

# Letter from Los Angeles

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## *Letter from Los Angeles*

**REICHENBACH & Co., SAINT-GALL**

White embroidered organdie flouncing.

*Model by William Cahill of Cahill Ltd., California.*



## Young, New and Different...

J. C. NEF & Co. S. A., HERISAU  
« NELO »

Black and white « Nervella » piqué.

Model by Rudi Gernreich of Walter Bass,  
Los Angeles

Photo Christa

Frequently in the fashion field one meets interesting designers. Less frequently one meets superb designers. And even less frequently one meets a superb designer who is also a philosopher. Rudi Gernreich of the firm of Walter Bass is that rare phenomenon who blends original talent and intellectuality with gentleness, understanding and genuine artistry. Although so many of his clothes bear a strong flavor of originality, he says there are no unique, original ideas, but rather similar ideas arising simultaneously in different parts of the world because of some similarity in social or economic factors which leave their impress on artists. Thus a silhouette developed by a Dior or a Balenciaga will have a slow evolution through various as the trend they initiate gradually develops.

Rudi — with all these ideas — is Vienna born and California bred. When asked why he is so « American » in his design, he answered that it is probably due to his wanting to adjust to the American way of living which he found here in the schools he attended during his most impressionable years. The result has been a way of designing and a complicated simplicity which recently won him an award from the famous *men's* magazine, *Sports Illustrated*, for reflecting American women's figures and their sports and careerconscious lives. And this talent has made his collection much sought after by the finest stores in the country such as Saks Fifth Avenue, Lord and Taylor's and Neiman-Marcus.

The firm for which Rudi Gernreich designs is known as Walter Bass, and headed by a gentleman of the same



J. C. NEF & Co. S. A., HERISAU  
« NELO »

Black « Nervella » cotton rib piqué.

Model by Rudi Gernreich of Walter Bass,  
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Photo Christa

name who is a designer, in his own right, of various kinds of knitwear, is well-versed in production methods and has an abiding faith in Rudi's designs. Rudi also designs a swimsuit collection for a large knitting mill and is now branching out into shoe design. Like most artists, he is versatile and this writer first knew him as an artist when he came in to display his art work. He later became a textile designer, then a suit designer for one of New York's largest firms and later returned to California where, after many trials and even a stint at dancing, he connected with Walter Bass who was the first person to have an understanding of what he was trying to create that was different and daring and colorful and Californian.



**J. C. NEF & Co. S. A., HERISAU**  
« NELO »

Cotton fabrics used for mix-match vest, black and white, with orange tie front, white on white shirt and black pants.

*Model by Rudi Gernreich of Walter Bass, Los Angeles*

Photo Christa

**J. C. NEF & Co. S. A., HERISAU**  
« NELO »

« Nervella » rib cotton piqué.

*Model by Rudi Gernreich of Walter Bass, Los Angeles*

Photo Christa



Like most top-flight designers, Rudi Gernreich and Walter Bass select Swiss fabrics for many unusual numbers, confining themselves to textured or ribbed cottons in solid shades. Rudi feels that in quality and construction the Swiss mills are the very finest. However, he feels that design-wise they are still too conservative and are bound by different... that is, European... ideas of color. Brilliant and rich color combinations are expected of California, and this is why California clothes sell as they do. If Californians are too conservative they run into competition with the larger, more economically run New York firms and lose both their identity and their business very soon.

*Helene F. Miller*