

Switzerland at the Fall Fashion Fair, New York City

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SWITZERLAND AT THE FALL FASHION FAIR, NEW YORK CITY

Swiss ready-to-wear fashions have been an attention-gaining feature of the new and flourishing European Fashion Fairs in New York City. Four Swiss fashion houses had displays in the spring show, which previewed fall and winter designs.

Originating in 1973, the Fairs are sponsored by Cavin and Tubiana of New York and Dusseldorf and over sixty European and Israeli ready-to-wear manufacturers participated in the most recent event at New York's Statler Hilton Hotel.

What with the dollar pinch, rising prices, and the energy crisis there has been a loss of American interest in European haute couture except among the very rich. But the ready-to-wear manufacturers offer original styles in quality fabrics at prices compatible with today's life styles. In addition to sportswear, dresses, slacks, and outerwear, accessories and shoes are also included, all presenting a broad spectrum of European quality.

Perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of the Fairs is the quality of European, and notably Swiss and German, synthetics. In my view, the United States are very much behind Europe in developing man-made fabrics which hold their shape, are soil-resistant, easily washable and pleasant to the touch. Many of the domestic acrylics, for example, hold stains and irritate sensitive skins. Further, the domestic ready-to-wear market is dominated by mass-production of the very worst sort characterized by poor design, shoddy materials and workmanship along with indifferent tailoring and stitching.

There were many "oohs" and "ahs" at the Fashion Show that opened the last Fair as the models displayed styles for all moods and times of day. And, at the latest showing, the more than 2,000 buyers from all over the U.S. and Canada demonstrated their interest by vastly increasing their orders.

"Our orders about doubled from the last time", said J. Fessel of Lion d'Or AG in Zurich. "This time we sold to some of the larger stores such as Bloomingdales and Flatz-Latham, and we are hopeful that the upward swing will continue."

Specializing in fashions for the young at heart, Lion d'Or updates nostalgia into practical up-to-the-moment coordinates such as blouses and skirts in mousseline in muted shades of green and beige. Soft acetate viscose in pale, flattering shades was made up into suits with wide, pointed collars and nipped-in waists.

The all-Fall look was seen in sporty coats of nubby tweeds, herringbone, velour-mohair mixtures and wide-wale corduroys—some belted and some with the «swagger» look of the Thirties. Coordinated slacks or skirts in Trevira® mix or acetate and wool combinations, featuring side stitching for good shaping, completed a stunning look for the cooler weather.

Croydor, also of Zurich, was showing for the first time, but representative Alex Stöckli was

Model: Lion d'Or AG, Zürich

Model: Kurt Stolz, Herrliberg

Model: Croydor AG, Zürich

Model: Spielmann & Co., Zürich



pleased with orders from B. Altmans, Wannamaker in Washington, and Marshall Field in Chicago. Features of the Croydor display were top-coats and skirts in loden cloth, wool, and wool-faced polyester poplin, some with raglan sleeves and epaulettes and sporting a trenchcoat look.

Mr. Stöckli was particularly proud of the "Cirette" stormcoats in which the fabric was quilted for warmth. For warmer days there were belted, unlined jackets, and cotton-polyblend poplin light-weight trenchcoats were shown in a delicious palette of 15 colors.

Another Croydor eye-stopper was the line of two-tone ski jackets with ruched collar and sleeves. The skiers will flash like tropical birds over the slopes with orange-black, yellow-brown, and other vibrant combinations. Also for skiing was a novel two-piece with overall pants and Eisenhower jacket of cotton with a quilted lining. A matching full skirt with the same denim look teams up with the jacket for après-ski.

Kurt Stolz, Herrliberg, showed only shirts and blouses on this visit to the Fair, but with what range! Use of Terylene® and Qiana® made these models not only stylish but easy-care and practical. They were soft and silky for after-five, and tailored for more casual but decidedly elegant wear.

Last, but certainly not least, we come to Geny Spielmann, who is the undoubted master in fusing fabrics and design into adventures in color. Many of his fabrics are made to order and incorporate the famous "G" symbol. Mr. Spielmann reported wide sales of his stunning line to Altman, Saks of Fifth Avenue, Marshall Field and to many boutiques.

His colors positively sing: cyclamen, viola, buttercup yellow, orange-orange, and fire-house red, all teamed up with cool white, warm brown, or stark black. Designs included stags' heads, elephants, pipes, automobiles, and—my personal favorite—posthorns in black with a touch of white on a beautiful natural ground.

These fabrics were made up in different weight fabrics into blouses, pants, and lined skirts, either short or long.

There were pyjama suits with the softest of lines, or patterned silk blouses teamed with slash-sided skirts, lined for quality. A most stunning ski outfit was shown in paper white, teamed with a white or black sweater or a symbol-design sweater, to be worn with sleek black pants. Mr. Spielmann went on to shows in Copenhagen, Munich, Paris, and Dusseldorf before returning to Munich.

Swiss fabrics and fashion know-how were certainly well apparent at the Fair and Swiss manufacturers should continue to play an expanding and lucrative role in future Fairs.

Betty D. Wamsley