

Starstruck from page E1

"If there is one American fashion historian who can put it all into perspective, it's Sandy. What is a fashion historian? I'm afraid it doesn't come from years of highfalutin' study and degrees from Yale. It comes from Sandy's lifelong obsession with collecting and researching fashion and Hollywood costuming," Mizrahi writes.

Schreier is a constant font of gossip stories that give insight into what we see or think we see on the silver screen.

Schreier's love affairs with fashion and movies began when her father worked as a furrier at Russeska.

"As a little girl I was taken to Russeska on Saturdays and would dress up. I was the darling of the store, a little Shirley Temple," she said.

It was there that Schreier first began reading *Vogue*, *Bazaar* and other fashion magazines. "They were picture books for me to read, I was bitten by the bug at an early age," she said.

And she was also bitten by the movie bug as well, imitating herself up on the silver screen.

"I always said when I grow up I want to be a movie star. But what I really wanted was to wear the beautiful clothes on the screen," she said.

Over the years, Schreier has been a costume designer for the Supremes, for whom she devised ostrich feather creations that earned her the "Feather Lady" nickname, a model (for Vidal Sassoon, Mary Quant and others), a world-class collector and a historian and curator of fashion, who mounted the exhibit "Chic to Chic" at the Detroit Institute of Arts in 1992.

She was recently named a national spokesman for The American Film Institute's "Legends" tour. And, she'll soon be realizing her girlhood dream when she goes before the camera for a part in the movie "Inspector Gadget" with Matthew Broderick and Rupert Everett.

"I was fortunate to be from a city where at one time the automotive executives wives bought from the couture houses. I was able to see, touch, feel and eventually be given gifts of couture to collect," she said.

Designing and collecting allowed her the time she needed to raise her four children and be

a "supermom."

"I really got to do what every mom does while sitting home playing dress up," she said.

The children are now grown and Schreier and her husband, attorney Sherwin Schreier, have five grandchildren.

The interests in fashion and Hollywood dovetailed in the 1970s when Detroit's movie maestro Bill Kennedy invited Schreier on his popular show. She followed with regular appearances with Kennedy's replacement, the ebullient Sonny Eliot.

But Schreier wasn't comfortable with her knowledge of Hollywood costume design at the time, so she began to seek out the top designers. She found they were as interested in her knowledge of couture as she was in costume design and Hollywood celebrity.

"They were asking me as much about high fashion as I was asking them about movie fashions. I learned the most from Edith Head, who was very generous with her knowledge and willing

to share with me," Schreier said.

The designers introduced Schreier to movie stars but also to costume houses, beadery, furriers and art directors. She became friends with such notable screen legends as Lana Turner, Loretta Young and Gloria Swanson, who shared her love for fashion, and with young stars like Milder who are just beginning to appreciate the history of design.

It was the late Edith Head, the Hollywood designer best known to the general public, who told Schreier that fashion design and movie costume design are entirely different, miles apart. Head told her fashion designers create clothes for real people, costume designers for characters in a movie. Head, for one, never tried to market her creations to the public.

Schreier's book begins in the earliest days of silent movies. Most of the original movie moguls were from the New York garment industry and were naturally interested in fashions.

"Fashion is entertainment and going from fashion to entertainment is not a big gap," she said.

Schreier makes two major points in her book: One, it is Hollywood, not Paris, that has been the major fashion trend set-

ter and, two, Hollywood costume design is in decline. Producers allot smaller budgets for costuming and use "costumers" rather than designers. Costumers choose clothes from various sources rather than creating original designs. Once only the extras were outfitted by costumers.

She said even the much acclaimed "Titanic" failed in its costuming. She said the rich ladies on the ship would have had their couture dresses with them, and the dresses in the film do not match up. She said Martin Scorsese's "Age of Innocence" does a better job of conveying the elegance of the period.

On the other hand, many of today's young stars are attracting the attention of clothes designers, who rush to dress them for awards shows and other public appearances. Schreier said the new actresses - Uma Thurman, Carmen Diaz, Mira Sorvino - have figures like runway models, a new look compared to the tiny actresses of Hollywood's golden era and the voluptuous stars of the 1950s.

And when Uma, Gweneth or Tom Cruise wear a fashion, the public usually wants a copy. The public, like Schreier, continues to be starstruck.

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