



Southern Style

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[Men's Attire](#)

[Tibi Dress](#)

[Office Shirt](#)

[Animal Print](#)

Dressed to the Nines

By Linda Russell

I couldn't find what I was looking for at the 2008 PGA show in Orlando, FL. I wanted sunglasses that would make me keep my eye on the ball. I wanted shorts that would make my hips turn. I wanted a cap that would keep my head still. But the designers were focused on other things, like performance fabrics, vibrant colors and attention to detail.

Fashions at the PGA Expo seemed ho hum at first with the same ole' spandex-enhanced designer shorts that came to the knee, short skorts that didn't, Capri pants for the long lean look and shirts with side vents worn outside the pants. As the models at the fashion show marched along the runway like graceful mustangs, pitching their ponytails at every turn, I saw the industry had found innovative ways of enhancing the old looks. Many of the shorts were adorned with silver or gold enhancements, ribbons of some type, or buttons and studs along the outer leg, all artfully done (adding greatly to the price of the clothing, yet adding nothing to the art of the game.) There were plaids and stripes, pleats and no-pleats, and prints and solids in lively colors.

And the shoes, ah, the shoes! There were sandals and Mary Janes; some were pastels and some were skins. There were lace-ups and Velcros, classic oxfords and nouveau low-cut trends showing toe cleavage. Golfstream shoes (www.golfstreamshoes.com) had the biggest selections. But alas, for me, none were in double-wides.

When the show ended, I knew I needed a closer look and began my trek around the individual booths. I snapped pictures of a rainbow of shirts hanging in a row at Cutter & Buck. Most had collars with nice stitching and cap sleeves; the sleeveless tops had exaggerated indentions at the shoulders to enhance the deltoids. This is a good thing since we're building up our deltoids to divert attention from our wings. The colors weren't different really, but richer, with more intensity. What distinguished them from last year was layering in unusual combinations. Instead of pink and green, pink might have been combined with yellow and orange.

Some shorts at the various booths were slim body-huggers and others had pleats. (I swore off pleats years ago.) The fabrics of the shorts and skirts were fabulous wrinkle-free materials that moved like melted butter against one another. Jamie Sadock had some savvy sweaters in yummy yellows and rich reds at her booth. I was taking pictures when a hand lowered my camera with a "Sorry, Jamie doesn't allow pictures unless you check with her first." I was directed to Ms. Sadock who looked like Sally Struthers. She was short (shorter than I am), huge yellow curly hair, a dynamite smile and layers upon layers of clothing — with black dominating but topped with vivid colors. She wore snazzy yellow boots and looked hot! (Not in the contemporary sense, but in the traditional temperature sense.) She was in deep conversation with some men who looked far more important than I, so I circled the booth trying desperately to see something unique. Her clothes are highly stylized with asymmetrical lines, keyholes, animal stripes and intricate details, such as little surprise zippers or braiding down the sleeves, exquisitely designed. One golf sweater had a faux-fur collar. But there seems to be a sameness about them that doesn't appeal to me, so I left. (She never got to talk to me.)

LIJA Golf showcased four new collections — Eye Candy, Runway Luxe, Spring Fling and Sweet Georgia Brown. (Tells you a lot, doesn't it? Full descriptions are available at www.lijastyle.com.) The "game-enhancing elements of the collections include comfortable, eco-friendly fibers (Al Gore would approve) that dry quickly and wick away moisture, provide odor-resistance, are breathable and anti-static." Their line embraced beautiful prints and coordinated accessories, but they didn't have those shorts I was looking for.

Tehama (my personal favorite) is a Native American word that means "abundance of nature." This company (www.tehamainc.com), which represents a line of high-end, contemporary sportswear for men and women, unveiled their IZOD G line of technical golf wear that emphasizes fabrics made of polyester and micro fiber with SPF 40 sun protection. These no-iron materials are particularly appealing to women who would rather wrap their hand around a dry martini than a steaming iron.

The most avant-garde style of golf wear for women was exhibited by Green Tee Apparel (www.greenteeapparel.com). These young designers say, "Our apparel provides an alternative to traditional golf wear and is not bound by conventional fairway fashion. Green Tee Apparel clothing is constructed with nanotechnology fabrics that repel liquids, resist wrinkles, dry fast and breathe." I especially like the "repel liquids" part because it's really hard for me to eat a hot dog on the course without spilling mustard on my shirt. Their styles include halter dresses with invisible side pockets and some nice buttoned polo dresses with front pockets and accent waistbands. Plus, their models aren't emaciated, spaghetti thin string beans, but rather healthy in stature, more like some of us.

Carter Humphrey (www.carterhumphrey.com) also advertised golf dresses. Some are shirtdresses; others are called Placket and Mod. One

particularly clown-looking dress with a floppy, fluffy collar was called the “Jackie Dress.” Could they possibly mean Jackie O? They, too, have the classic polo dress with silver buttons and small ball pocket. Very chic!

Many manufacturers and designers emphasize their golf clothes are transitional, moving easily and fashionably from golf course to restaurant. Since almost all the clothing is wrinkle-free, odor-proof and stain resistant, and oh, so haute couture, it surely must look fabulous when adorned with a little jewelry and the right shoes for nighttime. So when next you see me at a local bistro, I just might be sporting a “onesie” that I wore on the golf course that afternoon ... or I just might not. I don't know.

But I do know that the new lines for spring and fall '08 are fabulous and will coordinate well with last year's looks — if last year's clothes survived the washing and ironing.