



Howdy Fashionistas! I'm back!

Yes! FASHIONGRANNY has returned from her whirlwind European fashion investigative tour with great news, good news and ho-hum news. Before I get into that, just let me tell you how beautiful Paris was in especial!

I know many of my FASHIONGRANNY readers have had the pleasure of a trip to Paris and will echo my sentiments in heralding, undoubtedly, one of the most beautiful cities on the planet.

When Paris is “on”, every iota of view that your eye is fortunate enough to land on takes your breath away, and there is every possibility you may cry real tears. I did. Couldn’t help myself! The weather was perfect, in the high ‘70s, an occasional thunderstorm to clear the air, and the air... Yes! The air was clear! Cumulus clouds in overdrive, marshmallow puffy against an azure sky. Paris makes you poetic.

Then you add all the old stuff. Architecture, that has and appears as though it will last forever. Constructed when there were artisans or at least the artisans were allowed to art around. Maybe even forced to. Whatever it takes!

Even walking on centuries old cobblestones impressed me. They held the soles of my feet in captivity and seemed to imbue me divinely with the knowledge of “who had walked these streets before,” including the fashionistas of the past. Did Coco stand here on the Pont Neuf and declare, “I see a classic embellished two piece suit with my initials enameled on all the buttons, that will stand the test of time and women will wear and purchase from here to eternity!?” It could’ve happened.

I also ate myself into oblivion, which is an important part of the Paris experience. There wasn’t one thing that I put in my mouth that wasn’t the most delectable, tastiest morsel, from the brioche in the morning with my café ole, to the delicatessen salad and fresh bread. French, Chinese, Lebanese, Greek, Thai, Italian cuisine... whatever your epicurean fancy, thy will be done in Paris!

For those of you who haven't been to Paris, just think of the most beautiful day in your fantasy playground, add the words "perfect vacation" to it, along with "good eats" and "nobody you know," and you will not even be close to understanding, so go. Plan a trip soon while it's still there.

My great news is that contrary to the daily dismal outlook of the world's condition, on the other side of the pond the spirit of the people cannot be denied!

Individualism and random acts of kindness continue to spring forth despite the circumstances. Survival instinct can be seen sharpening itself against the same, as the two blades hone each other raw. Blade against blade in the ready for the clean cuts needed to maneuver all aspects of today's climate.

This brings me to the good news. The peeps in Paris did not disappoint! Repeatedly, the French mix up fashion into a stew of confusion and it still works! China and Chinese goods are prevalent; there is no doubt the Dragon is taking over! Quality suffers here, and quantity is a problem. There is a bombardment of cheap, poorly made "stuff" and way too much of the same stuff!

Yet, all the fashion houses, from Chanel to Dries Van Noten are still the rage for me, and remain a Paris staple, with their "hand stitched turned silk edgings" et. al, still alive and vital. You know the drill of course, about European women, wearing fashion and fashion trends in

spite of body size. This is a fact, and it was nice and pleasing to the eye to see women FASHIONGRANNY'S age, (older, that's all you need to know) not afraid to explore! Everybody had on an "outfit"! There was thought put into the outfits of most people on the street, tourists included.

Designers are all over the place with this season's fashion. There is a most schizophrenic element to these collections. A one shouldered dress complete with a jacket sawed in half, and one of your Moms scarves put in as a sleeve would put you right on trend this year. Think of people as art and this season's fashions as integral.

Here lies the little game I play with myself. If I think all fashion is art, I find myself less critical of it.

Fashion is definitely reflecting the times in which we live. It is so all over the place, you almost can't go wrong. This One World look is something else, and there *is* a One World look. America has a major part in the definition of this fashion, it's plain to see. Just take the amount of jeans and tees the people wear. Athletic shoes and hoodies. Grown men and women with Abercrombie logos. Nike, Nike, Nike! If it weren't for the different languages spoken, I'd have thought I was in America with this One World Look. There seems to be a lot of scarf wearing also. Not just on Muslim women's heads, but also around the neck in that PLO fashion. There are scarves everywhere! It's a look that's been around for a while and it appears as though it's here to stay!

I got the feeling that I should also reach back into my closet and pull out that longer skirt, a couple of simple cashmere sweaters, a pair of narrow legged pants, some piece of fur, on a sweater or wrap of sorts. A lot of sequins and larger paillettes were sewn on boy shorts and mini skirts, and I reflected on why I hadn't kept my favorite Hot Pant outfit from back in the day. That look? It's back!

In a great commentary about the fashion times written by Tina Gaudoin for the *Wall Street Journal*, I was gassed to find we both had assessed this season simultaneously. Miss Gaudoin wrote that, "we are a world in crisis and confusion, and our fashion shows this exactly. Fashion matters because along with all the important political, economic and social stuff, it helps to inform our world view." I couldn't agree more. It shows, and "it's a good thing, Martha"! With all this Global Sameness, fashion individuality might be the last allowed expression of self.

I guess the ho hum news would be "everything old is new again," and finding I say this often, I am guessing I subscribe to its tenets. It's ok. Bring out the old and on with the new! I am re-energized, therefore excited!

FASHIONGRANNY is glad to be home and I can't wait to see how my little berg fares this season against big city fashion. Bring it on!

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