

# Soft Disco

## All the excitement starts with dancing



Imagine yourself arriving at the New York City Stock Club in a chauffeured limousine. As your sleek black Cadillac rolls to a halt, you are whisked into the plush interior where a tuxedoed waiter plies you with Beluga caviar and rare champagne.

Sound like a scene from a fantasy? Of course it is—but if you can capture the mood of this daydream in your dressing, you'll have captured the whole attitude of evening wear this year.

"These are the most drop-dead evening clothes we have ever seen," said one department store buyer whose reaction was shared by many in her trade.

Notwithstanding fashion's aura of luxury, the emphasis for evening wear is not for grand balls and charity galas this year. All the excitement starts with disco and dancing and soft clothes that move. So, in place of traditional ball gowns, you'll find seductive evening wear. Shimmers of charm. Little slip dresses. Sequined camisoles.

It's no secret that many of the sexiest offerings look like lingerie, and Lani Sussman and Noreen Leon at Birmingham's Lingerie have simply carried the look to its logical end: they are selling nightgowns to wear for an evening of dancing.

"So much lingerie is designed by ready-to-wear designers that it has the same finished look," explained Lani. She estimates that 90 per cent of the at-home clothes and 30 per cent of the lingerie she sells are bought to wear on the street.

The difference is the price. "If you buy lingerie instead of traditional evening separates, you get the outfit at a fraction of the cost. For fall, we purposely bought lingerie that resembled

ready-to-wear, but costs about one-fourth as much," Lani said.

At Claire Fearone in the Somerset Mall, disco dressing is dramatic. But, here too, the clothes have a built-in ease. "These clothes are fun," said store manager Jim Tristehelwaite, "and since they were designed for dancing, they're comfortable as well."

Jim teams a one shoulder tunic top that envelope the body like a cocoon with easy black pants that are full at the hips and taper down to a narrow ankle. A brass and crystal necklace, earrings, and some Andrew Geller slide shoes compliment the outfit well.

At Hattie's, buyer Sam Rosenthal sees the mood of disco dressing as "more seductive than feminine." He points to plunging necklines and leg-baring slits as evidence of a trend toward vampishness. He has also noted an interest in vintage clothing such as the dolman-sleeved, one-button blouse made of thin antique silk, which is in Hattie's stock right now.

And the interest in "old" things to wear while dancing doesn't stop with clothes. Antique accessories—glittery rhinestone bracelets, dangling fifties earrings, and crocheted bags adorned with antique ribbon—are all part of the disco mood.

"Everything is moving, moving for right because of the dancing," said Rosenthal. "The clothes, the jewelry, the metallic sandals—even the black fishnet stockings—they're all designed to catch the eye."

—By Dozma Olendorf

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Sim-ba nightgown of pure silk with embroidered lace. Ora Feder camisole with matching half slip worn under nightgown. Lingerique.



Holly's Harp matte jersey peg leg pants worn with Fernando Sanchez camisole of black lace tulle and Holly's Harp silk antique fabric blouse with metallic striping. Antique rhinestone pin and Shoe Biz' black evening sandal, Hattie, Inc., Birmingham.



Stephen Burrows' shocking violet disco dress with lettuce edging. Shoe Biz' shoes are close-toe satin pump with rosette. Vintage jewelry includes rhinestone necklace, earrings and bracelet. Hattie, Inc., Birmingham.



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