

Fashion Outlook

Diane Von Furstenberg's designs simply feminine

Diane Von Furstenberg continues to prove that "form follows function" is still a fashionable theory. This is the designer who in 1972 tied up a classic by creating the wrap dress. By 1976 she had sold 3 million of these colorful jersey dresses. Nearly two decades later, simplicity remains the key to her line of children's clothes; and sophisticated shape and practical ease give her new nurses uniforms a healthy dose of femininity.

"One of the nicest things about designing is when you create something

lavishly patterned scarves, or read in Vogue about the star-studded parties that she has hosted in her Paris and New York apartments and in her Connecticut home, they may assume that Von Furstenberg is all glamour. Yet this designer keeps a firm hold on what is practical.

Von Furstenberg's special talent is tailoring her designs to fit people's needs.

She may have once been married to a prince, but Von Furstenberg, now 42, did not grow up in an ivory tower.

cated in different colors.

She also understands the need to have a variety of available styles when an occupation demands a constant color, like the traditionally white uniform of a nurse. "Nurses deserve to have clothes that they feel good about," she says. "Their uniforms should be comfortable and attractive."

Von Furstenberg created a wide range of styles for White Swan, a leading uniform manufacturer. White Swan supplied the resilient Visa fabric, which resists wrinkles and stays bright white, and supple Comfort Fiber Knit, which is supposed to feel like 100 percent cotton but is 60 percent stronger.

Von Furstenberg added her strong design sense to make functional but feminine outfits. These clean-lined uniforms usually have dolman or raglan sleeves to make a nurse's active day a bit easier. Von Furstenberg adds variety by including pants and cardigans along with the typical dress. Her Signet Collection gets an extra touch of authority with an embroidered crest on the breast pocket, notched collars and welted pockets on streamlined skirts and pants. There's even a bodysuit in the Joie collection. Priced under \$50, most styles are available in sizes 6 to 16, while some are cut to fit a size 4 woman and others to fit a size 20.

And while Von Furstenberg maintains "I hate complicated designs,"

she has added a touch of whimsy and playful use of color to her clothes for toddlers, and girls sized 4-6x and 7-14. Once again, the designer relies on sturdy knits, but she adds flirty flourishes, like two-tiered ruffle skirts and easy to love details like heart-shaped buttons, fabric flowers on dropped waists and purple suspenders on a black-and-white striped skirt. Most of these outfits are a very affordable \$35.

She has also created "skeggings," skirt-and-legging sets which are upbeat matches of grey and pink, red and black, and hot pink and turquoise. For special occasions, there are dropped-waist dresses with crisp taffeta tiered skirts.



DIANE VON FURSTENBERG has a worldly glamour and a sense of design. "My role is to make nice designs affordable," she says. Her style of clothing is known for simplicity and femininity.

with a group of people in mind," says Von Furstenberg.

Once people have gotten a whiff of her exotic, flowery perfume Tatiana, or wrapped themselves in one of her

Before she married Prince Egon Von Furstenberg in 1969, she went to school in Spain, England and Switzerland and studied economics at the University of Geneva. By 1971, she was the mother of Alexander and Tatiana, and she had nurtured a dress company into existence.

A year later, she had wrapped up her place in fashion history with that simple jersey dress. Since then, she has put her initials on accessories, cosmetics and household products. Von Furstenberg was also the first fashion designer to create a signature furniture line.

Some people are surprised by Von Furstenberg's flexibility and her desire to tackle different design projects. Others are impressed by a key element of most of her designs: They're practical and easy on the purse.

"My role is to make nice designs affordable," says Von Furstenberg, who didn't find a hole in the idea when Dunkin Donuts asked her to create uniforms for their employees. "I love to do uniforms," says the designer, who often has a favorite outfit dupli-



NURSE'S uniforms get a shot of elegance from Diane Von Furstenberg. This mock-wrap top has three-quarter sleeves for ease and comfort. The pull-on pant has an elasticized waist and a relaxed fit.



STRIPES are suspended over black leggings and a red top in this "skeggings" set by Diane Von Furstenberg, and tiers of dots add extra dash to this striped dress.

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PS Home Post Scripts

By Glenda Hughes, Sales Rep.

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Well, if I was ever under any illusions that this column didn't get much readership, I was certainly corrected recently! It is rewarding to know that the hours spent hovering over my typewriter each week are not in vain, and some of you follow my thoughts with great interest.

If you have been an avid reader of mine, you know that we are moving to a newly constructed home, and it has not been without its frustrations. Having gone through this process, I would like to point out a few pitfalls that others might run into, like we have, and try to make you aware of what is in your contract and what is not. As we have quite a bit of new building starting up in town over the next year, a lot of you will be going through some of the same things I have just encountered, and I would like to help you be an informed purchaser. My headaches need not become your headaches and it would be nice to have you purchase a home and go through the process of watching it being constructed, and being happy.

Naturally, not all builders are the same, not all developments are the same, and many of you will be very accepting of your finished product - and that's the way it should be. However, it would be wise to check out some things before you sign that new home purchase. As most of you will be buying from blueprints, you will probably not get a chance to see a model home, so it is important that you find out about "upgrades" - the cost and quality, what is "standard" in your home, and what is included and what is not included. Some of the biggest things you will probably have to deal with is carpeting, floor coverings, cabinets, furnace and things like central air, and windows. If you are good at being able to sort through your schedules, understand blueprints well and can see the samples of your cabinets and floor coverings etc. you won't have any problem. If you are like me, and have trouble reading plans and leave a lot to trust, you might share my headache. There is a lot to wallow through, so take your time, get someone to help you understand the schedules, and then you won't be in for any surprises.

Buying a new home can be an exciting experience, and the finished result should match up with your preconceived-idea of your dream house - and it will, if you tip toe through the tulips carefully.

P.S. Next week I'll be back, writing to you with fresh summer tales!

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