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## LOS ANGELES LETTER

In Hollywood the biggest furor rages over the new cinema developments... 3-D, Cinemascope, Cinerama. Where Don Loper is concerned, however, there is no controversy. He is definitely a 3-D personality, full, life-size and overflowing with a good grasp of reality.

Loper's famous 3 D's are dancing, design and decorating... for in that order he has obtained eminence in all three fields in a measure seldom if ever attained by any other personality on the American scene.

Loper began his career early. A continental education

### DON LOPER, LOS ANGELES

Party dress in embroidered organdy  
by *Forster Willi & Co., St-Gall.*



took him out of the country at the age of nine and soon after, as a dancer, he began the vigorous, glamourous pace he has maintained ever since. He first attained celebrity status as one of the most fascinating ballroom dancers in the world, sky-rocketing to success at New

York's famous Copacabana Club where he was known as an original dance stylist as well as an unique creator of costumes. Many of his costume innovations have now come into such general use in the theatre that it has been forgotten that these things were first introduced to the

American stage by Don Loper. I remember very well the black toe-to-hip fish net hose that Loper introduced to the *Copa* shows and almost every nightclub or stage show still has some version of this Loper theatrical fashion. Among other Loper innovations is the petti-dress, fondly fashioned of the loveliest fabrics showing a broad expanse of underskirt... usually of the most elegant Swiss fabrics.

From an exciting life in the theatre, Loper moved naturally to stage design, then to individual designing for stage personalities and then to a private design studio of his own. His list of clients reads like a „Who's Who“ of the American theatre and ranges all the way from Katherine Cornell, the great lady of the American stage, to Lana Turner, the cinema queen whose \$ 41,000 trousseau, executed by Don Loper, of course, made even Hollywood roll its eyes in envy.

Though carrying on the tradition of his couturier collection, Mr. Loper made a concession to the times when he went into the wholesale dress manufacturing business himself and also licensed three large wholesale manufacturers to turn out collections „designed by Don Loper.“ In his own wholesale dress line, Mr. Loper has maintained an unusually high standard of design and workmanship so that his clothes may be sold only to the finest shops in the country.

There are clear and visible reasons why „one touch of Loper“ has become a distinguishing fashion mark. But there is also, behind it all, a clear kind of thinking: Loper believes that women should dress to look pretty and particularly pretty for the men (any age) in her life. He feels that fashion is personal and should be timeless and not controlled by seasonal fads. He feels that clothes should move with the wearer, never overpower her, always compliment her. Thus he uses elegant fabrics, laces and embroideries in a most skillfull and

usually understated manner unless he is planning a genuine „tour de force“ for a particular personality.

When a woman buys a Loper creation she makes an investment in good looks and good breeding as well as adding to a completely harmonious wardrobe. Loper's clothes are meant to be collected and integrated with past and future Loper creations so that a woman may be what she is more beautifully, more thoroughly, more comfortably than she ever dreamed of being before.

In another field, three of the largest and loveliest hotels in Los Angeles, the Ambassador, the Beverly Wiltshire and the Beverly Hills, display his giant-sized talents as an interior decorator. In decorating, Loper always employs a characteristic style—that-is-not-a-style, taking the best from all periods and ending up with results that are chic, plush, elegant, impressive without being overwhelming or sadly antique.

Loper spends most of his time and talents, however, in the fashion field. Here he reigns like some benign and puckish monarch over his large following of faithful customers. His great sense of comedy leads him to reserve his most caustic wit for his more important customers, but his general good humor he gives of freely to everyone. Since a large part of his clientele is theatrical and on constant display, Loper clothes must have a special distinguishing spirit that keeps them out of the realm of tinselled stage creations. He has done this by extremely skillful designing, by the use of the finest fabrics obtainable and by having a clear fashion philosophy.

As a true artist he says, „I do not think of the dress I am creating, but of its wearer. I have failed if a person notices the gown and then later becomes aware that an old friend is inside.“

*Helen F. Miller*

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1 DON LOPER, LOS ANGELES

Black dress coat with a puf bow made in silk taffeta by Schwarzenbach Huber Co., New York, fabric manufactured by Robt. Schwarzenbach & Co., Thalwil.

2 DON LOPER, LOS ANGELES

Sequin sewn lace mounted on taffeta and taffeta lined overskirt. Taffeta by Schwarzenbach Huber Co., New York. Fabric manufactured by Robt. Schwarzenbach & Co., Thalwil.

Photo John Engstead.