Enchanting Paris

Else Nielsen

Iowa State College

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According to the French, there is no such thing as an ugly woman, only those who do not know how to make themselves attractive. Women have all hailed France, and in particular Paris, "The City of Love," as the fashion center of the world. It is only recently, with the growing independence of American women and the trend toward casual living, that designers on this side of the Atlantic have gained prominence.

Parisian designs are styled by hand and express superb styling, but the dress-manufacturing is limited due to lack of large-scale production facilities. Despite the more casual designs and advantages of mass production, United States designers have not completely monopolized the fashion spotlight. Women the world over still flock to Paris for the never-to-be-forgotten thrill of viewing a first showing of a designer such as Dior.

Paris fashion show

But you do not merely go to a Paris "house" and walk in to see a "fashion show." You have to find a way to gain admittance. One of the ways to get into a gilt salon to see the style showing is to register at one of the smart Parisian hotels. Then you don't need to worry about an introduction to most houses since residence is supposed to be a guarantee of your credit. If you are not so elegantly housed while in Paris, you may obtain a special card from a travel bureau, from the information desk at your bank or the headquarters of any American fashion magazine. The ideal introduction, though, is a note from a regular customer to her vendeuse (saleswoman). If you don't have access to any of these modes of entry, you may gain admittance by presenting $300 at the door. Then if you purchase an item this $300 is applied to it, but if you do not choose to buy, the money is forfeited to the house.

Once you find a way to get into a house, the difficulty will be to get away. Inside the luxurious salon you are escorted across thick carpets to comfortable upholstered lounge chairs and served cocktails and hors d'oeuvres. At approximately 3 p.m., after an elaborate introduction, tall, beautifully-groomed and perfumed models appear to exhibit the designer's latest collection. You can't take any cameras into the salon, nor may you take notes during a showing. In Paris there is no way for a designer to insure that his styles will not be stolen by copyists, of whom there are many. The designer is just protecting himself against adaptations or direct copies which are made up in inferior materials and sold at a fraction of the originator's price.

If you should wish to purchase a Paris creation, a vendeuse will attend you in selecting materials and in adapting the chosen fashion to your own figure. After these preliminaries, you may leave with instructions to return sometime in the near future for a fitting. A suit styled by Dior may carry a price tag of from $850 to $1000. If you wish to have a style personally created for you, and request that the design never be used again, you can expect to pay several thousand dollars.

In Paris the element which influences style is the individual whim of the designer, while in the United States it is the women's demands. The big fashion houses in Paris each cater to a specific type of personality, with a singular type of clothes. If a woman wants to catch a man she must go to a house which specializes in "man-catching" styles. A stately woman of noble bearing, or a woman who wishes to create this illusion, will go to another house.

About two and one-half months before a big showing is due to be held, the dressmaker inspects new lines of wool and embroidery sent in by manufacturers. Often a house buys out an entire piece of material or even orders a special design for its own use in an attempt to make the collection completely exclusive. A few houses even have special buttons made and copyrighted.

Dressmakers

Each designer has a different way of preparing his collection. Some heads of houses create their own sketches for fitters to work from or else they drape the materials on the mannequins themselves. Some dressmakers buy sketches from outside artists at a small price and then adapt them or take some few details as a starting point for their own designs. Some have designers who practically make the entire collection.

A curious fact about Paris dressmakers is that each thinks all his models are equally stunning. Therefore, the final editing is the most important single step in the creation of a collection. For six weeks before a collection is launched, an air of mystery pervades the premises. In spite of elaborate precautions to guard the secrecy of the collection, certain tendencies and certain details are found to be present in all the houses on the day of the showings.

Not only dresses and suits are styled in the famous city, but millinery is in demand for the fashion-wise.

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Overseas Jobs for YOU by Kay Scholten Technical Journalism Sophomore

Will YOU be one of the several Home Economic majors from each graduating class who finds her way into foreign service?

If this sort of work interests you, you may someday find yourself working in Beirut, Lebanon as Peggy McLaren, F. & N. ’53, is now doing. Her job is at the Presbyterian College for Women, as director of their home management house. Or maybe romantic Honolulu will be the setting for your job as it is for Margaret Lamb, T. & C. ’47, and Martha Bunge, H. E. ’45. Miss Lamb is a field director for the Girl Scouts of Oahu, Inc., and Miss Bunge manages the dining hall at Mid-Pacific Institute.

Openings for foreign service jobs can be found in both government service and private industry.

Recreational work

If military life intrigues you, the army has openings for recreation directors, arts and crafts specialists and teachers. A recreation director must have a degree plus considerable experience in recreational activities, be single and from 21 to 40 years of age. The salary is from $3,175 to $4,205. Arts and crafts specialists are required to have a degree in art, and experience showing their grasp of the basic principles of design. Teachers must have a Bachelor’s degree, 18 hours in education and from 2 to 5 years of public school teaching.

For a qualified dietician, the WACS and WAFS offer a good opportunity for overseas duty.

Home Life Education Specialists are employed by the Institute of Inter-American Affairs. Qualifications are at least a B.S. degree in home economics and teaching and supervisory experience in home economics or extension service programs. Preference is given to applicants who know French, Spanish or Portuguese. The salary is $5,913.

Job in industry

The opening wedge for you, if you’re interested in private industry, is typing and shorthand. A foreign language is usually a must, too. These positions are with automobile, oil, rubber, electric and transportation companies, with banks, export-import firms and in the fashion, foods and cosmetic industries. Most companies don’t hire people especially to send abroad. Those they send are usually employees who have worked up and proved themselves in the United States first.

For any home economics major planning on going into foreign service, there are many things to be considered before making your choice. Better begin now.

Enchanting Paris

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women. The purchase of a hat in Paris is an experience which will live forever. The important Parisian milliners display their hat collections which are often more extreme than those sold in private trade, so you need to know the proper procedure for having a hat made to get something for yourself. If you are having it made to match a particular costume, you take a sample of your costume to the milliner, and then choose a style which will harmonize. The millinery house has materials and trimmings for your hat dyed to match your costume. After the hat is molded directly to your head, you have a hat that’s exclusively yours.

Custom-made clothes

The Parisian market excels in custom-made clothes; and although there is still a limited market in the United States for them, the high degree of perfection which ready-made garments have attained have brought them into direct competition with the custom trade. American women desire clothes styled informally for greater comfort and at less cost, so most of them express the opinion that New York is the American center of fashion. They say the manufacturers there not only look at things from the comfort standpoint, but are ever alert to opportunities and adapt the newest styles from Europe to fit this country.

But whether you buy your clothes from Paris or New York designers, you are using the international formula to be well dressed and in fashion. It is as the French say, “The woman well-dressed and in fashion is expressing what everybody has in mind.” Good taste is to resemble yourself.