

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

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SHOPPING CENTERED



LINDA BACHRACK

Hats off to new topper trends

Sarah McGregor is a hat lover. She is one of those women that you admire on the street, secure in the way she wears her favorite accessory with a simple grace. I eavesdropped on Sarah and her daughter, Judy, both of Redford, as they giddily modeled hats at Jacobson's in Birmingham.

"I just adore hats," said Sarah, discarding a too-large straw number. "I bought hats when money was short, when the kids were in college. I'd just put a hat on layaway."

Perhaps the economy explains the sudden resurgence in the popularity of the hat. Historically, when Wall Street boomed, skirt lengths rose and when the stock market faltered, skirts plummeted. The longer skirts of the '30s were accompanied by a wide variety of hats, as was the Christian Dior "New Look" of 1947. However, by the mid-1960s, skirts were thigh-high and hats were shoved to the backs of closets, considered fashion relics.

Today, we're seeing a millinery comeback, with styles ranging from street-inspired caps to elegant picture hats and jaunty berets.

Remembering her favorite hat, a small silk flower-covered cloche, Sarah prodded her daughter for a favorite family hat story. Judy laughed, recalling how she was often embarrassed by Mom's hat wardrobe.

Bring back the memories

"I'll never forget one Easter when I dressed up in a navy straw boater with a flat bow. My brother thought it was a pilgrim's hat from a costume shop," she reminisced as she tried on a new shape, also in navy.

Sarah McGregor is glad to see women donning hats again, but still lings for the formality that accompanied hat- and glove-wearing. "We're too casual," she laments. But today's hats can be worn with everything. They are true accessories that allow the opportunity for personal expression.

Jacobson's features an impressive selection of hats by leading milliners Dobbie Cohen and Maev Carr. The soft bowler we picture is an un-

starched natural straw embellished with silk and netting (\$109). The shell motif is new for spring and can be seen in a variety of designs. I thought this one was a particular standout.

Neiman Marcus at the Somerset Collection in Troy also has a David Cohen black straw with an intricate gold-braided trim (\$129), a sophisticated Spanish look. "The hat makes the look," explained Katz of her love for the chapane. "It makes me feel beautiful."

If you're a serious hat buyer, you must see the selection at Barney's New York also in the Somerset Collection. Delicate starched crocheted shapies from Paris (\$228-\$266), artful straw trimmed with embroidered ribbons by Sarah Beraford, and black and white "doe-eyed" linens and classic bowlers by Deborah Harper (\$255) are a few of the most eye-catching.

Hats for a song

For hats that are less expensive but equally long on style, visit Kicks at Applegate Square, 29681 Northwestern Highway, in Southfield. Here, you'll find romantic straw bowlers embellished with wide black ribbons and tiny roses (\$69), unstructured "floppy" (\$129), admiral's caps in velvet with flowers, pearls and authentic gold braid (\$69-\$85), and Gatsby-like lace-trimmed straw picture hats for garden parties or Easter-egg hunts (\$65-\$116).

My favorite — the adorable sun hat we picture. This natural woven wide-brimmed straw sprouted a dark green sash and a bright yellow sunflower (\$65).

Perfect for the beach. Manhattan milliner Patricia Underwood has a few tips for your special hat purchase. She insists that comfort is primary, so look for hats that are soft and malleable. A sheer pale pink horsehair brim throws a pretty tint on a woman's face, the shape of a top hat is one that most people look good in and schoolgirl toppers with upturned brims draw the eye to the eyebrows and cheeks. Linda hat shopping!

Linda Bachrack is a Birmingham resident. To leave her column ideas, please call 953-2047, Ext. 1889, from a touch-tone phone.

Video takes the lid off trunk show

It's not a Hollywood movie premiere, but close. Have you been to a trunk show lately?

By SUSAN DEMAGGIO
STAFF WRITER



The trunk is gone from the trunk show. This very traditional and vital part of fashion retailing is changing.

In years past, designers' representatives would travel throughout the country with completed fashion lines carefully folded in trunks from which special orders were taken from haute couture customers on the second floor salons of better dress shops.

The idea is still the same, but Federal Express, working women and the video age have given the old game a new twist.

At Saks Fifth Avenue in the Fairlane Town Center, Dearborn, a mom and daughter who missed the show watch the spring St. John collection on video. At Neiman Marcus in the Somerset Collection, Troy, two friends review Calvin Klein's CK line during a quick Saturday morning fashion show.

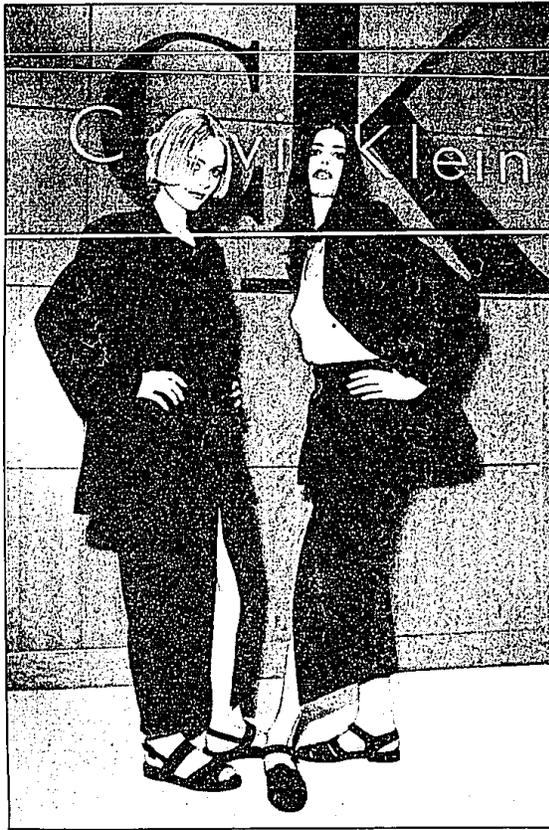
At the Liz Claiborne store at the Somerset Collection, every first Friday from noon to 1 p.m. about 75 working women enjoy a complimentary light lunch followed by 20 minutes packed with Liz's latest.

"Trunk shows are still an important part of retailing," said Janice Hayes of Jacobson's. "We're just making some adjustments to make them more accessible to today's busy women."

Hudson's spokeswoman Chris Mortiero agreed. "We're definitely," she said. "Trunk shows are very important to the customer who likes a particular designer or wants ideas on how to put a wardrobe together."

Hayes explained the advantages of shopping during trunk shows.

"You get to preview an entire line not just the special pieces a buyer gets for a store," she said. "You get to see the breadth and depth of a collection. You get to immediately discuss any concerns with the representative or in some cases, the designer himself. There's an element



JOHN STORME/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

of exclusiveness. You get to be first."

Marilyn Conner of Neiman Marcus said trunk shows continue to be "a driving force" at Neiman's.

"Our customers are well-traveled, well-schooled," she said. "They know what they like. They may follow one designer exclusively. We have customer files so that we can notify a client by invitation when their designer holds a trunk show."

Conner said Neiman's fashion

calendar is dotted with trunk shows. Some are simple, in and out. Others require months of planning.

"For the Calvin Klein CK trunk show on Feb. 13, we had to set up specially supplied black chairs for the audience, a small stage, the CK logo behind the platform, and have our makeup and hair stylists copy the look of Calvin's New York models from photographs he supplied. We set up and played the video from the New York show throughout the

It's all attitude: At the Calvin Klein trunk show for CK, a line exclusive to Neiman Marcus, metro models were coiffed and made up to capture the look, attitude and spirit of Klein's funky-classic New York spring show.

day, following the modeling," she said.

After the noon to 4 p.m. event, the merchandise was collected and Federal Expressed to Chicago for the next show on Michigan Avenue.

"Trunk shows mean a lot more than sales to a designer," Jacobson's Hayes said. "It's their chance to meet directly with their customers. A chance to see how their clothing fits, hear what their clients need and like."

'Economy-sized' women big with designers

By SUSAN DEMAGGIO
STAFF WRITER

When Saks Fifth Avenue launched its Salon Z departments 18 months ago, it was an answer to a prayer for a large (pun intended), though overlooked, group of shoppers.

"As a very dedicated teacher, I'm a woman who appreciates and looks for good design, who also happens to wear a size 20," said Mary Ann Hotos of Birmingham. "At Salon Z, I can purchase quality clothes in wonderful designs, style-wise. I love the coats and dresses. They're finally making

beautiful clothes for economy-sized people."

Women's Wear Daily reports that the average American woman wears a size 14, and the Large Size Council of America says this fashion market is one of the fastest-growing.

Salon Z manager Sally Marakas said her customers are professional women, usually over age 35, who are delighted to finally be able to buy clothes by Bill Blass, Gianni Versace, Givenchy, Mary McFadden, Adolfo, and starting this spring, Ellen Tracy.

"Their image was never in plus sizes," Marakas said. "But Saks had enough pull to get them to design some pieces for the larger woman. It's a misconception that you must be skinny to be fashionable. Fashion is a state of mind, not a size."

No one knows this better than Arlene Greer, herself a size 22. For the past eight years she's bought and managed Valentina's in Southfield's Applegate Square. This store specializes in designer-quality active sportswear for sizes 14-52.

Rebecca's in downtown Rochester specializes in lingerie for women up to size 52. Owner Rebecca Oberman has built a list of loyal customers since she opened five years ago.

"We carry bustiers, teddies, undergarments and some cruise wear by Christian Dior, Missy Lane and I.B. Diffusion," she said.

Upscale fashions in large-sizes can also be found at The Forgotten Woman in the 555 Building in downtown Birmingham.

MONDAY, FEB. 22

KIDNEY FOUNDATION BENEFIT
Tickets on sale through Feb. 29 for fashion show, champagne reception and luncheon sponsored by Jacobson's, National Kidney Foundation and the Dearborn Inn, noon, Saturday, Mar. 6. Proceeds to kidney patients who cannot meet medical and household bills. Limited, preferred seating \$75 each. General seating tickets \$45. Dearborn Inn, Gaiewood/Southfield. Reservations: 271-2700.

BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENING
8-10 a.m. Screening and blood fat analysis. Part of Walking Club Program. Co-sponsored by Botsford Hospital, Jacobson's court area. Free. Laurel Park Place, Six Mile/Newburgh. 477-6100.

SPAIN FESTIVAL
Through Mar. 1. Week-long activities include dining, entertainment and cultural events. Call for detailed schedule. Ritz-Carlton, Southfield/Hubbard. 441-2100.

PUPPET SHOWS
Cinderella daily through the month. 7 p.m. Weekends at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Meadowbrook Village Mall, Waterford/Adams. 375-9484.

ADDED ATTRACTIONS

TUESDAY, FEB. 23

ART CONTEST
Through Feb. 28. 6th annual contest and exhibit for amateurs. L'Oréal Mall, Seven Mile/Middlebelt. 476-1166.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 24

SHOPPING LESSON
7:30 p.m. Elvie Horton, fashion coordinator and discount shopper, shares secrets. Free. Seating limited. Pre-registration necessary. Auburn Hills Public Library, Civic Center/Southeast. 370-9360.

THURSDAY, FEB. 24

PIANO CONCERT
Gloria McBeth performs. 8-9 p.m. Center concourse. Laurel Park Place, Six Mile/Newburgh. 476-1100.

SATURDAY, FEB. 27

MAGIC SHOW
Comedy, mystery, audience participation by Bernie Stevens. Balloon animals. Free. Noon and 3 p.m. Center court. Winchester Mall, Rochester/Avon. 652-1152.

AFRICAN FOLK ARTS
Children's Dance Workshops 2 and 4 p.m. Food court. Storytelling with Naim Abdou-Rauf. 3 and 5 p.m. Penney Court. Free. Northland Mall, Eight Mile/Greenfield. 851-3993.

SPRING FASHION SHOW
1 and 3 p.m. Stage near Crowley's. Presented by John Casablanca School of Modeling. L'Oréal Mall, Seven Mile/Middlebelt. 476-1166.

Mail "Added Attractions" items to Susan DeMaggio, Observer & Eccentric, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009 or fax them to her at 644-1314. To assure publication, they should be received two weeks in advance of the event.