

a la mode



The classic blazer in Harris tweed from the Stanley Blacker collection.



Stanley Blacker's wool crepe suit can be dressed up or down, depending on your mood. (Staff photos by Tracy Baker)

Womenswear has menswear tailoring



Kermit Bass, special representative for the Stanley Blacker collection.

By CHRISTINE WALDEN

If you dropped your teeth the last time you turned over a price tag, Stanley Blacker's new line of sportswear may be the answer to your wardrobe and money woes.

While the Blacker collection isn't exactly bargain basement, it is quality at a price and, said Kermit Bass, filling a "void."

Bass is the Stanley Blacker representative in town recently with the collection at Himelhoch's.

"Stanley Blacker is an outstanding menswear designer who decided to embark on a new line of sportswear separates. He felt he had something to offer that did not exist," said Bass. "Certain manufacturers and designer prices had risen to such a high level that there was a void in the \$100 to \$200 price range of quality design. 'The trick in life,' continued Bass, 'is to build something better at fair market prices.'

The result is the Blacker sportswear collection consisting of luxurious fabrics such as real camel hair and

wool crepe, Harris tweeds or soft corduroys. Every garment is made to perfection with attention paid to stitching, lining, fabric and fit.

"THERE ARE 122 separate and distinct processes that a blazer goes through before it is ready to be delivered," said Bass. "There's the cutting, sewing, tailoring, finishing, pressing and each one of those categories has sub-categories."

"And before we buy a fabric, we sample it. Fabrics undergo tests in an accredited fabric testing laboratory to check for stretch and lasting qualities."

After all, he added, "What good is a classic blazer if the fabric isn't any good?"

Many of the techniques used by Blacker for his womenswear collection have been borrowed from his years as a menswear designer. For example, the clothes are made by menswear tailors who, said Bass, know about fit and perfection.

But the use of menswear techniques doesn't mean the Blacker collection is

for masculine women. In fact, some of the designs are far more feminine than the fluffiest of dresses.

"The classic blazer has been feminized," said Bass. "And the revolution of the blazer look can be attributed to a single thing, the skirt. It just adds a more feminine aspect."

BLACKER INTERPRETS the classic blazer in a number of ways. Some, such as his camel hair design, are top-stitched and sport four pockets. His Harris tweed jacket comes with suede elbow patches that are hand stitched on and easily removed.

Other designs are simply tailored and unadorned with stitching. For example, his corduroy suits, in soft fabric and shades of coral and blue, are plain jackets over pants. That design repeats in his brushed denim suit.

Still another design transforms white wool crepe into a blazer, skirt and vest which can be dressed up or down, depending on your mood. The ensemble evokes true femininity and defines a long, lean silhouette.

The clothes, said Bass, aren't for

everyone. "You do have to have a lean look because we aren't trying to mean all things to all people."

"But anyone from 20 to 55 can wear the designs providing they have maintained a well-proportioned figure."

Furthermore, the distribution of the collection is being kept "very thin," said Bass. "We have limited it to fine shops and specialty stores so there is a measure of exclusivity to it. A woman who spent thousands of dollars on a gown and thinks she is getting an exclusive feels like she was buying it in a bargain basement when she sees it on someone else."

In the process of traveling with the collection on its first introduction to the American woman, Bass had the opportunity to determine who is buying and if lifestyles influence why or why not a design is accepted.

"The clothes, he said, 'appeal to a very dynamic woman with great taste.'

And the lifestyles aren't that diverse.

"The lifestyle in America doesn't change," said Bass. "People have identical lifestyles whether they are in Bloomfield Hills or Long Island and all over, women today are dressing very casually and very smartly."

Fashion

- Sept. 22—Informal modeling of the Diane Von Furstenberg fall collection at Saks Fifth Avenue, Somerset Mall.
 - Sept. 23—Stewart's Fabrics presents "Show Stopper," a formal showing of make-it-yourself fashions at 2 and 7:30 p.m. at the store, 275 E. Maple Rd., Birmingham.
 - Sept. 23—Formal showing of the Leslie Fay collection for fall at noon at Hudson's, Northland.
 - Sept. 23—Carol Williams will commentate an "Accessories How-to" clinic from 7-9 p.m. at Hudson's, Pontac Mall.
 - Sept. 24—Formal showing of moderate priced separates at 2 p.m. at Hudson's, Pontac.
 - Sept. 24—Chadik's in Birmingham presents "A Taste of Fashion," a luncheon-fashion show starring the "Return of the Dress" at noon at the store. The seminar includes luncheon and reservations must be made by calling the store.
 - Sept. 24-25—Informal modeling of the Geoffrey Beene collection for fall at Saks Fifth Avenue, Somerset Mall.
 - Sept. 25—Informal modeling of the Tiktiner collection for fall at Jacobson's, Birmingham.
 - Sept. 25—Formal showing of the Amy Adams collection for fall at noon at Hudson's, Northland.
 - Sept. 25-26—Informal modeling of the Holly Harp collection for fall at Hattie's, European Fashions in Franklin.
 - Sept. 26-27—Informal modeling of the Albert Capraro collection for fall at Saks Fifth Avenue, Somerset Mall.
 - Sept. 26—Informal modeling of the St. Laurent collection for fall at Jacobson's, Birmingham.
 - Sept. 26-27—Informal modeling of the Albert Capraro collection for fall at Saks Fifth Avenue, Somerset Mall.
 - Sept. 26—Formal showing of the R&K collection at Hudson's, Oakland Mall.
 - Sept. 27—Personal appearance by Ned Swartz with the Ferragamo shoe collection at Saks Fifth Avenue, Somerset Mall.
- LUNCHEON SHOWS
- Tuesdays—Fashions by Alvin's modeled at the Cooper's Arms Restaurant in Rochester.
 - Wednesdays—Fashions by Alvin's modeled at the Haymarket at the Troy Hilton.
 - Fashions by Towers East Ship modeled at the Michigan Inn at the Benchmark, Dewey's, and Coffee Garden restaurants.
- For consideration of listings write: Fashion Calendar, Observer & Eccentric, 1225 Bowers, Birmingham, 35202.

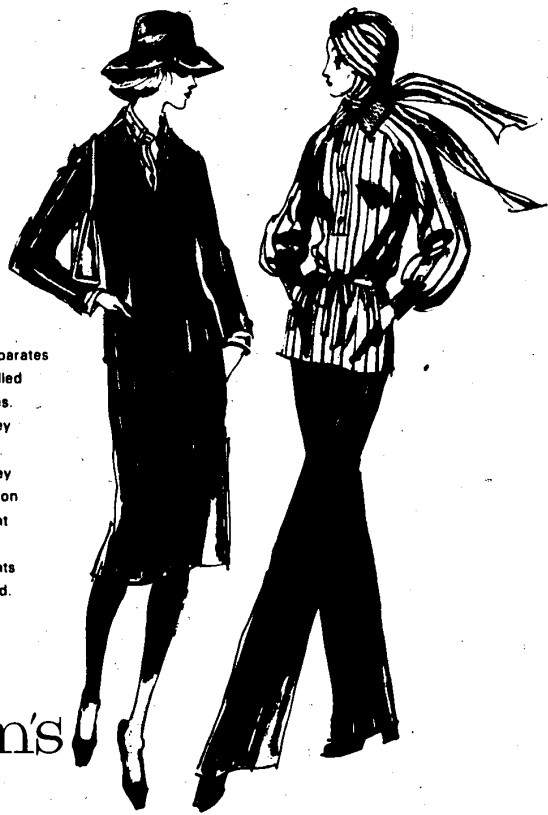
You are invited to our informal showing of the Tiktiner Fall Collection Thursday, September 25 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.

Tiktiner

haberdasher stripes on greytones, here from Nice, France for our Collection

Sportswear... fine flannel separates beautifully tailored by the skilled hands of French seamstresses. Rust/blue stripes on dark grey and light grey. Sizes 6 to 14.

From the collection: Dark grey wool and polyester four-button jacket, straight skirt and light grey shirt. Light grey wool overshirt, dark grey wool pants and wool knit scarf with hood.



Jacobson's

APPAREL STORE
Maple at Bates
Birmingham

Diane von Furstenberg's

easygoing collection of bodyclothes. They have today's tempo, take to travel and are, for the most part, seasonless.

Informal modeling on Monday, September 22, from 11 to 4.

Sportdress Collections.

Saks Fifth Avenue

Troy, Somerset Mall, Big Beaver at Coolidge