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LUTZ TEUTLOFF



Lutz Teutloff

Secrets of success

You may meet him almost anywhere between Berlin, seat of the Teutloff Modelle GmbH, and Bielefeld, headquarters of the Teutloff Verwaltungs GmbH + Co. Vertriebs KG. Just take the long way round and check out such intermediate points as Hong Kong, Osaka, New York, Milan or Zurich. Gathering creative ideas at the world's market places, however, is only one of Lutz Teutloff's secrets of success. There are also his 43 contract production plants in Europe and the Far East, closely supervised by his own technicians. There are his shops-in-the-shop, which serve as test labs for new fashion trends and provide daily feedbacks from the selling front. There are his three collections per season, minutely planned and accurately timed, keeping up a flow of fashion-right, time-right merchandise to Europe's most prestigious fashion stores. There is his talented creative team headed by chief stylist Hannelore Moeck, his flexibility, his capacity for hard work and – last but not least – his sympathetic understanding of the women he dresses.

Setting up shop

Lutz Teutloff's career started in the early sixties with the well-known Berlin coat manufacturer Bräuning. Always an astute interpreter of time-signals, he soon recognised the emerging fashion needs of Germany's post-war generation and created "Teen 17", a budget-price, young fashion collection, which became an immediate success with department stores and fashion houses throughout the country. In 1969 he set up his own business in Berlin, starting with 12 employees and an annual turnover of DM 6 million. In 1976 followed the foundation of the Teutloff Verwaltungs GmbH + Co. Vertriebs KG in the old linen town Bielefeld on the legendary Teutoburg Forest, which had established itself as a new and quickly expanding center of the German clothing industry. Today, Lutz Teutloff's enterprises carry 81 employees on their payroll and reach an annual turnover of DM 36 million.

Turning-point

The year 1977 saw some fundamental changes. Once again the young fashion-maker had read the signs of the time. He abandoned the now highly competitive, tight-profit young fashion market to produce henceforth "a better style, exclusive to the specialized fashion trade". Teutloff's new look is basically sporty, with just the right fashion touch – a versatile lifestyle range of sophisticated mix-and-match day-wear and luxurious avant-garde partywear. Created for today's active woman of "no age", his designs represent excellent value for money, combining that understated chic – particular to the best names in international fashion – with the excellency of German workmanship and the finest quality in fabrics.

△ Pure cotton poplin from Hausamann + Moos AG, Weisslingen. Model Lutz Teutloff – Winter 82/83.

▷△ Fine cheesecloth in pure cotton with St. Gall embroidery from J.G. Nef-Nelo AG, Herisau. Model Lutz Teutloff – Summer 82.

▷ Moiré taffeta with velvet applications from Jakob Schlaepfer + Co. AG, St. Gall. Model Lutz Teutloff – Winter 82/83.

Timely fabrics

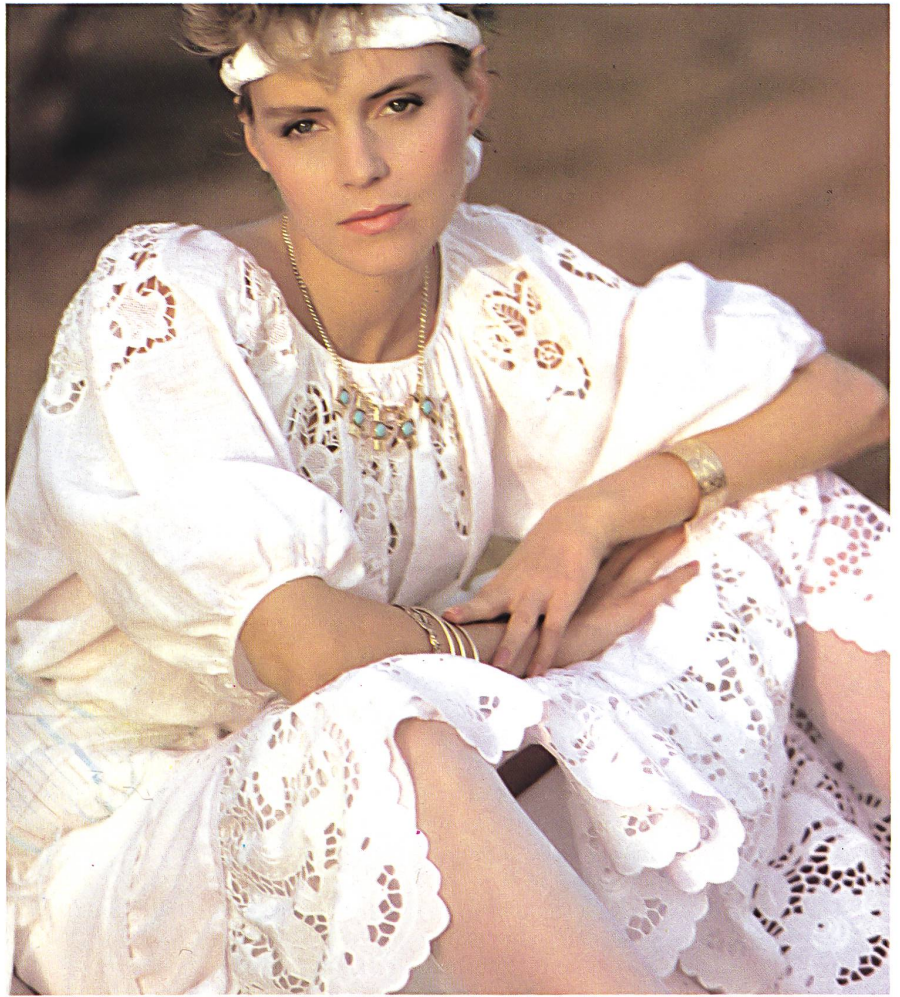
"Creativity must draw freely from lavish sources", thus says a garment manufacturer who spends a small fortune each season on fabric sample lengths. However, an annual production of 300,000 garments, absorbing almost a million meters of material, and a steadily increasing demand from export markets justify what Lutz Teutloff terms "the only luxury we permit ourselves". Not a luxury but a necessity is his insistence on punctual deliveries and sample conformity. On this subject the softly-spoken man from Berlin becomes quite adamant. Understandably so, for as he emphasizes: –

"The actual selling time at retail level for the three ranges we produce each season is quite short. Our decentralized production has to be contracted according to a precisely worked-out masterplan. Two or three days of delay from the weaver causes a six to eight weeks' delay in production. By then, the topicality of that particular line has passed, the season has slipped by."

Among the 40 weavers who meet his high demands on quality, innovation and punctuality are such well-known Swiss fabric houses as Abraham, Fischbacher, Forster Willi, Hausammann + Moos, J.G. Nef-Nelo, Schlaepfer and Wetter. They supply 10% to 15% of Teutloff's annual fabric requirements, in particular fine Swiss cottons and novelty embroideries, which he considers "the best in the world".

A keyhole glimpse at Summer 83

Working on his Summer 83 lines, Lutz Teutloff feels that the silhouette will turn towards a more structured style, that the shorter length has yet to make its full impact, that there will be a renaissance of the more fanciful dress. At his design atelier there are some sheer cottons with see-through effects, some precious pure silk organzas, some "never-mind-the-wrinkle" linens reflecting the spirit of our time; all ready to be styled into those eminently wearable Teutloff fashion designs that smart women prefer and can never have enough of. B. Feisst



MEETING SWISS FABRIC FRIENDS

