

Published April 24th, 2024

Looking Good in Lamorinda

By Moya Stone



Shirtwaist dress in spring print at J.McLaughlin.
 Photos Moya Stone

What's exciting about the start of a new season? Besides a shift in the weather, it's the thought of new fashions. Femininity is the theme for spring 2024; on the runways designers were loving lace, bows, sheer fabrics, and long dresses. Elle magazine says, "the sweet aesthetic will reign supreme this spring." Other trends that I'm excited about include striped T-shirts and polo shirts. Both tops work well casually with shorts or more dressed-up with the classic pencil skirt. For an extra fashion punch, pair the polo with a scarf.

Patty Giammona, Assistant Store Manager at J.McLaughlin in Lafayette, filled me in on what's big this season: "Vibrant florals, statement accessories, and natural hued sandals that go with everything." When I recently popped into the store, Sales Associate Michele Nagel showed me, around pointing out new items for spring including wide-leg jeans, floral print blouses, and wicker handbags. They have a selection of shirt-waist dresses in interesting prints (with pockets!), which are great for summer travel. Belts continue to be an important accent piece and J.McLaughlin has raffia belts in spring-friendly colors: navy blue, yellow, and orange. Put together a new spring ensemble and head over to the de Young Museum to view their current exhibition Fashioning San Francisco: A Century of Style. A smash hit since its opening in January, this exhibit features over 100 couture and high fashion pieces worn by prominent

SF Bay Area women. More than fifty designers are represented including Jeanne Lanvin, Rei Kawakubo, Christian Dior, Vivienne Westwood, Christopher John Rogers, and Alexander McQueen, just to name a few. Fashioning San Francisco is divided into seven sections that smoothly transition from one to the next. Something new (at least to me) is the use of two levels of mannequin displays, called - balconies - one on top of the other. I liked the simplicity and use of space, plus it felt fresh while offered viewing from a distance. Also new and great fun is Snap AR Activation, which allows attendees to "try on" some of the couture in the exhibit. Stand in front of a screen and like magic it will drape your reflection in a beautiful gown. (Don't miss it - it's located downstairs from the main exhibit.) Fashioning San Francisco: A Century of Style is on now through Aug. 11.

I was saddened to hear that Macy's in Union Square is closing. What a void that will leave both in the downtown area and in many hearts. Macy's was my go-to department store when I was in high school. One summer I worked part-time in the Juniors Fashion Department ironing the new stock before it went out on the floor. I got a kick out of being behind the scenes where some of the back stock was kept and where models tried things on for fashion shows. There are lots of stories like mine in Lost Department Stores of San Francisco (The History Press) by Anne Evers Hitz, a fifth-generation San Franciscan. In her book, Hitz tells about the rise and fall of some of the prominent downtown department stores, including the Emporium, The White House, The City of Paris, I. Magnin, and Joseph Magnin, among others. She digs deep into the history of each store, covering when each opened, what made it successful, and what contributed to its decline. I particularly enjoyed all the stories she includes from former employees and customers.

Finally, congratulations to Assistance League Thrift Shop in Lafayette who won "Best Thrift Shop" in The East Bay Times. Stop by and see what fashionable treasure you might find for your spring wardrobe.

Enjoy the new season and go forth in style.

Moya Stone is a fashion writer and blogger at www.overdressedforlife.com



Wicker and leather handbags are available at J.McLaughlin. Photos Moya Stone

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