The 'Painted Ladies'

Homegrown couturiers fashion impressive designs

Paris, London, Rome and New York, hose bastions of fashion and style, are eing challenged by homegrown cre-tive conture

conture. mingham has been quietly wing some extraordinary and im-Birmingnam has been quietly sheltering some extraordinary and imaginative talents for at least 10 years. These designers are now beginning to receive recognition.

receive recognition.

Though it has not been generally publicized by Hattie, Claire Pearone and Linda Dresner, the stores' merchandise doesn't all originate in exotic countries half way 'round the world.

Those distinctive, one-of-a-kind fashlons that cause heads to turn may have
originated in a modest suburban bungalow right around the corner.
One could scarcely hope for a more
individualized outfit than one created
from a hand-designed fabric offered by
Beth Groesbeck and Gayle Bettega, cofounders of an apparel design business
which is appropriately named The
Painted Ladies.
This team have a business partner
than the proper suburbance of the perfection
in most marriages would envy.
Chemical and the countrier, who creates
the countrier, who creates
one-mbed above of the perfection
hind-dyed fabrier designed by Bettega,
Together, they produce taxteful, one-

en trace inceas o Collisionae can we seasonal collections a year.

DESIGNS by The Painted Ladies have been offered for sale in prestigious shops side by side with Parislan labels at Jax on Rodeo Drive in Beverly Hills, The Pomplan Shop in Chicago, William Cappola of Palm Beach, and locally at Hattle, Linda Dresner and Claire Pearone.

And due to the artistic nature of the fabric, they have also been featured in shows at the Maker's Gallery in Soho, the Detroit Gallery of Contemporary Crafts, the Detroit Artist's Market and the Caroli Hooberman Gallery.

Professional recognition has been accoorded the partnership by their in-

of a kind originals which are idealy suited for special occasions. The wom-en trade ideas to collaborate on two seasonal collections a year.

the Carol Hooherman Gallery.
Professional recognition has been accorded the partnership by their inclusion as members of Design Alliance, Detroit. Their fashions also have been featured in "Say Yes To Michigan Designers," sponsored by The Fashion Group of Detroit.
Beth Grosebeck's training for couturier design began at Wayne State University. From courses in art, history of costume design and mastering the disciplines of tailoring and pattern making, ashe evolved to her own personal style.

ing, ane evolved to all one style.

Like most couturiers, she prefers to work out her ideas by draping inexpensive muslin on a dressmaker's form, pinning and draping it to refine her inspirations before committing them to a

She explained, "The materials we use are too expensive to cut into indiscriminately."

are too epansive to cut into indiscriminately.

GROESBECK'S versatility ranges from designing business suits to evening wear. She utilizes every type of fabric from chiffons to velvet and even leather. Patron requests for dressy attre have currently concentrated her efforts along these lines.

Her sensitivity for anatomical movement and respect for 'the hand of a fabric' has developed a subtie, sophisticated approach to woman's cloiking; and the unrestricted ease of her designs. Her sensitivity for anatomical movement and respect for 'the hand of a fabric' has developed a subtie, sophisticated and the sensitivity of Michigan and Michigan State University of Michigan and Michigan State University when she was inspired to research 6th century dyeing techniques and refine them for modern, fabric design production.

She prefers to use the completely natural fabrics, silk, line and Swiss cotton that is so linely woven that it gives the appearance of sile more subtle.

SHE EXPLAINED: "The natural ma-terials lend themselves to more subtle

finishes help absorb the dye more easily."

Bettega said she achieves original patterns by band-dyelig the fabrics through a series of intricate methods. For example, in one method, material is folded between two identically shaped and cut-out blocks of wood. Dye is then applied to the raised shapes and the material sandwirched between the blocks, secured by a C-clamp, then simmered in a hot dye bath of contrasting color.

Using another method Bettega can produce recognizable objects such as hearts or cupids. To achieve this, she paints the dye directly onto the material. She then hand stitches around the design perimeter, gathering it together before immersion in the dye bath.

design perimeter, gathering it together before immersion in the dye bath.

THE TOTAL process may take three hours or more, but the painstaking effort is well worth it. The frich glowing colors focus attention on the individual detailing of the garments, providing a totality exclusive look.

At times, exclusivity becomes a problem when a retailer, used to the volume of mass production, wants several, exact duplicates.

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Allow for index production, Bettega explained. "Part of their attractioness depends on random variations. So even if I repeat the process, using the same colors and fabrics, no two outlits will look exactly the same." "Sometimes Gayle will create a pattern that inspires me to design an outlit around it. At other times, I will ask her to develop a design to accent a styling detail. We have a creative flexibility from sharing ideas and giving one another suggestions, "Groesbeck said.

As in most dress design establishments, procuring employees who are knowledgeable in the personal style of coutler can be a problem. Groesbeck and the counter of the production o

get orders out more quickly."

BETTEGA'S inventiveness has speeded up old world dyeing techniques, but she has yet to find an apprentice. She commented, 'Not many people are willing to invest the time required or have the pathene necessary to get my results."

With such meticulous care lavished on the creations, one would assume costs for the customer to be quite out of bounds. Retail outlets are given the right of choosing a part of the line then charge accordingly. However, They.

However, The Painted Ladies custom-design for regular patrons as well. If purchased directly, a simple top is \$60. Most ensembles fall into a price





Hand-deelgned fabrics was the basis for an apparel design business founded by Gayle Bettega (left) and Beth Groesbeck, who are wearing their own designs. BELOW: Model Sheila Fasang models a raspberry-colored, crepe de chine ensemble.



range of \$225-\$475.

When questioned how long it would take to produce a client's order, Groesbeck replied, "It depends entirely on the request. It a client sees something we have already made up, it can be had immediately. Our cocktail suits are gone as quickly as we make them. Most women have plenty of advance notice prior to an important fuetion.

"But if they want an exclusive, designed from scratch, it may take anywhere from one to two months from fabric design to completing construction of a garment."

ADMITTEDLY, this is clothing for range of \$225-\$475. When questioned

occasions that call for wearing something unique, perhaps a charity ball extravaganza, opening night, or even a
vacation cruise. These are times when
it is important not to come face-to-face
with the important not to come face-to-face
to such such paragraph the same
designer fashings, wearing the same
No such faux-pas would happen to
anyone wearing an ensemble by The
Painted Ladies. The innovation are
lack of Ramboyance appeal 12, the
woman who is secure in her knowledge
of good taste and individuality. Connoisseurs of quality won't need an
excuse to wear these originals time and
again.



del Shells Fasang wears an outilt which captures a young ndy look. The multi-striped (red, yellow and blue) Swiss cottor stillow would, according to lits designers, be perfect for some-ng like cruise ship dancing.

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