

Fashion Outlook

Ball gowns on a budget Rental clothes make chic affordable

FASHION



HELEN BURGGRAF

By Helen Burggraf

When Cinderella needed a dress for the ball, she relied on a fairy godmother to supply one. The problem with fairy godmothers, of course, is that they're hard to come by these days, and their dresses cannot be guaranteed past midnight.

Whenever Nancy Reagan was faced with a similar dilemma, we learned recently, she borrowed dresses from top fashion designers. This, however, is not an option for women who aren't on a first-name basis with Bill, Oscar or Calvin. (And, as Reagan discovered, it can prove embarrassing if one doesn't return the dresses right away.)

For those not to the fairy tale born (or to the president married), there is an alternative to spending a fortune on an outfit that will only be worn once or twice: renting.

Although some women recoil at the very notion of zipping up a dress previously worn by who-knows-whom, men have been renting tuxedos for so long that such squeamishness isn't even an issue. What's more, companies in the new and growing business of renting women's apparel have the garments cleaned after each wearing, replace most if not all of their inventory each season, and scrap any item that's begun to show the slightest signs of wear.

One Night Stand, a London-based purveyor of rental evening dresses, opened a shop in Manhattan last year. It will open a second in Washington, D.C., in early spring, and plans to open next fall in Los Angeles and Chicago. Pret-a-Party, a Manhattan-based rent-a-dress outfit, hopes to

open franchised units in the Northeast in 1988. Therapy Boutique & Salon, a two-year-old Chicago beauty salon and boutique that rents eveningwear, is scouting for locations in Washington and Atlanta, "and we're always getting calls from people wanting to know when we're going to open in their city," reports owner Charlease Bufford, 37. Similar rental operations are located in Dallas and Boston.

The secret to such companies' success is their ability to put glamorous, drop-dead "entrance-maker" gowns worth hundreds to thousands of dollars within reach — if only for one night — of women who might not afford to own them. For fees ranging from \$40 to \$350 a night, plus a security deposit, a woman with an account executive's salary can wear the same \$3,500 Arnold Scaasi ball gown a wealthy New York socialite might own.

But the clientele of these rental companies is hardly the coupon-clipping set. At One Night Stand, for example, owner Joanna Doniger says her customers are shrewd well-to-do business women and socialites who regard it a "waste of money" to spend thousands on a dress that'll gather dust in their closets after being worn

only once or twice.

"It's also a question of not wanting to be seen in the same dress more than once or twice," Doniger, 34, adds.

Along with dresses, One Night Stand and Pret-a-Party also rent such

'They put glamorous, drop-dead entrance-maker gowns worth hundreds to thousands of dollars within reach — if only for one night — of women who might not afford to own them.'

accessories as costume jewelry, velvet cloaks and clutch bags. Chicago's Therapy Boutique, meanwhile, goes further, with shoes, handbags and even fur flings (\$75 to \$125 a night).

At Abet Rent-a-Fur, though, furs are all they rent.

"Most of our business is catering to bridal parties," explains Irving Shavelson, 70, owner of the 42-year-old company, who notes that most women don't really need a \$1,000 white-fox cape except on their wedding days, to get them from the limo to the church

steps and back again. (Blue-fox versions are available for bridesmaids.) Abet's capes rent for \$65 to \$85, and are delivered around the country by UPS. Also available are full-length mink and fox coats (\$175 and \$150 a day to rent), which Shavelson says are popular among Sunbelters visiting New York City during the winter.

Pregnant women have long borrowed maternity clothes from friends, but now they don't have to be at the mercy of their friends' tastes. Pro Creations Maternity Leasewear,

\$650 for maternity suits she'll only wear a short time," explains Donna Smith, 53, owner and founder. "But at the same time, she can't afford to let her image slip temporarily just because she's pregnant."

Pro Creations' fees run about \$10.95 a week for a suit that Smith says would retail for more than \$600. A complete wardrobe for a typical pregnancy would run about \$894, or \$44.70 a week.

Recently, Smith has begun offering a few maternity eveningwear styles for rent (\$45 to \$100 for 48 hours). In doing so, she's gained a peculiarly contemporary insight into the mores of American society.

Explains Smith: "These dresses have been worn, among others, by (pregnant) brides at their weddings and (pregnant) high school students to their proms."

• **EVENINGWEAR**
ONE NIGHT STAND, 905 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. (212) 772-7720.

• **PRET-A-PARTY LTD.**, 151 E. 49th St., New York, N.Y. (212) 421-0805.

• **THERAPY BOUTIQUE**, 433 South Dearborn Avenue, Chicago, Ill. (312) 427-0557.

ASK KATHY

Dear KATHY

I like to entertain during the holidays, but several weeks of parties leave me up in weight and down in spirits. What do you recommend?

Reply:

Holiday parties, whether you're giving them or attending them, are fun; but if you're not careful, it is easy to gain weight. When giving a party, the best way to stay in control is to offer vegetable snacks, "light" crackers, and mineral water with lemon and lime spritzers, in addition to the traditional hors d'oeuvres and drinks. If you attend a party elsewhere, eat a light meal before you leave home so that you are in control during the party. Also, don't be afraid to ask for plain water instead of high-calorie alcoholic beverages.

At Diet Center we teach "defen-



KATHY HAJAS
Diet Center Counselor

sive partying." There is no need to pass up parties if you know how to stay in control. If you would like to know more about entertaining while dieting, call or come in to Diet Center today for a free consultation

Your Choice

1 HOUR SERVICE

SAME DAY OR NEXT DAY SERVICE AT A LOWER COST

Passport Photos in 3 Min
WE RENT VIDEO CAMERAS

CRAIG'S PHOTO

NORMANDY PLAZA
West of Kitchissippi Food Centre 877-5945

DIET CENTER

Business Number 877-2900
Home Number 853-0780
98 Mill St., Georgetown

Personal Consultation By Appointment

VISA

Employment and Immigration Canada

Halton Hills Job Board

The Canada Employment Centre is located at 232 Guelph Street, Georgetown and is open Monday to Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The following represents only a few of the Career Opportunities listed on their Job Boards.

Order 0932923 - **SALE AND MARKETING MANAGER** - Commission and equity in the company. Permanent fulltime, 40 hours a week. Previous experience selling computers and software preferred but not essential. Must have good basic knowledge of computers and software. Own vehicle required.

Order 0950498 - **RECEPTIONIST/TYPIST** - Permanent fulltime, \$7.50/hour, plus, depending on experience. Must have word processing experience, preferably Word Perfect or Lotus. Accounting background would be an asset. Typing accuracy essential.

Order 09228099 - **GENERAL FACTORY LABOUR** - \$8/hour plus, depending on experience. Permanent 10 hour days, Monday to Thursday. Previous production experience an asset. Employer will train a reliable worker. Must have own safety boots.

Order 0898169 - **GRINDER/OPERATOR: ROTO ENGRAVER** - Permanent fulltime, \$6.50/hour plus, depending on experience. Previous experience operating a Milling Machine or Cylindrical Grinder preferred. Employer will train. Must have own safety boots and be reliable.

Order 0934862 - **ELECTRICIAN APPRENTICE** - Permanent fulltime, \$5-\$6/hour, depending on experience. Employer will take 1st year electrical apprentice or someone with no experience and who is reliable and willing to learn.

Order 0918078 - **WELDER, COMBINATION** - Permanent fulltime \$9-\$10/hour plus, depending on experience. (Full benefit plan after 90 days). Must be an experienced Mig and Stick welder. Experience welding structural frames and shelving a must.

Order 0938190 - **COUNTER ATTENDANT** - Permanent fulltime and part time hours available. \$5 to \$6/hour, depending on experience. Previous counter work an asset. Good work attitude and work history. Neat and tidy appearance.

If you are interested in any of the above positions, visit the Georgetown CEC.

MEET "THE TOP DOGS" AT #1 PET CENTRES

SMITZU MALE \$379.99

COCKER SPANIEL MALE \$399.99

LHASA APSO MALE \$349.99

DACHSHOUNDS (2) MALE \$399.99

HAGEN, 5 GAL. AQUARIUM KIT REG. \$79.99 NOW \$49.99

2 FOR 1 TUESDAYS BUY ONE FISH AT REGULAR PRICE, GET ANY OTHER SINGLE FISH OF EQUAL VALUE OR LESS FREE.

SCIENCE DIET FELINE GROWTH CANS \$1.69 4 LB. BAG \$8.99

SCIENCE DIET CANINE GROWTH CANS \$1.69 5 LB. BAG \$8.99

HAGEN, 10 GAL. AQUARIUM KIT REG. \$129.99 NOW \$79.99

HAGEN, HAMSTER CIRCUS KITS REG. \$29.99 NOW \$19.99

SCIENCE DIET FELINE MAINTENANCE CANS \$1.49 4 LB. BAG \$8.49

SCIENCE DIET CANINE MAINTENANCE CANS \$1.09 40 LB. BAG \$40.99