

Fashion's language



Dazzling white for warm days



Calvin Klein designs the easy dress

FASHIONABLE, adjective. 1. stylish. 2. of, or used by people who follow fashion. This season follow it to a big skirt and top, a delicate chemise, an apron silhouette or military colors.

Follow it to *chic* (sheek), a smart elegance or manner of style. In 1975 displayed by matching espadrilles to the big skirt, pairing soft curly hair with floaty dresses, chin tying or head wrapping scarves for various moods. Ultimately following fashions that fit your own life-style.

DEFINITIONS. The dictionary makes a living from them but in any other season chemise (sha-meez), a woman's loose, shirtlike undergarment of big, or considerable size or magnitude, would be out of context in the fashion world.

This season, fashion statements are loosely interpreted and Webster's needs some rewriting to give old words more relevant meaning.

As the fashion vocabulary expands, details pop up in numbers. They play an important part in structuring statements. Diagramming a look into parts and then putting it back together helps understand what everyone's talking about.

The little details for spring, aside from obie wraps, espadrilles and silk flowers, include a flourish of tucks on skirts, shirts, jackets and coat; gathers that fall from shoulder yokes, tiers or waistlines; bows at the neck, border prints and lace edges for evening.

They're all a part of the different total looks presented twice each year when American designers bare their souls to the public. Some of what they do catches on, witness the chemise. Others flop, perhaps not in style but in a particular look.

For example, you may never accept climbing into wrinkled army fatigues, but a crisp, casual military look may be right up your alley.

Or Calvin Klein's method



Ralph Lauren matches big skirts and tops

of head wrapping scarves was exciting on the New York runway, but few women in Oakland County will bother with meticulously wrapping scarves across foreheads and under chins.

But the soul baring, reflected in designs, emphasizes the difference between fashion and fashionable. Designers create fashion. You become fashionable by choice. And generally that choice is different than what is first seen.

The transition from the New York runway to the streets isn't all that dramatic, and nowadays women

are adapting rather than mimicing by choosing clothes that look good and serve a purpose.

This season a multitude of designs can satisfy.

Big tops, skirts and the chemise are perhaps the biggest subjects of spring. But they are only the basis for whole sentences or even paragraphs of looks.

The chemise mirrors a whole attitude of beauty and femininity. It is gorgeously soft, long, short, formal or casual, bowed, puffed, sometimes fitted, most times free.

Its simplicity is practical (See Language, page 30)