

The fashion plate

Boston-based Fiandaca wins new converts here

By RUSTLE SHAND

When Boston-based couturier Alfred Fiandaca returned to Birmingham last week for a special showing of his ready-to-wear and couture line, he already had local friends.

He's been known in this area by women who appreciate his exclusive designs at Jacobson's and were glad to see him come into prominence on the national scene last December when he ventured out of his couture shop in an old brownstone on Boston's Newbury Street.

As a result of his first visit here, he added to the list of women he dresses such area fashion notables as Rosette Ajluni, Chrys Jones Hogan, Edith Slaklin and Kathy Daftos.

They join the company of Lauren Bacall, Babe Paley, Joan Kennedy, Louise Fletcher and Cristina Ford, all Fiandaca admirers.

Rosette Ajluni said she was pleased to see the ultra suede trimmed mohair coat she purchased last winter was still in his line. She ordered a mohair dress to go with it as well as one of his miracle Italian-fiber sheer chiffons which is not only crush and wrinkle-proof, but wash and wear.

This second Birmingham appearance brought Fiandaca to the attention of governor's wives from 12 states as they breakfasted with the designer at Jacobson's.

Our own First Lady, Helen Milliken, said of Fiandaca's designs "I would like one of each." Narrowing her selection down to one of his classics, she bought Fiandaca's \$320 white wool jersey dress in a floor length for her active night-time schedule.

THE WOMEN clearly accepted Fiandaca's philosophy of "clothes designed as a framework for women to work within."

"The clothes I like to do are not today, not tomorrow, not yesterday—they are timeless," he said.

His clothes are feminine classics that will go on and on and on. They are eased and flowing but not trendy or voluminous. He believes in neutrals but notes that women are becoming interested in color, both soft and primary. He predicts "bright blue and red will be big for spring."

"Currently," he said "eggplant and plum are the big colors. But fashion has so many basics it is good to interject a little color."

Fiandaca said the response to his special showing was overwhelming, or more exactly, "they are selling like hot cakes; you would think we were giving them away." Fifteen minutes after the showing, 30 pieces had been sold.

The impact of his clothes was perhaps best transmitted by one customer at the close of the showing.

"I hate to leave: I am in such a lovely soft mood," she said.

HIS COLLECTION of slender, easy daytime

clothes included layering but with a difference. A black mohair tabard skinned over a white silk shirtwaist dress for a simple clean look, while a black wool jersey dress promised to be a wardrobe basic forever.

Many of his bias cut suits simply wrap around the body for a totally fluid look.

He updated his basic red mohair coat by adding a shawl; explaining the coat body has been in his couture line for many years.

Fiandaca's Liberty of London wool challis in shades of orange and black is really two dresses in one. The overdress can be worn as a separate tabard and the underdress worn independently.

As Fiandaca's designs became later-in-the-day, his fabrics became softer and more fluid, a trend he said will continue.

FIANDACA'S version of the formal evening gown wore many faces. Some were regal chiffons, others sweet-romantic dresses or sensuous and slinky.

His collection ranges in price from \$185 to \$385. Original designs soar upward to \$2,000.



Designer Fiandaca and Michigan's First Lady Helen Milliken watch appreciatively as the designer's classic wool and mohair dress is modeled. (Staff photo by Steve Cantrell)

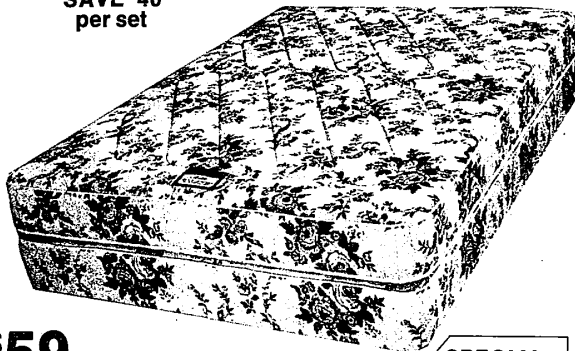
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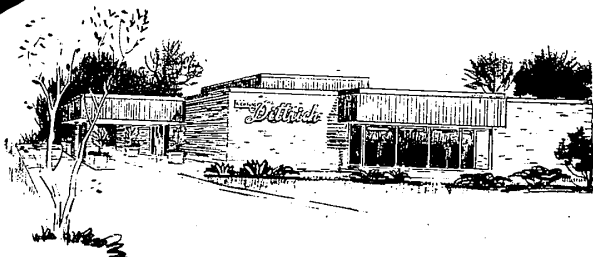
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