

## This is the year of 'the little black dress'

WHY DOES THE holiday season only come once a year? From mid-November through early January, there is a flurry of parties, dances and family dinners that wears out our feet and exhausts our wardrobes, yet leaves us yearning for more when the season ends.

According to fashion experts, this holiday season will see an opulent array of sumptuous evening dresses — for every special occasion — cut from gold lames, exotic gilded brocades, velvets and bright iridescent taffetas decorated effusively with glitter, beads and spangles. For the woman who wants megawatt glamour, these are the clothes in which she wants to make a much noticed entrance.

Yet this also is the year the "little black dress" makes a dramatic comeback in beautifully designed silhouettes that need no flashy gimmicks to stand out in the crowd. The little black dresses are notable for their slenderizing, close-to-the-body fit in luxurious midnight fabrics. And, being black, they will retain appeal long after this year's vi-

brant, trendy colors have faded from the scene.

The dresses look good at any length. Perry Ellis presented what he called "simple little slips," a sexy grouping of bias-draped, barely there, above-the-knee skimmers in silk, satin and wool vaguely reminiscent of those worn by the flappers in the '20s. Diane Paret, an avant-garde designer, went to the other extreme with long, hooded and cowed jersey dresses that sensuously cover the body and slither gracefully to the floor.

THE KNEES are covered in Morton Myles' collection of black matte crepe cocktail dresses, but he deftly exposed a woman's back and cleavage to her best advantage. One short dress, with crushed cummerbund, features a bared back illuminated with plumes of multicolored beadwork and pearls. On another, the neckline swoops to the waist, yet is subtly screened with an inset of black organza and a ladder of jewelry.

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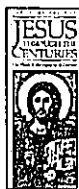
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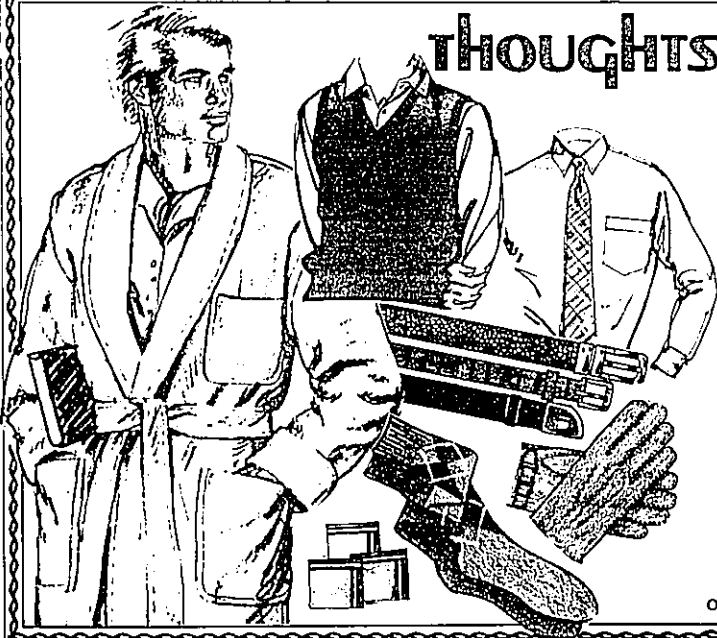


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