



## A TASTE OF QUALITY

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# Students are influencing trends of top designers

By Laure Perlinger

Fashion has long influenced college students across the country. And changing times have brought changing fashion trends. But the tables have turned, and today the students are influencing top-of-the-line designers and providing creative ideas for designer looks of the 80s.

The "preppy" look, originating from the college campus, is becoming popular throughout the country, said Warren Hirsch, president of Gloria Vanderbilt Murjani International in New York City. "People are going back to those traditional looks," he said.

Fashion is influenced by color and mood, according to Hirsch. "In times of depression, you want to wear something to brighten your day."

Denim is a very big seller, along with 100 percent cotton, and yarn-dyed plaids. "The basic body of the jean has become a lifestyle," said Hirsch. This spring the baggy jeans will be going out, but there is a new version of the baggy, called the trouser, which is less "balloony" and not as tapered at the hemline. It will give a woman more shape, he said.

### Shorter skirts

The trend in skirts is shorter, with noticeable change by spring. Tops in new colors will be marketed soon.

Gloria Vanderbilt oversees the entire advertising, promotion and personnel department of Murjani International. "We do sit down with her and discuss fabrication and color to be used," said Hirsch, referring to himself and the designers and merchandisers, "but she can no longer be primarily involved with every detail of the corporation."

"We have five designers and three merchandisers who basically create the products," said Hirsch. There are six presentations per year, with a constant cycle of fashion creation and production. Some type of new product is marketed every 60 days. The total time from creation of a particular design until it is marketed usually runs 120 to 180 days, said Hirsch, who with other Murjani personnel travels extensively to promote Gloria Vanderbilt designs.

### Biggest success

The company recently introduced merchandise in the United Kingdom, the biggest success in a single day since Murjani International's beginning, three and one half years ago, according to Hirsch.

"The English are ultraconservative people, but the colors and styles were so exciting that they (fashions) stood out like a sore thumb, and they loved them," he said.

The company introduced designs for the first time ever at the House of Lourdes, and just last week held a "Gloria Vanderbilt Week" in Philadelphia.

These promotional trips enable Murjani International to introduce their latest designs to fashion companies and ultimately to the consumers themselves. If consumers want it, they'll look for it in the store and buy it, Hirsch said.

Gloria Vanderbilt Murjani employs about 300 workers, including personnel from executive, designing, sales, computer, cargo and shipping departments. Since its beginning, the company has grown to a \$325 million business.

"We just don't allow for setbacks," said Hirsch. "We haven't had a setback yet in over three years."

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