

Today's fashion rules becoming matter of one's personal choice

Fashion, just as beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. Which explains why there are so many diverse opinions on what is in or out each season.

Claire Pearone explained, "Nothing is out anymore. Today, women wear what is most becoming."

Particularly at issue this spring are the lengths skirts will be worn and the height of shoe heels.

Mary McFadden, who, like most designers, shows her spring fashion collection in short, knee-revealing lengths on the runway, doesn't ship them that way to the stores. "They will be shipped in a length that falls 28-inches from the waist," she said. On a woman of average height, that translates to mid-calf.

Or, consider the statement, "High heels are out. Flat heels are in." True, if you hate high heels. False if you feel and look dumpy in flat heels.

SIMPLY DEFINED, fashion is the art of beautiful dressing. If many of the new styles and trends that emerge each season are not becoming to you, then those styles which may be in for some are out for others.

Clearly, we have returned to an era of beautiful dressing, according to Southfield couturiere Betty Baga Guem, who recently returned from a jaunt to Paris where she previewed the spring, summer offerings in the haute couture houses.

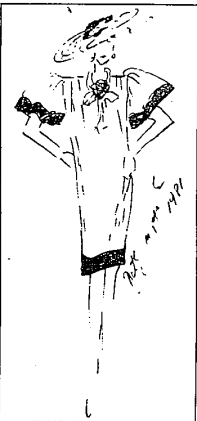
"There are no limitations on skirt and pant lengths or on heel heights," she said. "In Paris, however, low heels are shown with pants and suits and with some of the Spanish-influenced ruffled skirts. High heels are shown with dinner and evening clothes."

Ms. Baga said that although the Par-



the fashion plate

Rustle Shand



When she returned from visiting the Paris couturiers, Betty Baga Guem brought a variety of new ideas to please her clients. Among them, the straight dress (left), which narrowly tapers from wide shoulders to a banded hem. The short tulip skirt evening gown (right) is cut from silk taffeta in deep floral tones to pale almost white. (Drawings by Betty Baga Guem for The Eccentric)

is couturiers show short skirts just covering the knee or ending at the middle of the knee, there are no dictates.

"It is very dangerous to arbitrarily decide one length is best for all women. If a beautiful dress reveals a beautiful knee, then that is good fashion. But, not all women have beautiful knees and to be beautifully dressed, they must cover their knees."

The art of dressing well can be acquired, she said, by carefully editing current trends and adopting those that are the most flattering.

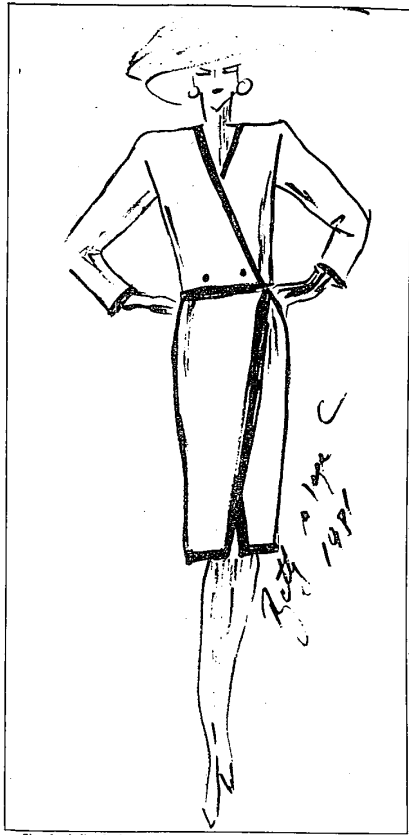
THE OVERALL look of the Paris spring, she said, is very pretty and soft. "It will be a very dressed-up season," she said. "The silk and linen fabrics are extravagant. The new clothes liberate the woman. Paddings and linings have been eliminated."

And, she stressed, while garden party hats are very much a part of the dressed-up, very feminine look of Paris clothes, they do not lend themselves to our automobile lifestyle.

"Black is the basic color for spring, sparked with a range of pastel accessories, including ombred snake shoes and pastel or bone stockings," she said.

"But evening brings out the best in all the gorgeous pastels that flow from deep shades to the palest tones. Flounces, ruffles and layers lend themselves well to the tulle, silk organzas, taffetas and lace that take on a flower silhouette."

Ms. Baga custom designs for the individual, for whom she sketched a few of her favorite looks for spring. To confer with her or to see her beautiful array of imported fabrics, contact her at 558-3516.



Simply defined, the fashions we will be seeing are a return to the art of beautiful dressing. The Envelope Suit combines heavy-weight white crepe and black piping.

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