

Shoe quality makes Levine first choice

By CHRIS WALDEN

Little feet can take giant strides, especially if they belong to Beth Levine, Coty award winner and mother of innovation in the American shoe industry.

Mrs. Levine, recently at Saks Fifth Avenue with her spring collection, took her first step in the shoe industry as a shoe model.

A size four B foot carried her from the doldrums of secretarial work to her current status as top notch, couture-like designer.

IT'S BEEN 28 years since her small foot got in the door. In 1946 she met and married Herbert Levine. Together they established THE fashion house for shoes, noted for quality and design.

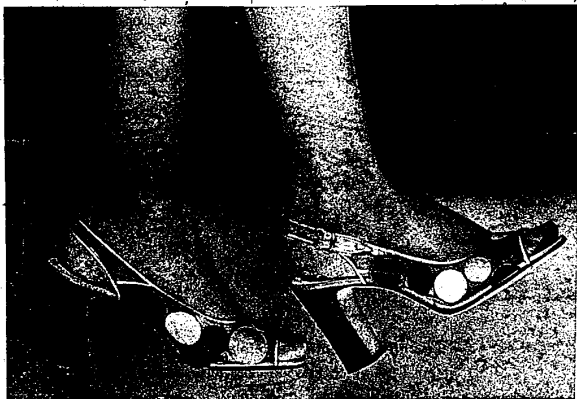
As a shoe model, Mrs. Levine learned about shoe construction. She discovered what makes shoes hurt and what makes them comfortable.

"I didn't go to a formal design school," she said. "I just worked and learned. I took a job as a shoe stylist because I knew what could be feasible and flattering."

SINCE THEN Mrs. Levine and her husband have created sensations in footwear. The designs are feminine, pretty and sexy. They are sometimes daring, always fresh.



Sleek, rhinestone-studded and only \$100.



Clear vinyl shoes with multicolor bubbles.

"My motto is always start with a new season. We started with shoes that other companies would not do," Mrs. Levine said. "We designed a very fine, classic shoe, a very pretty and feminine shoe."

Women who always come back for more testify to the quality of the Levine shoe. At the Saks one-day showing, women wearing Beth Levine shoes came in to buy more Beth Levine shoes. At \$50 per pair it indicates some belief in comfort design and quality.

AND COMMENTS matched beliefs. "Ooo," said one shopper. "They're so comfortable."

"Look at how sexy this looks," said another.

"We won't compromise on lower quality," she said. "I have been known to be a bitch on wheels because I wouldn't lower my standards."

OUT OF THAT desire for excellence comes sling-back shoes that stay on your feet, even when you dance - shoes that look good for more than a season and colors and textures that don't wear out or rub off.

It took Mrs. Levine two years to produce a bronze-tone shoe. The metallic content kept turning green - a definite no go for Levine. Now perfected, the shoe is a big seller.

Another first in the shoe industry was made by Mrs. Levine when she introduced the vinylite shoe. Clear, uncomplicated, the shoe goes with any evening gown a woman has. Lustrous or silver heel add zest.

ASIDE FROM "demanding quality, she demands beauty!"

The future of fashion may be determined by new shoe styles, she said. "If you can see what happens to shoes you can know what's going to happen to clothing. We had softer, feminine shoes before, designers brought dresses back."

Returning with soft and feminine is the desire to be sexy ... all over. For the feet Beth Levine provides sexy little numbers, bare and flattering. Strappy sandals and settle heels expose the foot and tense leg muscles just enough to give shape.

AS SHE SAT and watched old and young, dowdy and sophisticated women flock in and out, she commented,

"It's amazing some of the people who want to look sexy."

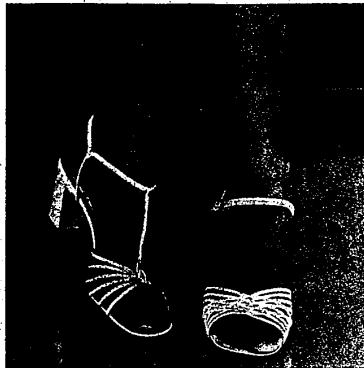
And it is. Older women, long past the size eight stage, slipped into a pair of vinyl, multicolor bubbled shoes and happily walked away.

Young girls enhanced already good looks with sparkling rhinestone pumps.

The shoes cover and please the egotism of women. They know no age or image. They are for every woman who wants comfort, quality and beauty, and that's what makes Beth Levine a success.



Beth Levine designs sexy feminine shoes.



Strappy sandals with clear vinyl underlays.

By LONA ASKINS, Staff Photographer



chintz and voile are a teen's spring things... breezy romantics, off to some place special with field-fresh pastel flowers strewn on minty green. 6 to 14 sizes. Polyester/cotton voile peplum top with ruffled trim, \$13 Swirly cotton chintz gored skirt ruffled at scalloped hem, \$16

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