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Autor: Miller, Helene
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Letter from Los Angeles

Winter Scene - California

For fashionable Los Angeles, the winter fashion season is inaugurated with the opening of the Opera. In a mammoth auditorium far on the south side of the city, literally thousands of Angelenos gather to be part of the sparkling crowd of the dashing, the daring and the bold who unite on this one occasion in a dazzling display of fashion. Later in the season, the magnificent gowns worn to the opera will delight smaller audiences at private parties or charity balls.

So many gowns were those we had seen earlier at the showings of Loper, Travilla, Novarese, Shieff, Kilpatrick, Paul Whitney, Helga and others. And so many were created in fascinating Swiss fabrics, of course. Here are some highlights of the shows: the « costume » look is everywhere. There were as many costume coats as furs at the Opera . . . a trend which Loper has been pushing, successfully for years. California designers have said a resounding « no » to any Paris decree in favor of any masculine or mannish details. A woman is a woman, is a woman . . . Capes are everywhere: long, short, for day or evening or over suits. But this has already been their third season on this scene. Many necklines are scarved high in front, loosely-tied in back or lowered. Skirts have controlled fullness, gowns are mostly slim with variations by such artists as Travilla who shows a full, triple-layered organza skirt topped by a navy midshipman's jacket. The long slim sleeves end in a flounce of organza and the jacket is collared in the same white organza. Travilla has other tricks, using hard weave and soft hand fabrics such as menswear grey wool with white organdy, a shirt look in many dress-up gowns and a suit look in several one-piece dresses. His colors are a gourmet's delight: wild mustard, Galliano yellow, artichoke green, lettuce, lime, lemon along with much use of navy and white and brass. Novarese is still one of the most highly buyable and wearable collections altho his prices are in the astral ranges. He uses a spectrum of fifteen colors and as many variations of line and cut. Since neither climate nor tradition hamper our California designers, most of them, like Novarese, continue to propagandize successfully our philosophy and way of life, which is: life can be so much gayer and more wonderful than most people are accustomed to living it. This is why Novarese uses the wide range of colors to suit the many moods of a busy woman's day: a whole range of yellows from palest to deepest and into subdued beiges; olive greens, cranberry, deep rose in a Forster Willi embroidered satin, hot pink, hot red. Many of his dresses have the young look of a high, fitted rib-cage. He uses chiffons, self-designed prints and lots of dots with emphasis on the long line. One extremely luxurious gown corroborating the long, line look was designed in a white Forster Willi fabric embroidered in black daisy shapes in bugle beads and then vertically



FORSTER WILLI & CO., SAINT-GALL
Broderie sur laine
Embroidered sheer wool
Modèle Michael Novarese, Los Angeles

striped by the same beading from neck to hem over the entire surface of the fabric. The audience response to this one was sensational !

Other notes : Maxwell Shieff uses dots, checks and other good things for versatility and wearability rather than a definite « look ». There were a number of high in front, low in back collars, a large armhole sleeve that was repeated a number of times, empire gathers on the back of a dress, white and black re-embroidered cut out organdy bound in black. Mike Anthony, a relative newcomer in



FORSTER WILLI
& CO., SAINT-GALL
Broderie
Embroidery
Modèle Michael
Novarese, Los Angeles

this fashion world, used luxurious fabrics such as Forster Willi embroideries on his magnificent costumes and ball gowns as well as more sedate silk tweeds for daytime wear. Sydney North, another new designer in this area, has made extensive use of Weisbrod-Zurrer's « Lascara » in a number of costumes. We note a coat dress with large sailor collar and low, double-breasted buttons.

All in all, the new collections have made a remarkable display of Swiss fabrics and trimmings on some of the most outstanding clothes offered to the American public this season, since California designs cover the country from coast to coast.

Helene Miller