

# CREATING THAT LOOK:

## Tailors make it fit with flair

Clothes don't make the man, custom tailors do. The custom tailoring industry, the art of designing clothing specifically for a client's body and lifestyle, is experiencing a "big boom" nationally, according to local tailors. And surprisingly enough, the sagging economy is responsible.

"People are tired of spending money over and over again for the same things," says Robert Lewis, of Robert Lewis Tailors in Portland. "The disadvantage of cheap clothes is you just can't build a wardrobe when you're busy replacing the clothes you already have just as quickly."

So some people turn to custom tailors and find some interesting benefits.

"The main thing a salesman says is 'I know what's good for you.' Yet all you know about his tastes is what you see of him. If he looks like he can't dress himself in the morning, or worse yet, if you know something's wrong with his appearance but you can't place it, he's not going to make the sale."

"I can make a guy look so conservative, you'd bet he still had his first earned dollar, or so 'bright and flashy' you'd think he was just off the plane from L.A.," Lewis boasts.

But what about the people who just step off Amtrak from Eugene? Have no fear, we Eugeneans have a few of our own image-makers.

Cindy Sato, store manager for Teresa Harter's Fashions and Fabrics, has had a customer ask to "look like a fairy princess." From this relatively vague request, Sato must dig for what "fairy princess" really means to her customer.

"We serve as a reference source," Sato says. "They bounce ideas off us, and we help critique them based on our tailoring experience. Together, we arrive at their choice."

Hand-made and designed clothes have definite advantages, the two tailors agree. Oftentimes, customers must fit their bodies into pre-made garments; tailors fit the fashions to specific frames. Lewis argues

that store-bought fashions become battered too quickly because of "short-cuts."

"We don't take any short cuts," the self-proclaimed fastidious tailor says. Lewis chooses high-quality grades of fabric and elastic and strong zippers.

Through a series of fittings, the tailor designs a permanent pattern for each customer. After that, the customer need only call his tailor, indicate the fabric and style needed for a desired garment. Then pick it up in a month.

Jeanee Moon, of Jeanee's Custom House in Eugene, adds that much of the work she does is for "people who want to be individuals. They either can't find what they want or don't want to look like everybody else on the street."

Although consulted tailors quote prices for a two-piece wool suit from \$100 to \$900, with a \$400 average, all say their customers are not exclusively the "super rich."

Lewis says most of his customers are from the "working middle class, but are buying upper-level clothes and using them to work in."

The tailors agree that their clientele tends to be over 25 and buys "classic investment clothing" for business use. Students seldom use their services because of the lack of time and money, as well as the general unimportance of clothing at that stage in their lives.

Lewis maintains that the demand for custom tailoring has been making a comeback in the past three or four years.

He attributes the recent turn-around from pre-made outfits to custom clothes to a change in the public's decision making. "They're realizing that with the same budget they spend on throwing away their clothes, they can begin to build a permanent wardrobe."

"I've got more here than I can do," says Lewis, who started out with little work and now hires part-time assistants.

By DIANE WINOCUR



## Tips, hues make fashions work

Long before the movie "10" came out, both sexes were comparing women to the so-called "perfect" woman. The ideal woman is bold, lean, long and healthy. She looks strong and sexy, with a natural beauty radiating from an inner glow.

Okay, so how many women really look like the long-legged mademoiselles who prance across magazine pages?

Very few.

Careful attention to clothing can make the most out of a woman's best features. But that doesn't mean shelling out the bucks. Knowing the clothes that complement an individual shape and using certain dressing rules while shopping can save money.

When advising someone on how to pull together her total look, Jane Phillips, Kaufman's fashion director, studies fabric, colors, design concepts and proportion.

"There's something in every one of these categories to make you look thinner, taller, shorter, and so on," Phillips says.

Watch the fabric weight, she warns.

"Bulkier fabric can make you look bulky; lighter fabrics can make you look lighter."

Large plaids and floral patterns also add weight, but vertical stripes elongate a short body and horizontal stripes break up a long body, she says.

In general, dark colors slenderize and light colors enlarge, but not always, says Audree Pedemonte, of Hue Review.

"If you are silhouetted against a white wall, then dark clothes might actually make you look bigger because there's such a contrast. But when you go out in the evening in low, subdued lights, then dark colors will blend in with the background and make you look thinner," she says.

Pedemonte says colors may not be as important as the way they are broken up. A short person should keep the same color from the shoes up. The blending of all pieces of clothing create a long line with an illusion of height, she explains.

Design concepts concern the style and shape of individual pieces of clothes, Phillips says.

High heels don't make legs look longer or make a short person look taller in every case, she says. Low or medium heels in a color blending with the outfit can be more elongating than high heels, which accentuate heavy calves.

A form-fitted boot that stops at mid-calf breaks up the smooth line of the body and draws attention to the calf while a straight-legged boot that stops below the knee slims down a heavy calf, she says.

Baggy jeans are good for hiding heavy calves, Pedemonte says, but not for hiding heavy thighs. In general, baggy clothes make overweight people look wider. Clothes should fit with room to move but should be well-tailored, Pedemonte says.

"Matching hair color with a blazer or sweater will increase height by three to five inches," Pedemonte says.

The 5'3" color consultant says to look taller, short people should walk erectly and wear scarves and hairpieces.

A jacket can right a thousand wrongs, she says. Long-waisted people should wear a bolero-length jacket that stops between the waist and the hip bone. Jackets should stop just below the hip bone for short-waisted people to avoid a "tent" look, she says.

A pudgy stomach, affectionately termed "beer belly," can be hidden with pleated pants and skirts, Pedemonte says. She says people should avoid wearing tightly fitted clothing and, instead, should wear a smooth-fitting, A-line skirt.

Ruffles may flatter Britain's Princess Diana, but large-busted women should avoid them to keep from drawing extra attention and should wear a top with lace around the neck instead. She says wearing scarves, collars or barrettes in "eye-extension colors" around the face will draw attention to the face and eyes.

The bottom line is proportion, Pedemonte says. She says the attention paid to the total look is analogous to an artist's attention to detail—the little hints work if combined appropriately with the total image.

By CAROL MORTON



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