



Flirtatious look adds pizzaz to spring fashions

PARIS (AP) — Clinging and very short or bustling with ruffles, clothes for the spring and summer look younger than ever.

The "midnette," or flirtatious young French girl, has replaced the femme fatale of last year.

In both ready-to-wear and couture, hemlines have been radically shortened in most houses, sometimes hitting well above the knee. The silhouette is moderately or closely fitted, and in suits shoulder padding still gives definition to a newer, longer jacket.

CHRISTIAN LACROIX at Patou took a wild approach, with his use of fabrics like taffeta and lace in ballerina or Creole styles loaded with flowers, polka dots, outlandish hats and hairdos.

(Just a week after his striking collection, Lacroix announced he would be leaving Patou to found a couture and ready-to-wear house under his own name, backed by the Financiere Agache group, which also backs Christian Dior and various retail enterprises.)

Sleeves may be important, too, sometimes puffy and to the elbow in daywear, or very big puffs for evening.

THERE WILL BE some choice, however, for those who like more discreet French fashions.

Suits, often in linen or rich ribbed ottoman, have long jackets with rounded, collarless necklines. The feminine approach at Dior by Marc Bohan featured a collared, decollete fitted jacket in his couture collection.

Pleated or flared skirts came out at other houses. But Yves Saint Laurent's sexiest short outfit for his ready-to-wear is an off-the-shoulder striped T-shirt over a leg-revealing tulip-draped skirt.

The old Chanel suit has been given a new update by Karl Lagerfeld. He showed peppy navy suits with diagonally-cut jackets and swingy circular skirts — all with narrow white piping.

PANTS TAKE a back row in the latest, more expensive French lines. But some ready-to-wear designers like Enrico Coveri showed casual

pajamas in polka-dotted or striped soft poplins. A few bloomer suits made news as well, quite fun at Claude Montana in various shades of linen.

Ready-to-wear and couture dressy clothes will be slim and waist-cinching.

The madness on runways was tempered by designers like Saint Laurent and Marc Bohan at Christian Dior. Saint Laurent's white poplin shirtwaist dress with colorful new scarves and sashes could be worn proudly for years. And Dior's bicolored raw silk suit with its pleated skirt and generous short sleeves would be a good classic addition to any couture wearer's wardrobe.

THOSE WHO WANT to dress colorfully and with pizzaz can look anywhere, as all Paris designers turned out fresh colors for late day, from salmon pink and porcelain blue to hot reds.

Lacroix's heavily-flower-embroidered puffy dresses for Patou are fun, if not very practical.

Pierre Cardin's layered, stiffened organza dress with a halter neckline looks smashing in flowered tuschia pink, with original jewelry touches: metal circles decked in moon-like pearls looking like planets in orbit.

Ballgowns are better than ever as Paris sees them. A puffy, ruffy line is most popular, especially with strapless tops, sometimes pannier hip effects for a 19th-century romantic look.

IN FABRICS, LINEN is the big winner for daywear along with pique and jacquard silk crepes, poplin, some broadcloth or tweeds in spring ready-to-wear. Jeans fabrics got an uplift at both Chanel and Saint Laurent in their ready-to-wear collections.

Animal prints have just about had it in Paris. They're being replaced by outsized houndstooth-check effects, bold flowers in all colors and stripes of all widths, as well as the biggest polka dots seen in years.

For late-day, shantung, taffeta, lace and stiffened gazez were used widely in more elaborate gowns. But ruffled chiffon and draped silk crepe were not forgotten either.



Credits

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