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NEW LOOK FOR A RETRO FASHION

The fashionable breakthrough of the narrow line — often tapered — has taken hold everywhere with astonishing speed and unanimity. The fashion scene has changed completely within the space of a year; barely twelve months ago most couturiers were still playing with yards and yards of fabrics which tended more to conceal than to reveal. Now, the emphasis is on the slender line, with marked wide shoulders, slim waists and highlighted hips. Women's natural curves are once again coming into their own; even legs are reappearing, given a longer look in some cases by perilously high slender heels on pumps and sling-backs. Hems are higher but still cover the knee.

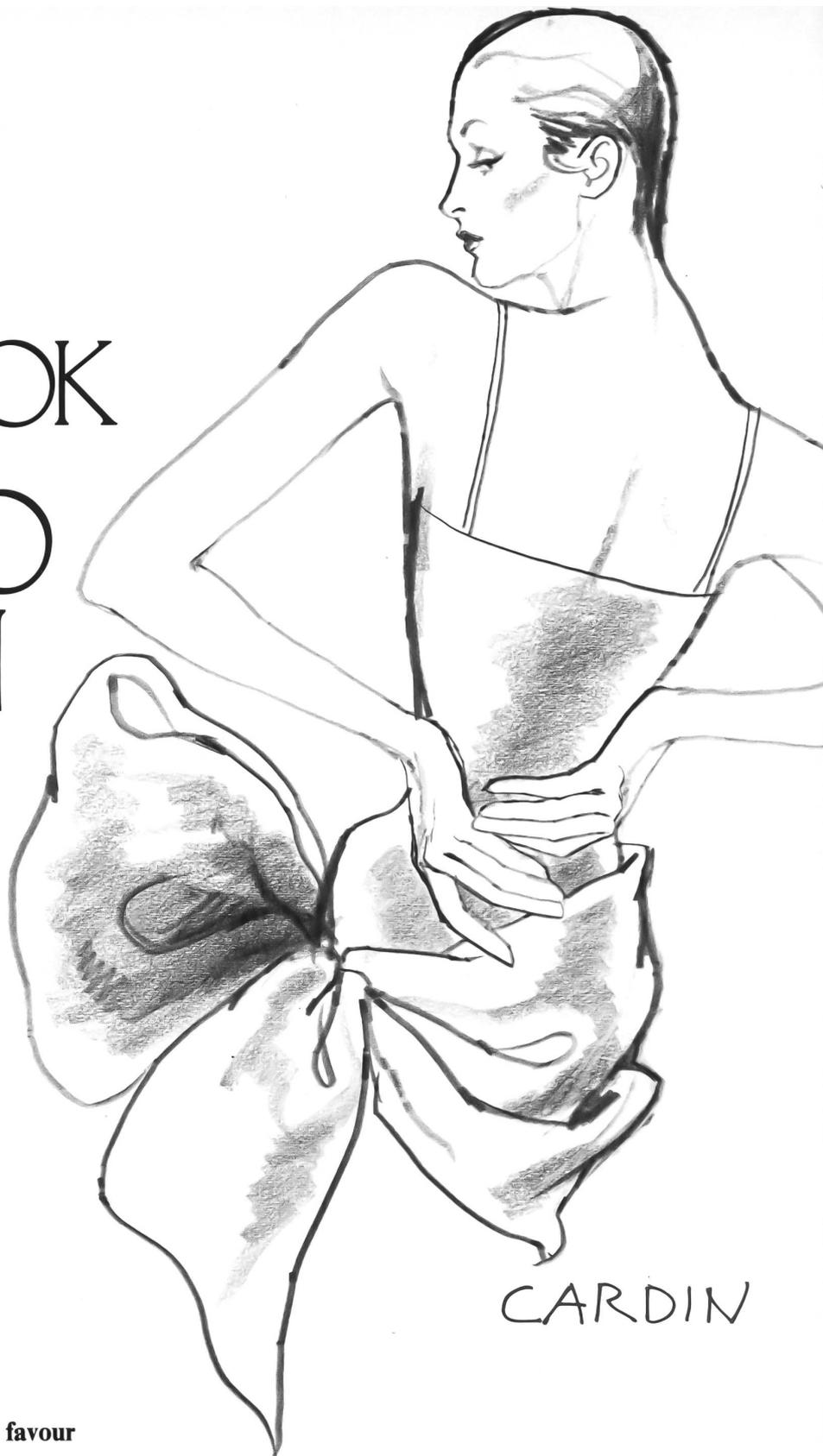
Everywhere the talk is of a "retro" fashion which has taken its inspiration from the 50's or the pre-war years. In every collection certain parallels can be drawn to those periods, but the trend is only indicated, and each couturier interprets it in his own way. The overall effect of the new models is fashionable, modern, elegant, feminine and functional, aimed above all at meeting the needs of the active woman of today, on the threshold of the 80's. In spite of the slender line, there is no sign of any restriction of body movement. Perhaps couturiers have remembered the words of Coco Chanel, who is supposed to have said: "A dress that is not comfortable is a complete failure; real elegance never restricts movement."

Suits back in favour

Great emphasis is placed on suits — trouser suits as well. Their tailored jackets vary in length from short to hip length. Flat felled seams are everywhere. Belts of various widths emphasize the narrower waist at its natural place. Shoulders are mostly — but not everywhere — wide and emphasized with gathers and padding. Long

lapels, shawl collars or V-shaped cardigan necklines and buttons placed low are features setting off tops. White piqué trimmings for collars and cuffs on black or navy blue tailored suits have a youthful, neat effect. Fine braiding is used to decorate hems. Rounded or flared basques are everywhere and give an attractive new look

to jackets. Narrower skirts emphasize the hips and are often in contrasting colours to the jackets. Wrap-over effects, gathers and pleats as well as low set flares, add the necessary fullness for walking, as do seductive slits. Suits are now worn without a blouse, mostly with a strapless bodice or silk T-shirt.



CARDIN

Dresses with emphasis at the waist or hips

For the day, shirtwaist dresses with long lapels trimmed with white are just as fashionable as slender sheaths with heart-shaped necklines and V-necks, sometimes plunging right down to the waist, sometimes more modest with discreet insertions. Draped funnel-shaped pockets draw attention to

generous hips just as the pert, rounded basques of the two-piece dresses. Gathers, drapes, overlaps, asymmetric hemlines, flounced, pleated and flared hems, and rounded slits are some of the many details giving new interest to dresses. Leg-of-mutton, kimono and raglan sleeves, off-the-shoulder

versions, halter necks and narrow straps are other decorative features used to set off day dresses, not to mention sailor collars, pagoda sleeves and piping. With a matching jacket, a dress is quickly converted into an outfit for stepping out.

The day trend continues into evening

The many short dinner dresses in silk or embroidery make it difficult to draw the line between day and evening wear. The main themes are repeated — though more elaborately — to include glamorous ballgowns draped asymmetrically over one shoulder. Wrap-around models with gathers at the side at waist level, balloon-type skirts with close-fitting bodices — the choice is tremendous. Hips lavishly draped with material create a tapered look, full skirts contrast with narrow, off-the-shoulder tops. Jump suits with sequins, dandy-suits with strass trimming, and even satin pyjamas, worn with loose jackets in embroidered tulle focus even greater attention on the specialities of the Swiss textile industry.

Materials and colours in the new fashion

Just how much Swiss silks and embroideries are appreciated by Haute Couture is shown season after season by the many models created from Swiss specialities. In the most recent collections too, it is gratifying to see that Swiss creations are well represented. Dots are a much varied theme for prints as well as for embroidery. A new feature is dots combined with stripes. Floral patterns come in large repeats and in mini-designs with a mock plain look. One- and two-toned patterns in classical combinations of colours and refined designs are just as popular as panels with single blooms on a screened ground. The grounds for prints are crêpe de Chine, figured crêpe de Chine, Moroccan crêpe and mousseline in pure silk as well as the plain qualities, gazar, all kinds of crêpe, satin, mousseline, chiffon and organza. Embroideries with shiny shimmering effects, attractive embroidery edgings, rich open-work as well as hand-cut richly embroidered hems round off the scene. The palette of colours includes light, luminous tones together with pastel and watercolour shades. Clear contrasts, classical combinations and beautifully matching colour compositions are the main trends.

GIVENCHY

The spring/summer 79
collections

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