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JEAN MUIR



Winner of the 1970 "Designer of the Year" award, Jean Muir started her professional career in London as a sketcher at "Liberty". From there, she moved to Jaeger, where she stayed for seven years. "It was really excellent training, she told me, I was supposed to design every type of garment, even including sweaters."

After operating a company called "Jane & Jane" for a short time, Jean Muir started her own company 5 years ago. Her address is now 22 Bruton Street, W.1. In her showroom, I admired her trophies which include the "Ambassador Award for Achievement", the "Harper's Bazaar Award 1965" and two American design awards, all bestowed on Jean Muir for her "quality of design".

And this is precisely her aim. The collection of 60 to 70 models, mostly late day and evening or party dresses, is not designed for mass production. She employs a staff of 30 on the premises plus a number of out-workers. Her production shows her predilection for the "look" of indoor as opposed to outdoor clothes. The resulting effect is greatly prized by the better trade houses, like Henri Bendel of New York and Fortnum and Mason, of London, who regularly buy her entire collection.

For spring 1971, Jean Muir has prepared a truly beautiful collection of soft and womanly models: ankle-length skirts in slinky silk jersey, carefully smocked for shaping at yoke and sleeves along with very eye-catching crêpe de Chine models, screen-printed specially for her in hold and very beautiful designs. Teamed with crêpe de Chine or silk shirts, her suede tunics are decorated with small punched holes forming delightful patterns. For the first time, one of the less expensive Swiss fabrics—a light, seersucker-type Tutorette—caught her eye. She chose Mettler's "Ondina" and used it for an entire separate collection called "Jean Muir's 1970's" with an exciting new look. Tutorette has always been popular with blouse and men's shirt manufacturers because of its lightness, softness, easy-care properties and excellent range of colours. It remains a great favourite for shirtwaister dresses in plain colours as well as printed. Jean Muir has used Tutorette in a completely different way. She combined two or three contrasting colours for one dress and for the smocked sleeves and yoke of another. She has used three different colours to emphasize the yoke and cuffs, combined two Tutorette colours for pleated ankle-length skirts, shirred the waist of yet another model and decorated the skirt and billowing sleeves of the blouse of a black two-piece with narrow silk bands in three different colours. It all sums up to the sophisticated country look of this charming Swiss-fabric collection.

When asked her opinion on present fashion, Jean Muir quickly replied "The word 'fashion' should be removed from the dictionary. There is no such thing today. There is a 'way to look' and a definite feeling for what looks right for now. Different clothes mean 'another way to look'."

Jean Muir is very interested in the training of future designers. Last year was the first of her three years as Assessor at Kingston Polytechnic for the students' National Diploma. This is the fashion school which has won so many competitions during the last years, including, on three occasions, the St-Gall International Young Fashion Design Contest. Miss Muir also pays frequent visits to the Liverpool College of Art and occasionally delivers a lecture to the students on her firmest belief, "Quality of Design", the vital ingredient which has made her one of Britain's foremost designers of today.

Greta Sitek



◀◀ Pretty peasant-style dress in cotton
Ondina by
METTLER & CO. LTD., ST-GALL

▼ Swirling blouse and skirt in cotton
Ondina by
METTLER & CO. LTD., ST-GALL

