PAGE 1

Pretty color; easy fashion

TOGETHER AGAIN!

News at night, right—the look of a top and, instead of pants, a long slim skirt—this season’s newest “pijama dressing!” Here’s Geoffrey Beene’s super-soft, north-of-south-version—blue-eyed, gray-pink plaid silk crepe. Geoffrey designed the shirt-and-sash-side and one of his new T-shirt-based tops. And a beautiful way it unwraps—beautifully. Gianfranco Ferré, about $950. At Lord & Taylor, N.Y.; Gattle’s, Bal Harbour; Magnin; Liberty House, Hawaii. Accessories and men’s fashion details, next to last page. These 12 pages: hair, Harry King of Cinandre; makeup, Way Bandy.

The kind of dress a lot of women have been beating the bushes for years, left—a short, simply pretty late-day/little-dinner dress—banana silk crepe de Chine, bare-necked, with sleeves that just slip off the shoulder. Monty Susman for Mollie Parnis; Altair, Coondogale Silk Company. About $385. Bergdorf Goodman; Saks; Neiman-Marcus; Lillie Rubin—South and West; Swanson’s. A reminder: those woodsy, misty scents for men (Aramis for one) are a nice mood-changer at night. And who knows, maybe your scents won’t clash.

*Images: models in gray-pink plaid dress and yellow wrap dress, leaning and walking on stairs. Series of smaller frames showing playful stairway scenes.*

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PAGE 2

Part of the fashion idiom: “easy dressing”—meaning dressing that’s unstudied, uncomplicated, easy to wear… all in an attractive, polished, real-life way. The concept’s American. We started it. We do it best. And we keep doing it better. This season, “easy” goes to a whole new level—racier, sharper, more sophisticated. What does it: fabric with more character, patterns with more strength, more precision… color!

There’s a new character to Ralph Lauren’s sportier American classics, like his traditional trousers, this page, are in a bold floral print of silk, and his shawl-collared “robe” is vivid purple in soft, languorous silk charmeuse. Another plus: these looks needn’t wait for warm weather, a resort—this is terrific at-home dressing any time. Trousers, about $358. Robe-jacket, about $658. Late Dec. at Saks Fifth Avenue, NYC; Hudson-Belk’s, Raleigh NC; Polo/Ralph Lauren, San Antonio. Ring and bracelet, Paloma Picasso for Tiffany & Co. Donald Judd chair, courtesy Max Protetch Gallery, NYC.

Everybody loved the look, the Fred Astaire nonchalance of Ralph Lauren’s impeccable, classic trousers… in brilliant chrome silk charmeuse, opposite. Here, played against a navy double-breasted wool gabardine jacket and white tank. Trousers, about $358. Jacket, about $396. Late December at Barneys New York; Polo/Ralph Lauren, Costa Mesa CA; Polo/Ralph Lauren, Denver, Polo/Ralph Lauren, San Francisco. Rings and bracelets, Bulgari at the Pierre Hotel, NYC. Elizabeth Jackson chair for Arc International, Inc., NYC. These, next two pages: hair, Madeleine Cofano for Bruno Dessange; makeup, Laura Mercier. Details, more stores, last pages.

*Images: models in bold floral trousers, purple robe, and yellow scarf; second in bright yellow pants and black jacket with polka-dot scarf.*

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A STRONG SENSE OF EASE

Typical of this “laid back” American approach: very polished sweater-and-skirt dressing for low-key evenings. And what a sweater-and-skirt this is! By Ralph Lauren, this page, a long, soft-moving, bias-cut skirt of flag-red silk crepe de Chine with a generously sized navy cotton turtleneck sweater. The turtleneck—so important this winter—keeps evolving for warm weather, with long sleeves, short sleeves, even on halters. Skirt, about $258. Sweater, about $198. Turnout late December at Allcott & Andrews, NYC; Short Hills NJ; Hartford CT; Washington DC; Polo/Ralph Lauren, Atlanta; Polo/Ralph Lauren, Ft. Lauderdale. Elizabeth Jackson chair for Arc International, Inc., NYC.

Pure pow! The dress everybody applauded, wanted!—Donna Karan’s—opposite. In double-faced, full-bodied bright red silk—strong shouldered, tightly cinched at the waist, with a graceful, ankle-length skirt—it sets up a whole new definition of shape and kind of dressing for easy evenings. Donna Karan New York. About $890. Late December. At Bloomingdale’s, L.H. Rogers, Salem MA; Alexander’s, Virginia Beach; Hudson’s, Hattie; Palm Beach FL and Scottsdale AZ; Eleanor Keeshan, Los Angeles. Chair, Lawrence Originals, c. 1960, courtesy Fifty-50, NYC. Details, more stores, see last pages.

*Images: models in red silk dress, navy sweater and red skirt, posed on geometric red-and-white chairs.*

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A STRONG SENSE OF EASE… PATTERNS ARE PRECISE, SHARP—UNSENTIMENTAL

The best of these patterns, when they aren’t in strong color, are in strong black or navy with white, like this very attractive city dressing for working women—easy to wear, but polished, meant to be taken seriously. David Hayes’s black-and-white suit, left: a body-close, pointed-edge jacket and short, narrow skirt, both in strongly textured silk cloque—a look that moves from day into evening. About $460.

Regimental precision—the navy-and-white stripes, right—of Gloria Sachs’s silk button-back blouse and classic trouser, all the raciness of a jumpsuit. Top, about $220. Trousers, about $290. And then there are patterns so precise, they give you a feeling of texture. Anne Klein’s starring jacket, left—long, clean, collarless—continues in black-and-white, perfect proportion with this short, slim linen/satin skirt; with trousers. Louis Dell’Olio for Anne Klein & Co. Jacket, about $380; skirt, about $160. Jewelry, Paloma Picasso for Tiffany & Co.

Another attractive jacket, right, by Mondi, in navy gabardine, slightly more classic but not blazer-y—it’s longer, more relaxed, it moves. Here, over matching trousers, a white shirt. Jacket, about $209. Trousers, about $160. Shirt, about $120. Hair, Edward Tricomi for Pipino-Buccheri, NYC; makeup, Laura Mercier. Details, more stores, see last pages.

*Images: models in patterned black-and-white and navy outfits, posed in studio and seated near luxury car.*

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A STRONG SENSE OF EASE… THE SINGULAR CHARM OF A SOFT SUIT IN A STRONG MIX OF PATTERNS

Usually hard to find: suit dressing that strikes the right balance between crispness and ease. You find it, opposite, in Oscar de la Renta’s striking plaid/check suit of navy-and-white wool—the jacket lightly shaped and rounded; the skirt short, narrow, slit; the look sharpened by the jolt of a red-and-white striped silk blouse. About $1190. Late January at Saks Fifth Avenue; Sara Fredericks, Boston & Palm Beach; Montaldo’s; Higbee’s; Balle’s. Jean Prouvé chair, Global Furniture, NYC.

In a more dressed mood, this page, Bill Blass’s soft-falling 7/8 coat and slim skirt, in a deep, knee-length shaft of gray silk, in a controlled, allover “palmette” print (fabric, Abraham) with a striped silk halter that wraps at the waist (Blass, Telos). Gray at night, a pulled-together, charming way to look. About $2570. Late January at Saks Fifth Avenue, NYC; Sara Fredericks, Boston; Martha, Palm Beach & Bloomingdale’s, Holt Baldwin, St. Petersburg, OH; Frost Bros. Hair, Ray Allington for Vidal Sassoon; makeup, Margaret Avery. Details, more stores, last pages.

*Images: models in plaid suit with striped blouse and gray patterned coat, posed leaning against luxury car at night.*

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