

# Fashion Outlook

## If you want to be trendy, go out on a limb

### FASHION



MARY MARTIN NIEPOLD

This fall the legs have it. They've become a major fashion accessory — built-in finishers to outfits ranging from short gabardine skirts to peek-a-boo tunics. There are all manner of stockings, leggings, tights and unitards to draw attention to this willowy natural accessory.

Skirts, again, have inched up for fall, and in some cases, skirts are replaced altogether by long tunics or jackets. In these instances, particularly, a well-covered leg carries the same fashion wallop as the skirt or trousers it replaces.



PAISLEY TIGHTS by HUE are inspired by prints from India. They are available in dark, earthy tones to complement this fall's fashions.

Trends for legs, like trends for dresses, jewelry, shoes or scarves, take their cue from major couture designers in Europe. When fall/winter '89 shows were held in Europe last spring, retailers and the fashion press gobbled up the notion of leggy looks for fall. Karl Lagerfeld sent ribbed tights down the runway, and glittery stockings accented the slit skirts on the runways of Yves Saint Laurent.

Lagerfeld totally eliminated the skirt from the longer Chanel suits he designed for fall, and, *voilà*, the notion of a long jacket plus tights or skinny pants, was born as a major look for fall. Lagerfeld credited his inspiration to the trendy young people in ma-

for world capitals who had begun to wear big jackets plus tights.

On this side of the Atlantic, designers took their cue to interpret the leggy look in all manner of styles. The legs had it in a long, sequined sweater over silky tights (from designer Isaac Mizrahi), as a body defining jumpsuit (by Carolyne Roehm), as plaid wool shorts and opaque tights (by Geoffrey Gertz), as a short silk taffeta evening raincoat over tights (by Mary Ann Restivo) or as skinny cashmere knit pants with a tailored lame striped jacket (by Gloria Sachs).

Whatever your personal preference — perhaps as simple as opaquely colored pantyhose repeating the color of a skirt or dress for the office — American women have rarely seen such a plethora of leg looks, any one of which can instantly update a wardrobe.

Donna Karan sees the wool crepe unitard, stretch tights or pants as pivotal fashion accessories for fall — she added blouses, jackets, long skirts or coats to her unitards, and she showed bulky oversized shawl-collared sweaters topping stretch pants — clean, understated looks that are simultaneously comfortable and sophisticated.

Because these new fabrics incorporate the stretch properties of Lycra spandex fibers, women are literally comfortable enough in their shiny hosiery or opaque tights to choose skirts of any length. Stretchy leg fashions assure that legs are well-covered and well-fitted — and the overall impact of an outfit comes off as both neat and coordinated. There's no excuse for

sagging knees, thanks to the new technology.

The key word for legs this fall is covered. When some of the long evening skirts are seductively slit to the waist or long tunics are the total torso covering for day, the legs must be covered. And while sheer neutrals are never wrong, they don't carry the pizzazz of tights or hosiery covered in leaf motifs, ribbed patterns and even a slinky leopard lurking near an ankle.



NO MATTER the length of the skirt, legs are making a definite fashion statement this season.

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Opakes and tights are the hottest newsmakers in hosiery right now. Du Pont manufactures the Lycra found in most legwear on the market. It reports that hosiery manufacturers have increased "their style offerings of tights and opaque hosiery with Lycra sevenfold over the last three years."

HUE, a leader in the legwear industry and well-known for their colors and pattern innovations, projects a sales increase of 73 percent for 1989 over 1988. This year, the company also added 400 new stores to their list, upping their total to 1,300 department and specialty stores throughout the country.

### Leggy looks draw attention to your natural accessories.

According to Kathy Moskal, chairman of HUE, "People are so ready for color. Color makes the leg the acces-

sory of the season." Among HUE's new fall colors are Mustard, Char-treuse, Flame Orange, Garnet and Amber. Patterns in their new collections emphasize heraldic emblems, brocade and passementerie adaptations, as well as paisleys and stripes.

When shopping for legwear, be aware of certain caveats:

- Be sure to purchase the right size. Check the size chart on the package and match your height and weight.

- If you are a between-sizes person, stretch hosiery is even more important. Better to go up a size for the "gentle cling" in effect.

- Never buy tights or pantyhose that are too tight — the sight of "panty" lines, bulging thighs or tight waists spilling extra flesh from above can instantly ruin any outfit.

- Know your fibers. Opakes with nylon/Lycra have a soft sheen and work best with career or dressed-up day ensembles. Opakes with cotton/Lycra have a matte finish that works best with knits, jerseys or heavy tweeds.

- Choose complementary footwear for opaque hosiery. Low and stacked heels on styles such as oxfords, loafers and spectators work best.

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