

New York fashion

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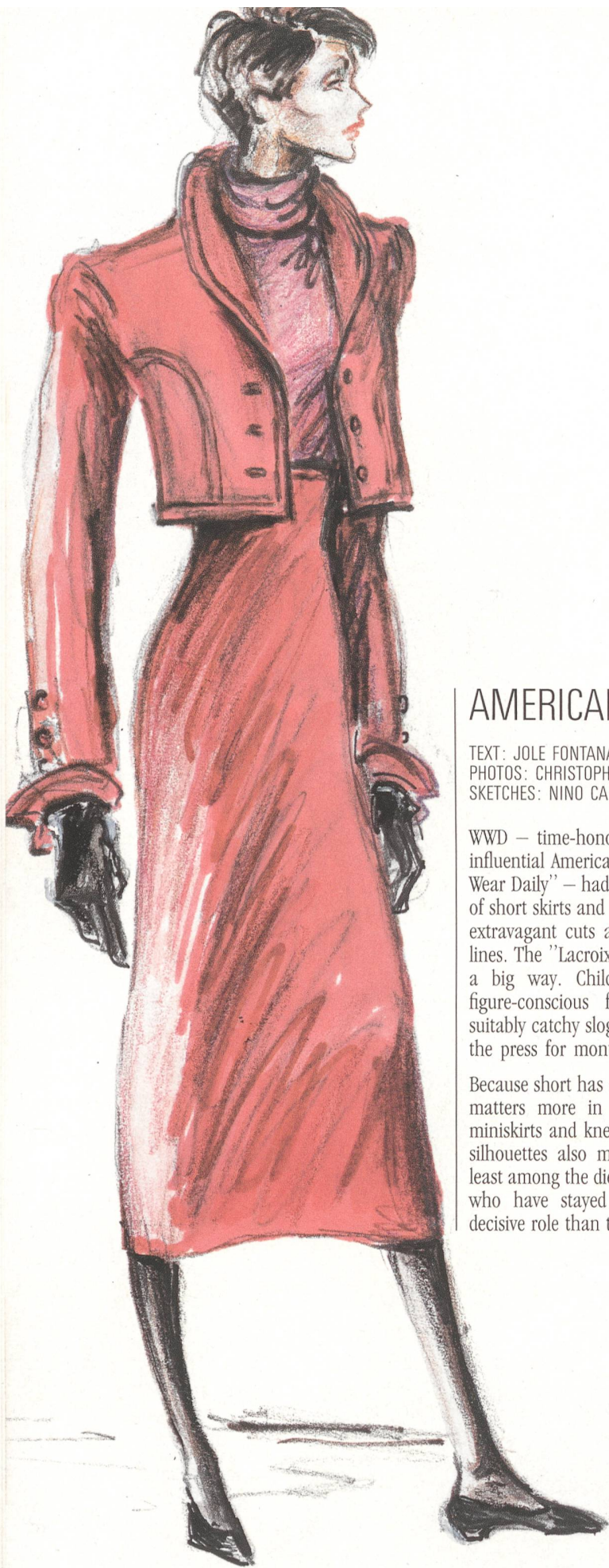
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NEW FASHION

AMERICAN STYLE

TEXT: JOLE FONTANA
PHOTOS: CHRISTOPHER MOORE
SKETCHES: NINO CAPRIOLIO

WWD — time-honoured abbreviation for the influential American fashion Bible "Women's Wear Daily" — had plumped heavily in favour of short skirts and couture-inspired styling for extravagant cuts and emphatically feminine lines. The "Lacroix syndrome" went down in a big way. Childlike luxury women and figure-conscious females accompanied by suitably catchy slogans peppered the pages of the press for months on end.

Because short has a youthful effect and youth matters more in America than elsewhere, miniskirts and knee-lengths and skimpy sexy silhouettes also met with some success, at least among the diet-conscious jet set women, who have stayed slim and played a less decisive role than the average career women.

Longer lengths rub shoulders with short silhouettes in the American designer collections. The cropped jacket with pencil skirt heightens the long lean look. Model Ralph Lauren

Now a fresh page has been turned. Like their Parisian and Milanese counterparts, the New York designers have brought out Autumn/Winter 88/89 collections featuring longer lengths that, while not precluding short, have definitely altered the landscape. WWD ran the diplomatic headline "The long and the short" and stated categorically "Everyone knows it's proportion that counts. Not length."

Following a brief interlude, age-old mottos are resurfacing in the latest trend: timeless design, contemporary classic, quiet chic. These are the talking points that eclipse length problems. The about-face to so-called sensible fashion and practical dressing has been welcomed, by and large, with a sigh of relief. For in the long run, the rather forced change to a more demandingly feminine, slightly outdated style has created more problems than it has triggered off impulses. Uppermost in the New York designers' minds is the thing they really care about and that has earned them their international reputation: realistic fashion with the sportswear touch. This comes over at Bill Blass or Oscar de la Renta as slightly more extravagance, at Donna Karan as slightly more fancy and at Stephen Sprouse as slightly more racy, but at Ralph Lauren on the other hand as completely regressive. One thing, however, they all have in common. None of them create a catwalk fashion: wearability is the universal touchstone.

Here as elsewhere, pants are given star billing on the current fashion stage. Slim cigarette shape are as prevalent as amply cut models with waistline pleats, trouser suits and

YORK

especially jump suits. Ultra-wide trousers are generally reserved for evening, and have sparked off a train of astonishingly varied ideas.

Costume jackets come in all lengths; the most stylish version — and opponent of the long jacket/leggy skirt that will still be around next winter — features a pared down, calf-concealing, high-waisted skirt teamed up with a short torso-hugging jacket. Coats are long slim sheaths, flaring tent-shaped models or roomy trenchcoats. A new type of dress type, the "chemise", has made its appearance — basically a straight simple shift, occasionally buttoned at the back, often in jersey or as a coat dress in medium-weight woollens. Details are applied sparingly. The widespread absence of collars betrays a certain purism. At the most, a single large-button closure sets an accent.

The American designer collections are decidedly more colourful than the Europeans'. Particularly noteworthy are the vividly coloured coats, a powerful antidote to grey wintry fog. Apple green and orange at Anne Klein, bright yellow and pink at Calvin Klein, billiard table green at Caroline Herrera and flame red everywhere.

However far daytime fashion has reverted to unspectacular chic in occasionally select but never obtrusive fabrics, glamour remains the uncontested favorite for evening. Traditionally, it's the mainstay of every collection. Luxury, decoration, the big splash, are an integral part of the American way of life, especially in New York, where the giddy round of social events outrivals the ceaseless whirl of gala charity dinners.

Pants are the hottest favorites with designers in Paris and Milan. Slinky flannel pants and a turtle neck pull-over are paired off with a roomy bright yellow jacket. Model Calvin Klein





1

*1. Fabric (coat) by Forster Willi
Model Bill Blass*

*2. Fabric by Schlaepfer
Model Carmelo Pomodoro*

*3. Fabric (jacket) by Abraham
Model Mary MacFadden*



2



3

SWISS FABRICS FOR AMERICAN STYLE

"Quiet chic" is a buzzword that epitomizes the New York designers' Autumn/Winter 88/89 collections. The same umbrella term covers fabrics that rarely dazzle with special effects. On the American market, this cramps the style of foreign manufacturers of high-

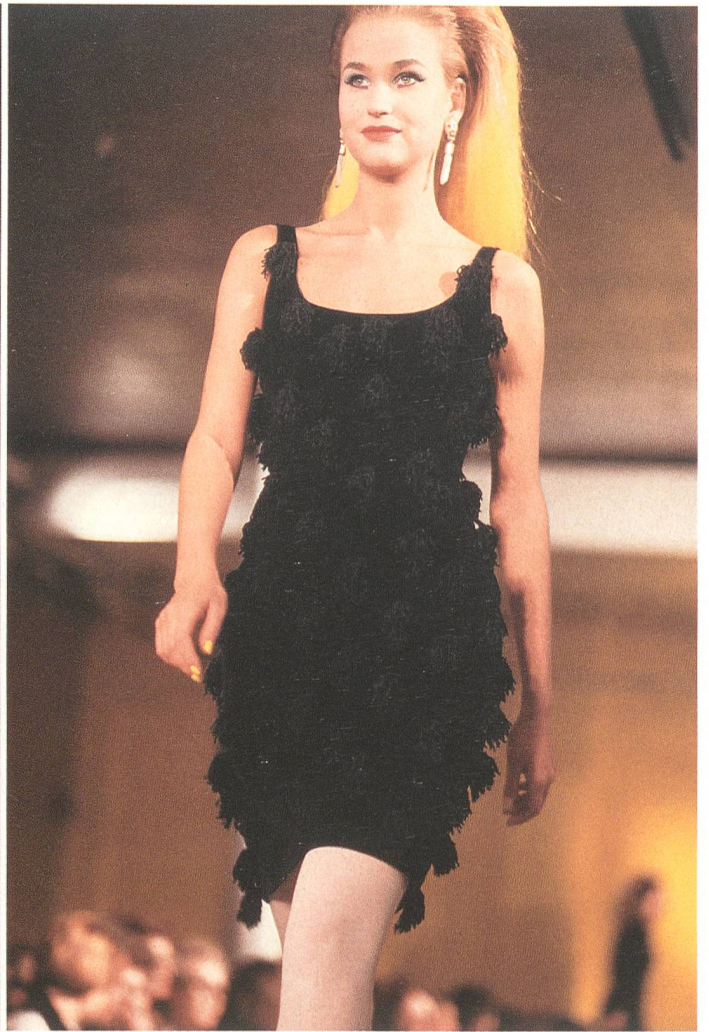
quality fabrics. Like the Swiss who, if they are to clear the price hurdle erected by today's low dollar, must offer designs or qualities that make an irresistibly appealing fashion statement.

This is true at any rate where Swiss novelty fabrics are concerned, particularly in evening fashions. For evening fashion is so vital to the prestige collections that a broad spectrum of

exclusive and speciality fabrics is in demand. Obviously the exporter who stands the best chances is the one who does not neglect marketing even in difficult times, and who continually nurtures old contacts and cultivates new ones with the top-ranking stylists. The exporter with something different to offer and the necessary powers of persuasion can bank on success.



1



2

NEW YORK

F A S H I O N

*1. Fabric by Schlaepfer
Model Stephen Sprouse*

*2. Fabric by Schlaepfer
Model Stephen Sprouse*

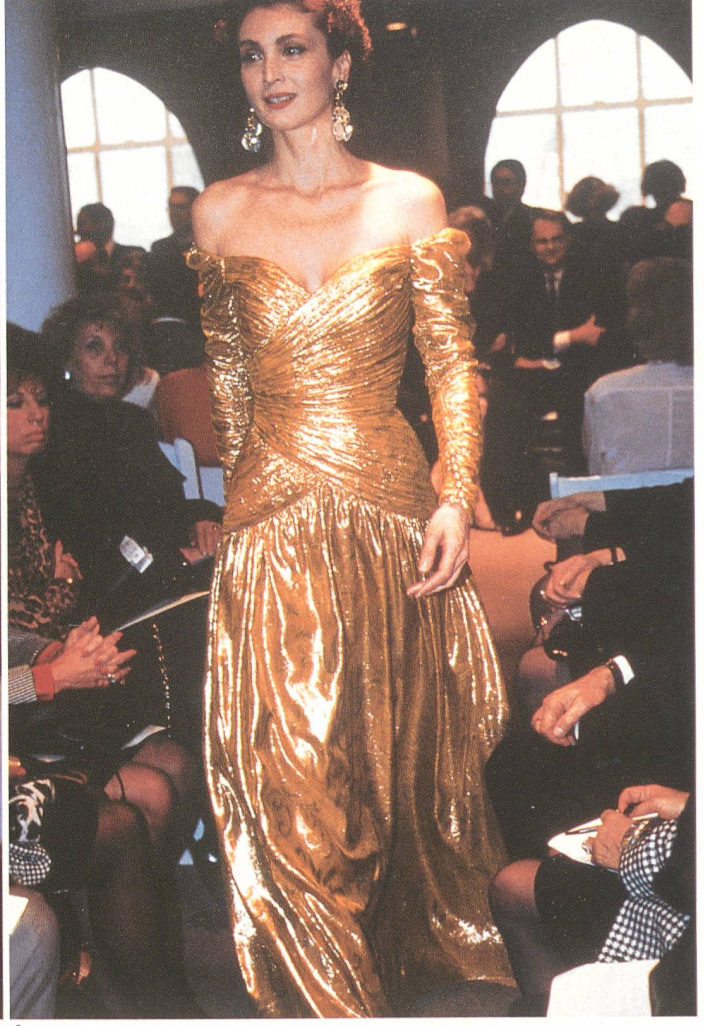
*3. Fabric by Abraham
Model Scaasi*

*4. Fabric by Abraham
Model Adele Simpson*

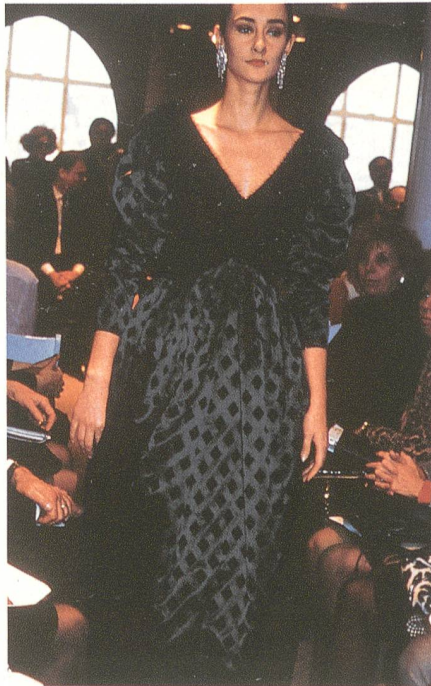
*5. Fabric by Weisbrod-Zürer
Model Adele Simpson*



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4



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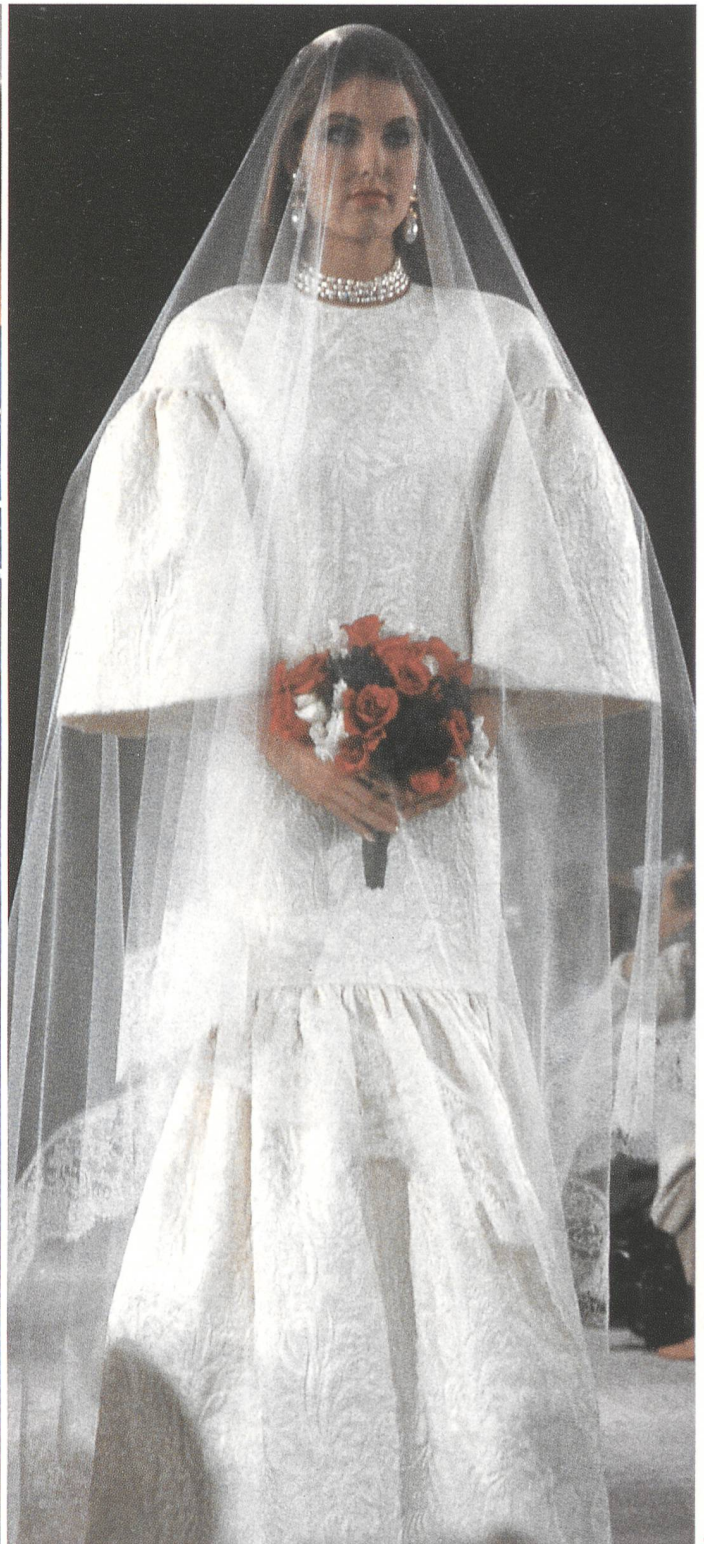
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*1. Fabric by Schlaepfer
Model Gloria Sachs*

*2. Fabric by Abraham
Model Oscar de la Renta*



3



4

*3. Fabric by Abraham
Model Oscar de la Renta*

*4. Fabric by Abraham
Model Caroline Roehm*