

# Fashion Outlook



**ITALIAN KNITS** are known for their style. This shapely cotton skirt and sweater set is by Reuso Fabiani.



**PARISIAN PEPLUM** adds sass to a straight, below-the-knee skirt. Both in chocolate by Rodier of Paris.



**AUSTRALIANS JUMP** from the rugged Outback look to these soft, seductive jerseys by Jill Fitzsimon.

## Around the world

### Fall fashions shape up as womanly

By Mary Martin Niepold

In a quest to find out what's new in the fashion world, more than 25,000 American buyers recently country-hopped, covering 46 nations in just three days. This pilgrimage occurred last month and brought buyers, reporters and foreign designers and manufacturers to the New York Pret Trade Show.

The Pret, founded in 1973 with 24 exhibitors from five countries, boasted 1,450 booths this year. According to organizer Emile Tubiano, the New York Pret is a bonanza for fashion buyers who find it too expensive to hopscotch from one country to another. He says, "There are more Europeans here than at any European show."

The Pret is also a barometer of shapes, colors and fabrics forecast for autumn. The show is held a month before American designers, including Calvin Klein, Ralph Lauren and Bill Blass, preview their lines and bring attention back to New York's Seventh Avenue, the heart of the garment district.

Like the buyers, shoppers will find fall's feminine fashions irresistible. Both foreign and domestic designers favor a seductive, silhouette with waist-hugging, fluid lines in clingy fabrics. Knits are still tops with designers who create curve-caressing sweaters a la Lana Turner. The touchable textures come from fellic soft mohair, chenille and slinky crepe de Chine. Designers embellish some styles with art deco and Celtic motifs, beading and novelty decorations.

Don't worry about shortening last year's skirts. Hemlines offer a suit-yourself situation. Long, swirling skirts still evoke a sense of gypsy romance. Those with good legs may get a kick out of flirty swing skirts, which reveal the knee and a stretch of thigh. Suits are sophisticated and streamlined. Waist-conscious jackets (especially peplums) top long, slim skirts. The no-frills design is grounded in earthy colors — brown, mustard, moss and navy.

The fittest females will win head-turning glances in this year's hour-glass-shaped dresses in stretch jerseys and sleek crepe de Chine.

The designers from each country

have their own way of translating these sultry styles. An important viewpoint on the fashion front comes from the French. At the Pret, 55 collections represented France. "In anything to do with beauty, perfume and fashion products, Americans always have a great attraction to the French," says Barbara Ende, marketing coordinator for the French Fashion and Textile Center in New York.

The buyers were attracted to the long fluid lines of the cardigan and skirt sets designed by Rodier of Paris. Renoma of Paris sculpted womanly shaped dresses and suits with knee-baring skirts, strong shoulders and fitted waists.

Form-fitting knits were also used by most of the 38 Italian firms. The designer Edward gave both skirts and coats ankle-grazing flared hems. The Italians also picked earthy color combinations and often mixed textures, using shearing with suede and leather.

"American buyers love Italian styling," said Colette Hughes, an officer for the Fashion Center of the Italian Trade Commission. "It's unusual in its couturere like elegance and dynamic wearability."

Elegant-but-tailored styles were the keynote to West Germany's 20 collections. An up-note from Down Un-

der ended the buyers' world tour. Australia sailed in with 16 companies that capitalized on America's fascination with romantic frontiers. Australia's popular Outback look combines rugged Western styling with some feminine frills.

"The buyers' acceptance of this Outback look set the stage for other companies with a more sophisticated appeal," noted Frank Passanante, senior marketing officer of the Australian Trade Commission. Some of the best Australian designs are multicolored women, futuristic forms from Vivian Chan Shaw and form-fitting knit dresses from Jill Fitzsimon Australia.

It looks like the fashion ticket for autumn '87 ensures the American shopper a world of choice — and all of the designs are intended to have women look exactly like women.



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