

Take stock of styles, invest in fashion



Investment dressing is a phrase frequently bandied about as clothing prices startle and fashion continues to change.

True investment dressing, of course, means investing in clothing that will appreciate in value which means the term is somewhat inaccurate. However, it is possible to get good value for your clothing dollar, something that will continue in style for many seasons.

What designers mean by investment dressing is that you buy something interesting, simple and elegant enough that you'll like it for years.

Lisandro Sarasola, whose designs are exclusive locally to Claire Pearone, designs pieces of clothing that become investments through sheer versatility.

"What I really love about fashion today is that you can have an investment collection and mix and combine everything," said the tall, handsome designer from Argentina.

The Sarasola investment wardrobe begins with silk pieces which may be a slender sheath dress or a soft skirt with shell or camisole top and a soft slender pant. The silk pieces come in basic colors of black or gray as well as spring bright pastels.

SARASOLA THEN LEAVES the basics and goes on to create myriad wonderful, inspired jackets, vests, belts and jewelry. A deep gray macramé vest and fantasy belt top his pale gray kabuki dress for afternoon and dinner dressing.

Or the gray dress is topped with a lalique belt and a cotton channel quilted jacket. French suede vests with colorful, hand-painted sashes add another dimension to the complete wardrobe pieces.

The quality of Sarasola's craftsmanship, alone, makes his pieces collector item investments but his designs go beyond that, creating an exciting modern look. The imagination soars with the updating possibilities of his summer quilted jackets and great-looking belts and jewelry.

THE IMAGINATION also sees a lot of the Mary McFadden design concepts in the highly styled pieces. "I am inspired by Mary McFadden who is the greatest American designer," said Sarasola, appreciating the observation.

This designer, however, keeps his retail prices hovering around the affordable. His silk dresses are \$225 and belts range around \$90. His quilted jackets are \$285 to \$305.

"We keep our prices down," said Sarasola. "I prefer to sell to a larger group of women and not confine my designs to the very few who can afford what many of the designers charge."

Lisandro Sarasola hails from Argentina where his family raised cattle on a country ranch. "My family did not like the idea of my pursuing the arts," he said. "But, now they are happy because I am so successful."

Sarasola was educated in Italy at LaGarregue University for the Arts. He remained in Italy for a year, working as a fabric designer and painter of fabrics. He opened his own firm in New York, five years ago. His concept of a complete wardrobe with basic yet highly stylized pieces has made him the darling of specialty shops whose customers want to make investments in quality art-form clothing that is reasonably priced.



A gray dress by Sarasola, above, topped by a cotton channel-quilted jacket and belted in lalique, is a wise investment for the fashion collector. A macramé vest, left, sets off this versatile kabuki dress, gathered at the waist by a fantasy belt. (Staff photos by Dick Kelley)

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