

Fashions in New York

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1. The 1947 American Silhouette: a printed silk model by Maurice Reutner.



1947 New York fashions are more feminine and seductive than ever, a rather surprising trend when one considers that, after the first World War, all women wanted to be «masculine», flat-chested, with Eton crops and mannish footwear. In 1920, it would seem, American women were expressing their spirit of independence by exercising their right to vote, casting off that much despised article, the «corset», and by generally competing with their menfolk in all types of occupations.

In 1947, women are no longer trying to be the rivals but the co-workers of men. They worked side by side with men during the war, in factories, offices, hospitals and the services. They donned uniform pluckily and as coquettishly as possible. But how monotonous is khaki when worn by both sexes! And now, the W.A.C.'s, the W.A.V.E.S.'s and the V.A.D.'s quite naturally tend to affirm their difference rather than to imitate the opposite sex, to seek to charm instead of competing. «To please» is woman's present password.

The 1947 American woman is keeping her characteristically slim and stream-lined figure, but fashions do allow her to show some feminine curves and graces, provided she has preserved a «small» waist. Accentuating this feminine silhouette, hips are stressed by draped effects, flounced skirts, wide tunics, graceful sun-ray pleats. Shoulders are less broad and square and tend to assume a Victorian droop under «berthas» and capes now revived, or when arms are clad in wide «parachute» sleeves; waists look «waspish» in slim, moulding bodices.

It is, of course, in evening styles — long ball and dinner gowns — that the fancy of designers is most free to express these new trends. And, in this, the incomparable quality of the silks, fine rayon lawns, organdies, laces and embroideries imported from Switzerland, is an invaluable asset for American fashion houses. (Fig. 2). Nor should it be forgotten that, if fashions are out for *effect*, the American woman, so long deprived of luxury articles — is out for *quality*. American wholesalers and retailers are all saying that their clients have become quality conscious and that they are no longer



2. Evening gown. An original creation by Boué Sœurs. «Glamorous Evening»: gold lace and brown tulle bodice over brown taffetas with draped and knotted bustle effect at the back.



3. Mc Cutcheon's model in dotted Swiss.

satisfied to buy any old fabric provided it is in a pretty shade. The perfection of the material and of the processes which go into its manufacture — weaving, finishing, dyeing — is a fundamental quality which confers real value to a material and inimitable chic to a gown. And this perfection is precisely what Swiss manufacturers can give to women of taste, to those who appreciate true elegance.

New York's favourite speciality — the little tailored frock which has grown out of the shirt blouse — has lost none of its popularity and remains an essential element of the American apparel industry of all classes. Today, however, the tailored dress is not a uniform; every model has a characteristically individual note — either an original trimming, an embroidered motif, a lace insertion, a special colourful or sombre shade of the material, a gaily unexpected touch of delicate lingerie or à-jour work (Fig. 3).

Cotton still predominates for these little tailored or lingerie frocks: the famous dotted Swiss, piqués, embroidered or sheer rayon lawns, geometrical silk prints have at last returned to the market. The possibility of importing fine cotton, rayon and silk fabrics from Switzerland fortunately coincides with the very feminine trend of American fashions. Embroideries, laces, dainty accessories, silks of incomparable handle, printed scarves — all these Swiss-made products which have made the reputation of St. Gall, Zurich and Appenzell — together with Basle ribbons, Wohlen strawbraids, have once again made their appearance in the fashion houses and finest window displays of New York.

Of course, to give a complete picture of 1947 American fashions, one must not forget to mention Wohlen in Aargau (Fig. 4). This Swiss centre manufactures millinery straws and strawbraids and is a large supplier of milliners in New York and other centres throughout the American Continents. And this year, every woman who likes to look smart and well-groomed will once again wear — a Hat — that much neglected article of apparel — for The Hat has returned to its former position as an indispensable accessory of the more elaborate and complicated styles which are to come to us from New York and Hollywood, from Chicago and New Orleans, from Miami and Palm Springs.

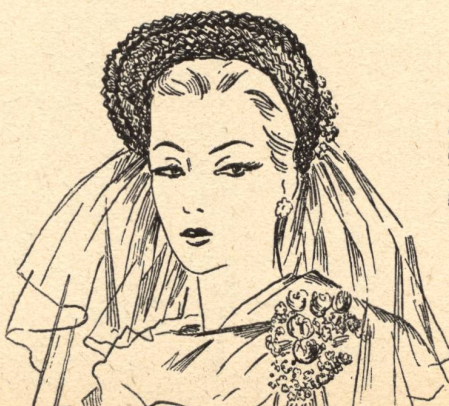
Thérèse de Chambrier.



3. Mc Cutcheon's model in Swiss, imported rayon lawn.



4. Swiss straw millinery model by K. G. Hat Mfg. Co.



4. A G. Howard Hodge creation: in shiny black Swiss straw, with Malines lace trimming and forget-me-not and rosebud nosegay.