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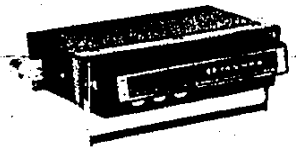
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SOPHISTICATED, BUT COMFORTABLE is this fully lined black wrap skirt and matching blazer from Jacobson's Young Signature Collection. Combined with a red paisley blouse of 100 per cent polyester and paprika-colored pumps, it is perfect for day-time or evening wear. The jacket and skirt, made of a combination wool and dacron polyester, are $95 and $44 respectively. The blouse is priced at $32; the shoes are $35. (Evert photo)

FASHION PORTRAIT FOR FALL 1973

By the clothes she wears, every woman creates a portrait of the woman of her time. Historians can trace events, customs, pressures, even the aspirations of an era by studying the accepted dress--the "fashion"--of the period.

Fall 1973 will be no different. Fashion never dies; it simply mutates. Today's fashion seems to be moving away from rebellion, abstraction and confusion toward realism, orderliness and a respect for the rules.

Women once more need guidelines and will expect them from skilled, serious and unbiased observers. While the long-predicted swing back to uptight Victorianism in everything from morals to modes seems still far away, the fall 1973 clothes by American designers clearly foresee a more conformist trend, with individuality, romance, luxury and sexuality for icing.

FREAKISHNESS IS OUT, but "mood" remains an essential to a rounded wardrobe. The fashion "happening" is gone, replaced by the fashion collection representing a specific school of fashion thinking.

Clothes this fall look more expensive, because they are 12 to 20 per cent more. Women will buy less on impulse, more by decision, but they won't settle into one dull, impersonal mold.

"Soft" remains the number one adjective for fall 1973. But substitute "fitted" for "clingy" or "drifting." Nothing hangs airless or moves out of control.

The hat is the omnipresent accessory, pulled way down and slanted. Knit caps, draped turbans and shallow brimmed hats are the types.

The sweater is a major influence, both in shape and texture. Ribbed knit coats and jackets appear in every top collection, often with fur collars and cuffs. The ribbed or cable knit dress in white or a sweet color is a key idea for late day. The thicker and looser the knit, the closer it fits the body.

THE WAISTLINE, when marked, is natural with a narrow strip belt. Coats are sashed or have a mannish fabric belt made deliberately too long so one end dangles from a knot. This too-big look, like wearing a man's shirt, is one of the few fashion tricks of the season. Most designers avoid the small fashionable airs and graces.

American designers have entered into no hemline controversy, except to reaffirm a liking for around the knee. Handkerchief point skirts appear in some evening collections, but by and large party dresses are simply knee or floor length, with no in-betweens.

Legs, however, are a point of interest and of color. The idea of carrying the costume color to the floor is intrinsic to fall fashion. Shoes and stockings match the costume color.

The dressy short dress, most designers believe, has a renewed place in women's lives. Not for cocktail parties, but for purposeful day and late-day activities where pants now seem less correct.

Winter prints and patterns are discreet but colorful. Winter flowers are important, as are foulard motifs, dots, quiet plaids, vivid and muted stripes, bands and borders.

There is comparatively little black, but what there is has high drama. Neutrals such as beige, taupe, grey, wine, forest green and brown make stunning head-to-toe monotone costumes. All shades of blue, green and vivid red flash everywhere.

"HARVI DRESSED ME"

A. Shirred waist, fly front, cuffed pant by Garland in Hunter Green, Navy or Brown...$20
B. Shaw collar, sleeveless sweater by Garland in Hunter Green, Navy or Brown...$11
C. Print shirt in matching colors from Tami...$13
HARVI'S