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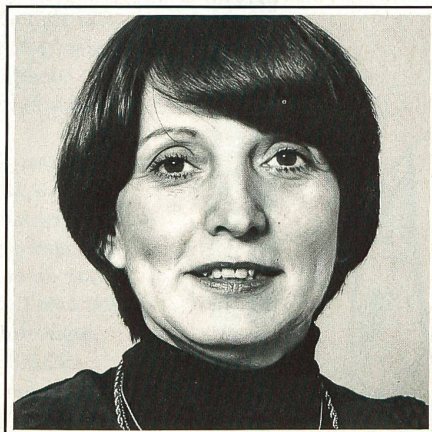
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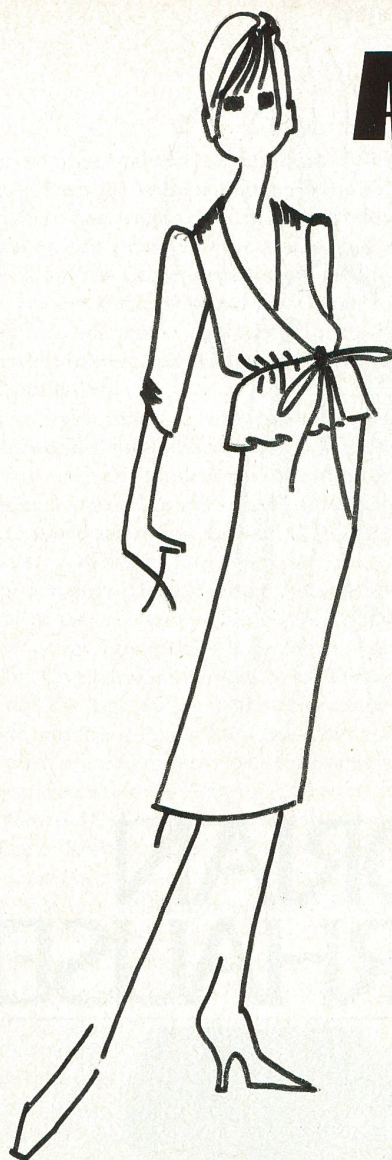
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ANNEMARIE GARDIN



A SWISS DESIGNER IN NEW YORK



It is a little over twenty years since the young Annemarie Gardin left Switzerland to conquer the New York fashion world. Her professional qualifications were quite considerable even then: a practical apprenticeship as a seamstress and cutter, two years of Swiss art school and a year's fashion course in Paris. On top of all this, she possessed an inexhaustible fund of ideas and enthusiasm. Her first stay in the bustling world capital was supposed to last only four weeks — it lasted for two years. In order to earn a living meanwhile, Annemarie Gardin designed model after model, which she sold with growing success to fashion houses on 7th Avenue — the Fashion Avenue of New York. However as she had no permanent work permit for the USA, she was obliged to return to Switzerland. Here however she felt too restricted, the possibilities of getting ahead were too small and the pace of life just did not suit her mercurial temperament. Five months later therefore she returned to her chosen homeland, New York, where she began once again to fight for her place in the fashion world.

The way to the top

Success did not just fall into the lap of this talented, ambitious young Swiss woman. Slowly however she began to gain the interest of the buyers of the well-known stores, ready-to-wear manufacturers and editors of the large-circulation women's magazines. Even "Vogue" featured her designs. Then she won first prize in a "Diamonds and Fashion" contest for the most original creations — she showed diamonds on blue jeans and on an old sunshade. As a result, the name of "Annemarie Gardin" appeared in all the newspapers. Untiring efforts, continuous hard work and a constant supply of brilliant ideas slowly but surely helped her on her way to the top. Today this dynamic Swiss designer runs three ready-to-wear factories — one in America and two in Italy — which produce two to three thousand dresses for her every month, for sale in shops and boutiques as well as in famous stores like Saks Bloomingdale and others, for American women have no objection to wearing mass-produced clothes, even if the models

are in the higher price brackets. The main thing is that they are in keeping with the latest fashion and correspond to the latest trends in design and colour.

"I design dresses in the dressy to elegant sporty style for the open-minded, career-conscious and independent woman, who in spite of her career still retains a sense of humour and above all wishes to remain feminine!" she says. — That is to say women like herself. She buys all her materials in Europe, and favours softly flowing fabrics, featuring designs in small repeats and quietly matching colours. For a single model — which is then produced in the required quantities — she needs roughly 4,400 yards in 2-3 combinations of colours. "What Swiss fabric manufacturers wishing to export to America should understand", says Annemarie Gardin, "is that it is not so much the intrinsic quality of an article that counts but its fashionable quality. The average American woman is not looking for something that will last, she is looking for something fashionable that will enable her to feel quite different!"

In love with fashion... and with New York

Annemarie Gardin really lives only for fashion. In her studio she designs every single model of her collection herself, has it prepared down to the last detail with all its accessories, so that it can serve as a prototype for massproduction. She keeps a very close watch on production in her ready-to-wear companies for she does not want to risk receiving complaints from any of her famous clients. Competition is fierce and her ambition to stay right on top is as strong as ever. "Not only for financial reasons", she laughs, "but because I am in love with fashion and my profession. I cannot imagine life without my work; similarly I need the hustle and bustle of this world capital on the Hudson to stimulate me. Yet when I grow old I shall come back to Switzerland. I have already had a house built there for me... but until then I still have a great deal to do!"