



Smithsonian Institution

National Museum of African American History and Culture

Playbill for Porgy and Bess

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ON A PERSONAL BIAS by Bernice Peck

Presidents' wives, like opera singers, seem to come in smaller sizes these days. Rosalynn Carter is just right for the job. She wears a Size 6. And that's even allowing for the 7 lbs. she gained during the campaign, tucking into big hurried sandwiches couple or three times a day. Skirts are selling. Not to worry. Pants are here to stay. Many manufacturers report that their fall pants are outselling skirts 2 to 1. There are a dozen variations, from knickers, jodphurs, calf-length cutoffs, etc. but the latest pant look is the one I like: real skinny lanky and lean. They call it the cigarette or the stovepipe.

At the top: Every designer, from wild to mild, has used hoods. On everything—coats, sweaters, blouses, lounge clothes—you name it. There are also snappy little boyish caps (Halston did one beauty in bright red felt, also an Ultrasuede skullcap banded in ribbed wool). Plenty of fedoras for the hattier girls. Babushkas are back.

Down Memory Lane: It seems to me since breasty bareness became commonplace. But one of the first pointers was back in a March '68 Vogue. It showed st. Laurent's crystal-clear black chiffon blouse posed winsomely over the budding nipples of Penelope Tree. Most of us didn't think it would catch on, but since then it's all been downhill and upfront, and Cosmo has done a heap in taking the bosom out of the closet ...

1969 was the year hems hit their most disoblighing heights, 4 or 5 inches above many knees scarce fit to be glimpsed, let alone displayed. Even Liz Taylor's looked lumpy and just, well, funny. But some of those gawky short dresses are still making it these nights. Over pants or long slim skirts, they're tunics.

Parties: It's a new thing, don't ask me why, to serve up hors d'oeuvres on mirrors... The John Hoffman Modelling Agency is said to have look-alikes for a dozen stars, from John Wayne to Liz Taylor. Renting a few for a party might wow your friends, or anyway annoy them... At a big Newport weekend last summer, one considerate couple fetched along butler, maid, chauffeur and cook to help out around the house... Caviar is now \$135 a lb. This is not: A can of Sell's Liver Pâté fork-mashed smoothly with 1/4 ripe avocado and a little mayonnaise to hold it. Serve on simple crackers like Carr's Water Biscuits. Quite yummy.

My rich thrifty friend Margo is infuriating. Like, I finally blew \$60 for a marvelous silk shirt, and a week later she copped it off marked down to 1/2. And she's so rich. Me, I never dast order less than 1/2 lb. of a fine goody at our elegant charcuterie. Margo, they cut 1/4 lbs. for her, and Saran-Wrap them, yet... Our upper-class butcher likes to make me cringe if I ask for an Economy cut. Not Margo, though. He throws in an indulgent smile and a bone for the dog (she makes soup out of it). So why should I like Margo?

Fragments: "Ron's the kind of guy who'd keep a pocket calculator in his pajama top" ... "The Hustle isn't the greatest, but it'll have to do till the gavotte comes back" ... "It's like shopping at Bendel's, I always come out feeling divine" ... "Warren Beatty says Jerry Brown is a very honest guy" ... "And now peanut ice cream will probably outsell maple walnut" ... "If Betty ran, I might vote for her" ... "Dope, anexoria isn't a skin disease, it's where dames are so scared of gaining weight they under-eat until their bones poke out" ... "Diane is so phony she even rehearses kissing in the mirror" ... "At every meeting Harry throws out a great idea--usually his assistant's" ... "Oh, knock it off, if Burton doesn't light Susan Hunt's cigarettes who are you to be so fancy?" ... "I saw it--Toots, the old fizzer, really did poke his snout into her cleavage" ... "Edna has ant-industry and energy, but she's strictly Miss No-Talent" ... "She'd be a beast even if her skin cleared up."

[[advertisement]]
Add two candles, soft music, and serve.
[[image: close-up photo of a bottle of Grand Marnier]]



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