

# Letter from Los Angeles

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## LETTER FROM LOS ANGELES

SEEING WELL... SELLING EASY!

They say that seeing is believing. In the case of the J. W. Robinson department store operation, seeing is selling. To make this true, over \$ 6,000,000.— worth of brains and brawn were expended to evolve one of the country's most glamorous show cases for quality merchandise. And you cannot miss the Swiss as an important part of the showing, for Swiss products are present on every floor and in every merchandising division.

To present only the finest of merchandise in the most exciting and easiest-to-sell manner, Raymond Loewy, one of the greatest industrial designers, and Periera and Luckman, a top architectural firm, combined to design a complete, small sized department store. It is Robinson's

Beverly Hills, a companion store to Robinson's Los Angeles and Robinson's Palm Springs. The newest store is built on the edge of Beverly Hills, one of the world's most exclusive communities, composed solely of a conglomeration of mansions, swimming pools and exotic greenery running over into Los Angeles from which it is separated only by a fine line on a map. To cater to its solidly successful clientele, Robinson's Beverly Hills is appointed in a most luxurious manner, carpeted in subtle tones, scientifically lighted, and carefully decorated to give a feeling of contemporary elegance.

To maintain its leadership in bringing the unusual to its customers, Robinson's instituted their annual Foreign



Robinson's Beverly



Fair. This occurs in October and all merchandise is stocked to peak point for the event, which brings to an interested public the treasures which Robinson's buyers shop for all over the world. The showing is premiered by an evening invitational opening and the spirit of fiesta prevails. The Robinson's Beverly Hills parking lot, which has facilities for 1,100 cars, is always filled to capacity. Guests move with anticipation through the large open selling areas as well as through the specialized arcades.

The entire atmosphere is one of dignity and beauty reminiscent of art openings in an elegant manner. And the Swiss displays of fashions, fabrics, watches, trimmings are outstanding in this assemblage. An important part of this showing is the display of the high fashion designs of Adrian, Howard Greer and Athena, all importers and constant users of Swiss fabrics and trimmings.

Added to this concentrated October showing is the constant presence of Swiss merchandise in all parts of the





#### Athena

A day suit of grey Swiss tweed.

Photo John Lee

store at all times of the year. For example, in the present collection of Athena suits there are Swiss cottons, Swiss tweeds and Swiss mouchete, a rayon and cotton weave. One of this season's most beautiful costumes is a suit of navy Swiss eyelet batiste over navy crepe. Most of Athena's fabrics are imported by K. Meyer of Mills Valley, California, George Tushak of Los Angeles and Royal Woolens, New York.

Another designer now on display and featuring a quantity of Swiss fabrics and trims is Howard Greer. One of the frocks in his current collection is yellow linen trimmed with white Swiss embroidered organdy. Another gown is fashioned of black crepe with a taffeta bodice over white Swiss embroidery. These fabrics and trimmings were imported from the Forster-Willi Company.

In the men's department lies another gold mine of Swiss imports: nationally advertised Hathaway shirts. Here fine broadcloth or lightweight two-fold Swiss voiles made from long-fibered Egyptian cottons cater to the discriminating shoppers who seek and expect such merchandise in Robinson's stores. Swiss fabrics are responsible for much of the beauty and growing popularity of Hathaway shirts.

Of course the yardage departments bring the customer into closest contact with Swiss mills. Mr. Ben Gibbon, dean of yardage buyers, estimates at least a \$ 15,000.—volume of business yearly from Swiss materials and trimmings. One of the most popular this year is a honan cotton in a wide range of woven-in patterns and designs, all yarn dyed... from the famous Stoffel mills. Typical merchandise from the trimming section is an embroidered linen banding with cut-out motif in flower design; a flouncing of navy embroidered organdy appliqued with white organdy flowers; delicate white batiste banding made in the form of four-layer loose petalled flowers centered with myriad tiny French knots and an all over embroidered organdy yardage, 44 inches wide selling for \$ 7.95 a yard... all from Forster-Willi.

Naturally, success in selling such lovely merchandise comes from its presentation in stimulating surroundings. For let us face this fact: although behind each trend is an imaginative designer, that trend can die a quick death without proper presentation to the customers who can afford to buy it. Knowing this well, Robinson's has gone to tremendous lengths... spending time, money and energy to become outstanding specialists on exciting «point of sale» display. They have also continued to advertise a group of nationally famous California designers who are constant users of Swiss merchandise. Thus in creating a fine sales atmosphere for themselves, Robinson's have also been effective in promoting the goods of a great Swiss industry.

Helene Miller