

There's a little taste of Paris in her designs

By SHIRLEE IDEN
Ask Madge Pollak about fashion and she'll tell you it's in her blood.
A tiny, brown-haired and brown-eyed woman in a seude suit, she's been sewing for most of her life. Her shop isn't Paris, it's Southfield, but there's still an international flavor apparent when you walk in.
Creations by Pollak is 29 years old.

It's a business that was born when Mrs. Pollak and her husband, Alexander, came to this area. She creates original designs for discriminating women. He sews draperies.
Mrs. Pollak was born in a small town in Hungary and lived most of her early years in Budapest. "I studied at a school where I majored in design and art," she said.

"You have to feel this kind of thing and you have to love it. One must be creative and when you do your work with love, it goes."
"My own mother always said to get training, so you can stand on your own two feet wherever you go."
For Mrs. Pollak, it has worked out just that way. Sewing has been an occupation, a means of earning a living and even a way to save lives.

SHE EXPLAINED that her present husband is not her first husband.
"My first husband had to dig his own grave and then stand beside it naked to be shot dead by the Nazis," she said. "I spent the war years in a Gestapo house, a home that was taken away from a family. The Gestapo processed film there from air force pictures."
"My sister and her three-year old baby were with me and we cleaned that six story house. They never knew we were Jewish."
After the war ended, Mrs. Pollak went back to her own Budapest apartment and the Russians came into the city.
"They gave me work making pillow cases," she said. "I never knew what

they did with them, but they paid me with food. There was too much food for me to consume so I fed everybody in the apartment."
Pollak was an acquaintance from before the war and after the two met again they were married. They have a son and a daughter and have lived here in the Detroit area for nearly 30 years.

Mrs. Pollak said in designing fashion that one idea brings another.
"Some customers come in with an idea and some just say 'I have a special occasion coming up, what do you suggest?'" she explained.
Her designs are exclusive, original and one-of-a-kind. Her sketchbook is kept quite private from prying eyes. And above all her creations are custom-made, exquisitely finished and crafted.
Seven women work in the Pollak workshops, cutting, sewing and finishing.
WHEN A customer comes in, first she will chat with Mrs. Pollak about the kind of outfit she wants and then the designer makes a sketch.
"I have to create something that fits, that enhances the figure and cam-



ouflages the figure flaws at the same time," she said. "The dresses are made with great care and my customers are spoiled. They become accustomed to that. Many of them have followed me for more than 25 years."
"Sometimes you get a customer who says she's going to a noon wedding and she wants a sequined dress. I have to guide them away from fashion faux pas like that."
After her customer approves the sketch, Mrs. Pollak helps her select a fabric. "Then I make a muslin pattern for her to be fitted in before the fabric is actually cut. That way we can make adjustments before cutting into the material."
Currently Mrs. Pollak is working on a very special creation, a wedding gown for her daughter, Debra, who will marry Steven Zimberg on Aug. 20.
"I made my daughter-in-law's wedding dress a few years ago and it was photographed and written up in the papers," she said. She added that her customers will be looking for some-

thing out of the ordinary in the dresses of both Debbie and herself.
For about eight years, Mrs. Pollak has allowed students from area colleges to come and visit her shop and see how the dresses are conceived, and then custom-crafted.
"THEY ARE usually from textile and design classes," she said.
Recently, 20 students from an Introduction to Fashion class came to the Pollak showroom in the Heritage Building. Mrs. Pollak showed them the fabric swatches and bolt, the fitting rooms and workroom. Then she answered their questions about the entire process and about fashion and her own background.
She told them about studying at the Budapest Technology Institute and about working for the Rothschild Salon, and of experience in a Paris fashion house.
They must have gotten the idea that for Madge Pollak, fashion design is a labor of love.



Madge Pollak (left) looks on as Wayne State University fashion students Robbie Boern and Suzy Horwitz examine one of her original creations. The students visited the Southfield Creations by Pollak shop to see how fashion design happens from the idea to the finished product. Mrs. Pollak has run the business for 29 years and brought a European background in design, art, sewing and textiles to it along with a good share of creativity and enthusiasm.

Fashion Calendar

Wednesday, May 17
Sheila Davlin, fashion and accessories at Jacobson's - Miss Davlin will bring her one-of-a-kind collection of after-five wear, pillows, comforters, handbags and jewelry to the Jacobson's Designer Salons in the Birmingham store. Fabrics provide the focal point of this collection. Miss Davlin travels the world purchasing vintage silks and satins in China, Japan, Burma and other countries, which she imports and sends to 40 Cajun workers in Opelousas, La.
A true cottage industry craft, the workers turn the hand painted and brocaded kimonos and court costumes into an exciting collection of original items which customers can purchase on a special order basis. For the two-day presentation, Jacobson's has remodeled its Designer Salon into an Asian bazaar in which Miss Davlin will demonstrate the quality workmanship and distinctive fashions from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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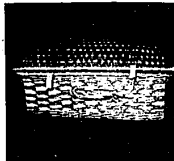
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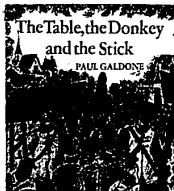
Basket case

It's the kind of thing you rarely buy for yourself but that every household should have. They last practically forever and are marvelous for picnics at Pine Knob or Meadowbrook, to say nothing of tailgating in Ann Arbor or Lansing. The Sportsman has wicker picnic hampers that are fitted for two people (\$58), four (\$115) or six (\$125). Made in England, the Sheffield stainless forks, spoons and serrated knives fit into slots in the lid of the basket. Plastic plates, cups, sandwich keepers, bottles for cream and sugar, salt and pepper shakers plus Thermos bottles are also included.
The Sportsman, 184 Pierce, Birmingham, 646-1225



Quarterly interest

If there's a special child in your life, the Birmingham Bookstore's Children's Book Club is an especially nice thing to know about. You, as sponsor, pay \$30. The recipient then receives four books per year, starting from the month of your choice. The books are personally chosen by the store in accordance with the birthdate, grade and interests of the child. (The \$30 fee includes gift wrapping and delivering). Available for children up to twelve years of age, it's a lovely way to instill a permanent interest in literature.
The Birmingham Bookstore, 263 Pierce, Birmingham, 642-4404



Waist-full

This nifty one-size-fits-all item could take care of all of the men on your gift list in one fell swoop. It's a little zippered canvas case (\$14) containing four cotton webbed belts in four different colors (navy, beige, white and brown) plus one solid brass sliding adjustable belt buckle. For an additional \$3, you can personalize the case with his name or initials. (personalizing requires one week).
Lee Specialty, 4068 W. Maple, Birmingham, 644-3444.



Out of print

I don't exactly know why but among all of the other delightful little girls dresses at Pam's of Bloomfield, this one really caught my eye. As fresh, crisp and colorful as a summer garden, it would be a perfect choice for a special occasion. Made of white on white embossed cotton, the cap sleeve and jewelry neckline are edged in Kelly green. When the green leaf and stem print that begins at the top of the dress reaches the waist, it bursts into a profusion of lemon yellow, scarlet red, shocking pink, purple and cornflower blue blossoms. Designed by Florence Eiseman, the dress (\$38) is available in sizes 4 to 6x only. Some are in stock; orders take four weeks.
Pam's of Bloomfield, Bloomfield Plaza, 6562 Telegraph, Birmingham, 626-5925



PRESENTING sheila davlin



We invite you to meet Sheila Davlin, designer extraordinaire Wednesday, May 17 and Thursday, May 18, 11 A.M. to 5 P.M. She'll present her luxurious one-of-a-kind garments fashioned from the world's most exotic, antique, opulent fabrics. Silks from heirloom kimonos, appliqued panels of hand embroidery, quilted satins from court robes and, sometimes, surprise fastenings of antique ornaments... nothing is wasted of whatever precious scraps have been accumulated. Her collection includes evening bags, pillows and other luxe oddments individually fashioned by hand. The look of her clothes is contemporary... easy lines in evening separates for the woman in search of the unique and glorious. Sizes 4-14.

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