

Wardrobing - Model A Style

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In today's computer savvy, cell phone frenzy, "hold that taxi" kind of world, we are anxious to make our clothing dollars stretch. A look back to our very own Model A era provides a good example. Throughout the decades, wardrobing has proven to be both helpful and wise for the fashion conscious lady who wants to keep an eye on her budget but have that "in" look for the season. Not many ladies could afford to buy complete new outfits twice a year. For those who could afford to do so, it was considered just too big a task because of all the required planning and purchasing. For those who made their own garments the time needed to fit them was significant.

Then, as now, the choice of purchasing garments to build a solid wardrobe was suggested as a good plan to follow. You could make additions along the way from season to season to update or enhance your wardrobe without spending an exorbitant amount of money. In August, ladies began to plan for the fall and winter seasons. One of the key elements was the choice of fabrics and colors so they could be worn year-round. This reduced the clothing budget a great deal. Also staying away from faddish outfits and a lot of frills, that would soon be outdated, was strongly recommended. Of course, the need for the "in look" of a summer dress was also understood but not one that was expensive. The major idea was to select a garment that could easily be used from fall to winter and winter to spring. If a velvet garment were chosen, it would definitely be for the winter season. It was also recommended if velvet were chosen that it should have an ample hem and movable belt so it could be changed to match the fashion trend.

Another bit of advice to ensure an outfit's design did not reflect on the past season was to select a printed silk with a dark background. This would also allow it to be well suited for cool weather. The same was true with the purchase of cottons. Cottons plus silks could be worn repeatedly and had the advantage of washing well which was another point to consider in making the long-term wardrobe plan. Selecting fabrics, which would not only wash well but also have an appearance, which would last for many seasons made great sense to busy people, and it kept them free of constant and costly care of their clothes.

In selecting a winter coat it was strongly recommended that a wardrobe planner purchase one made of sturdy wool with simple lines and having a minimum of good quality fur trim from a long-wearing pelt. These characteristics would prove satisfactory in the long run rather than choosing a more elaborate style. This kind of coat was easily worn from early fall to late spring. Color selection was also a key part in selecting a coat. Choices of tan, gray or grayish blue were suggested as less tiresome and could be used with more combinations of hats and outfits.

It was noted that since Easter was no longer the designated point between straw and felt hats, one could wear their favorites from one season to the next if chosen wisely.

The advantages of making one's own outfits provided many benefits over purchasing readymade. You could choose better fabrics, adjust the garment to suit your figure better and display a quality of individuality.

A sample of the style of dresses made and worn during 1930 is shown on this page. The two models pictured together give an example of what was chosen by the more mature woman. The model with the jabot is a design directly from Paris and the model with the surplice closing for the larger woman is made of a tiny pin-dot fabric with a flat crepe collar. The third model pictured depicts a flattering design, which was easy to make.

Ladies were reminded not to buy and store new clothes away for some event in the future because styles would change and fads would come and go and no one wanted to look like last year's fashion scene.

In the overall review of planning and purchasing a wardrobe during the Model A years, times have changed but the wisdom of purchasing fewer pieces of good quality remains. The main objective was and is to look one's best when going to church, a friend's home or social event.



Note: Fashion resource information and examples are from a 1930 issue of The Country Gentleman.

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