

Realities fall short of forecasts

By CHRISTINE WALDEN

After all that raz-ma-taz on how to look great for summer, of big dresses matched with straw hats, skirts teamed with clingy tops, sun dresses, apron-tied or otherwise, espadrilles, straw bags, scarves and what-all-else, it seems that what's been forecast and available isn't what's being worn.

Rather, on any given day and on any Oakland County street from Birmingham to Somerset Mall, women are still putting on polyester by the bootload and sandals that not only look uncomfortable but are clunky; carrying tiny little purses that can't hold much and in general wearing clothes that are distressingly dull.

Snobbish?
Perhaps, but in a season when fashion and the clothes that go with it are good looking and easy (what could be easier than slipping into a dress?), few women have opted for a new way to look.

It could be the weather. Keeping cool is the primary aspect of summer dressing. However, keeping cool does not necessitate looking tacky and wearing shorts that are too tight or tops that reveal undergarments. Recently, one woman stood out among the throng of women in sleeveless knit tops and pants when she donned a cap-sleeved, bare-back sundress. So did another woman in her cotton short-sleeve t-shirt and duck pants.

How you dress also depends on what you've got planned for a particular day. After all, who needs to look her best for a day of car-pooling kids, grocery shopping and gardening. But

Tongue in chic

some women looked like they dressed in the dark and completely forgot that atop their heads was hair.

Finally, it could be that women don't like most clothes available, which is all right. Today women are sophisticated, intelligent and educated. Clothing can reflect that and wearing any of the cute, pretty or sweet items to a woman's lib meeting somehow seems out of sync. Still, neatly tailored pantsuits, shirtwaist dresses or skirts and tops fit just about anyone's lifestyle and look fashionable as well.

IT IS ALL, speculation, of course. There's really no definitive way of telling why one woman looks good and another bad, except in a technical sense, as with proportions and color combinations. Even if that were possible the revelations certainly wouldn't be important enough to change the state of world affairs.

What fashion simply boils down to is pleasing yourself and having fun.

One woman seen in downtown Birmingham didn't look terrific but obviously had a good time getting dressed. Her waist-tied shirt, washer-

woman scarf and blue jeans were the order of her day, and she evidently let her imagination work for her.

Other women did look chic and fashionable. One woman matched a ka-haki bias-cut skirt with a print top, added a pair of espadrilles and a good-sized straw bag.

Another woman also wore khaki, her skirt wrapped, worn with a brown tank top and a bit of jewelry.

Several women held their own in pantsuits. One in black with good buttons, black espadrilles, canvas bag and simple shirt. Another's was belted in light blue cotton. She accessorized it with navy blue espadrilles, a head-wrapped scarf, oversize sunglasses and a canvas bag.

The dress category looked good too, but only one big dress was seen, worn by a younger woman who freshened its look by putting it over pants.

Other dresses were of the body hugging variety. One woman wore a jersey shirtdress, added simple gold jewelry, a canvas bag and easy, non-clunky sandals. Another kept her en-

semble extremely simple with a jersey two-piece striped dress and earrings.

BLUE JEANS were still the most familiar sight, but only a few people took the time to make them look better than usual. One woman paired hers with a skinny top a silver-thin silver chain and a large, pouchy leather bag.

Several things can be learned from watching fashion in the streets. One is seeing the same errors and avoiding them. Most mistakes were made at the feet. The women who looked good usually had on shoes that complemented what they wore. For example, a light jersey dress shouldn't be worn with a dark, bulky shoe. A bone or tan colored sandal is better. Likewise, all proportions must be watched to avoid one thing overpowering another.

People watching also shows what's been accepted. Big straw and leather bags were frequent. Sunglasses have become an important fashion accessory. Jewelry is sparse and sparkling. And whether women stick to polyester or go to the naturals, they aren't afraid to wear scarves. Also, the dress, though making a comeback, has a long way to go before it makes pants obsolete.

So another season passes and with it all the talk about looking great and how will have to be forgotten or at least shelved until fall, when it will be time to start all over again.



Looking good is easy in a simple shirtdress accessorized with minimal jewelry and canvas bag



The pantsuit looks good with a wrapped head: espadrilles and sunglasses. (Staff photos by Douglas Bauman)

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Fashion Calendar

July 23-24—Informal modeling of the James Daugherty collection at Claire Pearone, Somerset Mall, Troy.

July 23-24—Informal modeling of the Cesar de la Renta collection at Saks Fifth Avenue, Somerset Mall, Troy.

July 25—Informal modeling of the Orsini collection at Saks Fifth Avenue, Somerset Mall, Troy.

July 25-26—Informal modeling of the Don Ayres for Garnet collection at Saks Fifth Avenue, Somerset Mall, Troy.

July 30-31—Personal appearance by Adolfo with his fall collection at Saks Fifth Avenue, Somerset Mall, Troy.

Aug. 1-2—Informal modeling of fall clothes at Saks Fifth Avenue, Somerset Mall, Troy.

Aug. 6-7—Informal modeling of the Pierre D'Alby collection at Claire Pearone, Somerset Mall, Troy.

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