

Stylist likes to break rules

BY SURAN DEMAGGIO
EDITOR

Fashion designer DeLah McKay assures you that she understands all the rules — "I just don't happen to live by them."

Speaking about her spring collection from offices in New York, McKay explains that she is "an artist" who attempts to design "what people will love."

"My pieces are garments your heart tells you to buy," she said. "I make unusual clothing that's fun and fits well."

For spring McKay introduces romantic, long, flowing shifts and skirts. Her signature jackets feature patchwork or contrasting bias. There is lacework on her cardigans.

"I design for the woman who has been there, done that," she said. "She owns 50 jackets and 10 pants but buys mine because they are different and expressive."

Eleganza owner Sue Louisa-Hickey features McKay's collections in her West Bloomfield boutique. She said there is another reason women buy McKay — comfortable fit.

"Her pants are generous cuts. Her jackets offer room to move," she said. "You can wear a McKay design for years because she listens to her customers."

McKay grew up in England



where her mother was a men's tailor. She said she never gave her mother's work a second thought, but subconsciously it must have taken hold of her.

"I started out, unsuccessfully, to be a designer and model," she said. "I could not get into college so I wound up traveling the world, living in seven countries, buying fashion in Paris that I'd sell in Australia."

Lucky break

"I met designer Pierre Balmain at a party and he became my mentor. I was his right hand girl in those days."

"After he went bankrupt, contacts in the business led me to become fashion director for a chain of British department stores. I went to Hollywood where I was a stylist for the stars (Stephanie Powers, Kathleen Turner, Vicky Lawrence, Jacqueline Bisset to drop a few names)."

"Eventually, I got a job as a Seattle television host doing makeovers and fashion segments."

A reversible jacket McKay made for herself launched her

design career the second time around. Friends all wanted one, and when a department store ordered some, a New York Times article set McKay on her way.

"It was a fluke," she laughed. "In 1989, I sold a million dollars worth of jackets in just eight months."

McKay said she believed her lack of ability to sketch kept her from being a designer early on, until she realized, she "sketched" collections all day long in her "mind."

Single, McKay said she's devoted to the long hours of her career, and then to decouping furniture, playing tennis and doing "home stuff" to unwind.

"Please don't believe that my career in any way kept me from relationships," she laughed. "I've had several very serious romances around the world that just never worked out for one reason or another."

These days I'm doing what I've always loved, artistically taking colors and textures and trying the unusual with them."

The Eleganza boutique is in the Robin's Nest Plaza on Orchard Lake, north of 14 Mile. DeLah McKay's line is priced at \$135 for walking shorts to \$335 for a jacket. Inquiries are welcome at (810) 737-2666.



High style: Designer DeLah McKay works in georgette crepe, rayon, silk and wool, adding whimsical touches to jackets and dresses.

Where can I find?

Thanks to all the readers who phoned in locations for the hard to find items in this feature! Several callers have inquired about fees for this service. There are none! Where Can I Find? is a service of these retail pages for consumers.

• Margaret Nagy searched her basement and came up with an April 1945 copy of Ford Times magazine for Robert Hiss. "My late husband worked for Ford for 38 years and he was a saver!" she said.

• Two callers said they came across clothing made from recycled plastic. The *Aveda Lifestyle Store* at Somerset Collection North sells a line called *Anatomy* which includes polar fleece, sweats and T-shirts made from old plastic spun into fibers, and *The Nature Company* at Somerset Collection South features a collection of gloves, mittens and shirts — plus much more, through a catalog 1-800-227-1114.

• Three callers came up with sources for men's *Supp-hose* stockings — *Mittelfeld's Department Store* in downtown Rochester (810) 651-8171; the *Veteran's Hospital* canteen on Southfield Rd. in Allen Park and *McClutcheys Store* in Indian River, (616) 238-7712. The store is happy to send out special orders.

• Suzanne Edmunds (super shopper) reports seeing *Math To Go* by Texas Instruments at *Sam's Club* on Haggerty in Farmington Hills. She also found *Picorelli* hamburger relish at *Ackroyds*, Five Mile and Beech Daly in Redford, 313 532-1181.

• A caller reports seeing Yardley's liquid soap at the F&M store on Warren Road.

• Two readers were willing to sell *Wearever* Shooter that they no longer use.

• Several callers explained that Hallmark's *Frosty Friends* are still issued annually. They may be found at the Dearborn Civic Center's annual Hallmark Show in February, and also through Ron Kesterson of Knoxville, who carries them (423) 676-7611.

• A reader has a copy of "The First Nine Months

Are the Hardest" and has been put in touch with the caller looking for it.

We still need to find:

• Linda Gorinski is searching for a copy of an English textbook for her seventh grade son: "Warner's English Composition and Grammar Complete Course." Has anyone come across this book?

• Lynn Duke hopes to locate a copy of Michael Douglas' recording "Happy Birthday Jesus," popularized in the 1970s on his afternoon talk show.

• Former state representative John Jamian is anxious to come up with old restaurant photos, menus, signs and other memorabilia for a history book he is writing on the Woodward Corridor. Specifically, he wants information about the old Corning's, Ted's, Devon Gables and May's Drive-In. He welcomes information at (810) 540-0605.

• Sandy Hill hopes to track down a place to buy mineral oil for a rainlamp KAYDOL-35.

• "Jennifer" wants to know what retailer carries clothing by *Smooth Ones*. "I purchased a pair of *Smooth Ones* trousers at *Lochmann's* a month ago and found them to be the best-fitting pants I've ever owned."

• A reader is looking for a copy of "Boy on a Dolphin" by David Devine. Since it is now out of print, she'd be willing to buy someone's old copy.

• Ever see *Magic Baking Powder* made by Nabisco of Toronto on your grocery shelf? A caller doesn't want to travel to Canada to buy it.

• A Birmingham resident can't find the Almay hypo-allergenic all-over body splash that she used to buy at Montgomery Ward's.

• Katherine Ostrowski loved sending engraved Mitchell Christmas cards to friends and family. Since the company went out of business, she is trying to find something comparable. "I like the real ornate cards," she said. "Does anyone know who sells these?"

If you've seen any of these items in your travels, let Malls & Mainstreets know and we'll print the answers. Please call (810) 901-2567.

There's a new game in town



Clown around: From Pressman Toys, a kids action game where the clown throws a foam pie and makes a raspberry sound at unsuspecting players. For ages 5 and up. \$20.95 at Toys R Us, Target and Kmart.



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