

Chapter 14

PAR EXCELLENCE

Psalm 31: 24

Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope on the Lord.

DIAGNOSIS

Even after putting forth our best effort, layers of darkness sometimes fall around our being through no fault of our own. We simply open the windows of our soul to not only despair, but hearing the sound of the message, "Get your house in order. Your time on this earth is quickly running out."

Thus, after spending countless hours designing trendsetting fashions for an array of manufactures in the women's clothing industry, these bleak words were spoken to Dick Du Puis by his physician. As he lay in the hospital diagnosed with hepatitis, his condition was deemed terminal.

Furthermore, to make matters worse, the company he had served so well was denying medical insurance and workman's compensation, stating the cause of Dick's illness to not be work related.

However, fortunately for Dick, a student from UCLA who was writing a thesis, requested permission to study his case. Thus, after analyzing blood samples, it was concluded that no one in the United States had ever contracted this form of hepatitis and connected the source to fruit from Australia.

Consequently, Australia being the supplier of fruit to the locations where Dick conducted business trips, his company, "Neal of California" had to pay for all medical expenses and workman's compensation. Then, adding even more hardship as Dick struggled to live; he was told his services as a clothing designer were terminated.

However, proving that only God knows the exact second each of us will be called into his presence, Dick Du Puis's journey was not yet over. He still had places to go, people to see and above all, God's work to accomplish. Although wounded in mind, body and soul, he miraculously pulled through and went home to convalesce. Then, ironically, after the news spread of his recovery, the company that had treated him so shabbily invited him back as a designer once again.

However, it is when we are trudging through deserts of diminished hope that light streams its long-awaited radiance, clearing the dark-draped regions of our souls. It proclaims the direction of life's journey so clearly that it summons us into a new direction that is abounding with God's unimaginable blessings.

OWN BUSINESS

Since the long-ago dream of designing and sewing women's clothing had so deeply rooted itself in Dick's heart, no matter the trials or tribulations faced, it could not be erased. Therefore, as his strength returned, he began to make plans for going out on his own; a new venture that called for change and courage. After all, during the years of working as a company employee, critical experiences along with a list of private clients had grown immeasurably. Also, since only two of his children now still lived at home, the basement level of his historic house would be the perfect location for this workshop.

Additionally, he determined his specialty would be designing clothing for the entire wedding party; bridal gowns, bridesmaids dresses, and mother of the bride attire. Not only would Dick design and sew the wedding garments, but would literally supervise every aspect to assure a complete look for each individual in the party. (Manicuring of nails, make up, and hair style) He would be present from beginning to end of the wedding, making sure the garments were fluffed up appropriately for a perfect finish.

This decided, he opened his doors for business, causing word of mouth recommendations to spread like wild fire. Given the fact that he contracted to design and sew the clothing for the entire wedding party, the length of time for completion would range from 6 months to one year.

As a result of his unique talent and customer service, by June, Dick's calendar was booked for the year. Consequently, Dick spent 15 years providing customers with such superior products and services that he was labeled by all as the preeminent designer; a much sought after and highly recognized individual.

Also, during this time, his very loyal existing clients kept him busy by writing their engagements on his calendar, indicating the due date for a completed garment to wear at

each event. (Opening of the opera or Academy Awards to name a couple) Then, after specifying the event, they would give him free rein to make all their decisions regarding the garment; a demonstration of complete trust in his ability.

In order for you, the reader, to realize Dick Du Puis' understanding of what it took to please a customer, plus his own trait of being a perfectionist, included for your enjoyment is a newspaper profile about his business and personality. It will show why Dick's business grew so quickly that he found it necessary to turn away customers. If he could not deliver perfect garments and a memorable experience for the customer, he would simply decline the opportunity.

PAR EXCELLENCE



A bride's best friend her fashion designer.

ACALADES BEYOND BELIEF!

Profile: Richard DuPuis

By Shirley Saltman One of the nicest parts of daughter's recent wedding was having all our dresses designed and executed by Richard DuPuis of Pasadena. We got Dick's name from a friend of a friend who had him design her daughter's wedding

gown.

We first met Dick several months ago when we went to his 100-year-old Spanish mansion to meet him and find out what he could do for us. We were in for one of the grandest treats of our lives. Dick not only designs all his clothes, but he also creates the patterns and sews every stitch himself. His creations are works of art.

We watched as the bride's dress, the three attendants' gowns and my own lovely Mother-of-the-Bride were created. We quickly realized that what DuPuis does is to paint each person's picture; but instead of using oil and canvas, his media is fine silks and satins. His clothes totally reflected each of us and watching him go from sketch to finished dress was a thrill of a lifetime.

lick began sewing when he was a mere lad of 12 growing up in Louisiana. When he was 16 he entered a contest and his dress was the winner. (He competed against adults who had sewn for years.) In 1963, his dress design was chosen for display in the L.A. Museum of Natural History in Ex-position Park as a representation of the clothes of that year.

He began working in L.A.'s fashion industry as a young lad and learned everything from design to patternmaking to the actual fine sewing, a rare combination of talents and abilities in one

Each time we would go for a fitting (which we must admit we did more than was necessary) we would enjoy tea in Dick's new modern kitchen. Often he would treat

just made, fresh bread with jam he had canned from his garden supply, quiche, or the best cookies ever eaten. His culinary skills matched his sewing abilities. One day we had a tea freshly brewed from just-picked garden herbs. Delicious.

One of the reasons DuPuis turns out such incredible creations is that he is a true perfectionist. The underslip he made for our bride had a small spot of something on it after it was finished. We assured him that no one would ever know. He said he would know and he made us another slip. He spent hours creating a pillow for the ring bearer. He wasn't thrilled with the result and spent more hours creating another one (which absolutely was a work of art).

The other thing that constantly amazed us was rare ability engineering the complicated dresses. We would sit by the hour watching him work in his basement workshop (yep, a real basement but more properly called a cellar since one could gain access from the outside cellar door).

In our frequent visits, we also met some of Dick's five children plus one adopted daughter plus two foster children. Dick was left a widower many years ago and raised the children by himself. His beautiful daughter Jodie will be getting married in June. We were so impressed with her that we invited her to join her dad as our guest at our wedding.

We were amused when Jodie related how she told her co-workers during the time of Princess Diana's wedding that her dad makes more beautiful wedding dresses than the one she wore. Her friends scoffed. We are here to testify that Jodie was right. daughter's dress was more beautiful than any wedding dress we have ever seen. It was an exciting experience. us to delicacies which he had A gift from a talented artist.

As the chapters have unfolded in this book, the talent God bestowed on Dick Du Puis at birth should now be painted vividly in the minds of one and all. After walking with him on his life's journey, it is absolutely understandable why at age 15 he was able to sketch in such a mature fashion. Having been born with a fire in his belly for designing and sewing women's clothing that could not be extinguished; he mastered techniques and broke creative boundaries that surpassed even those possessing the wildest imaginations. This teamed with enormous grit and courage; he waded against the current and climbed impossible mountains reaching unimaginable heights; all the way to the pinnacle of success. He stood up for what he believed and was not desirous of the lime light, but wanted only to create such sensational garments that women would feel special and more confident for having worn them.

SKETCHES

In preparation for the fashion show of actual creations Dick designed, it is important to witness a sketch taking on a life of its own as it makes its way toward becoming a finished garment. Also, in order for each sketch to take on a life of its own, some photographs of actual beading adornments used to enhance the design have been included.

Therefore, as you invite your eyes to feast upon the sketches he imagined for his clients in the next section, it is important to focus on the uniqueness of each design. It is apparent he knew each client personally and created the best look for her body.

Then, when you reach the actual fashion show in the next chapter, you will have comprehended the enormous task it took for a sketch to become a completed garment. As a designer, Dick visualized how the garment would appear from all angles; even down to the way the light would transform the fabric to the human eye, along with the sound the material made as movement occurred.

Last, all components must come together smoothly, resulting in the drawing of a perfect pattern to fit the various shapes and sizes of women.

Finally, having been fully prepared for the beauty you are about to experience, you are invited to turn the page and enjoy nineteen beautiful <u>SKETCHES BY DU PUIS</u>.

SKETCHES BY



PU18

SIDE FLOUNCED CHIFFON WITH BEADED MIDRIFT

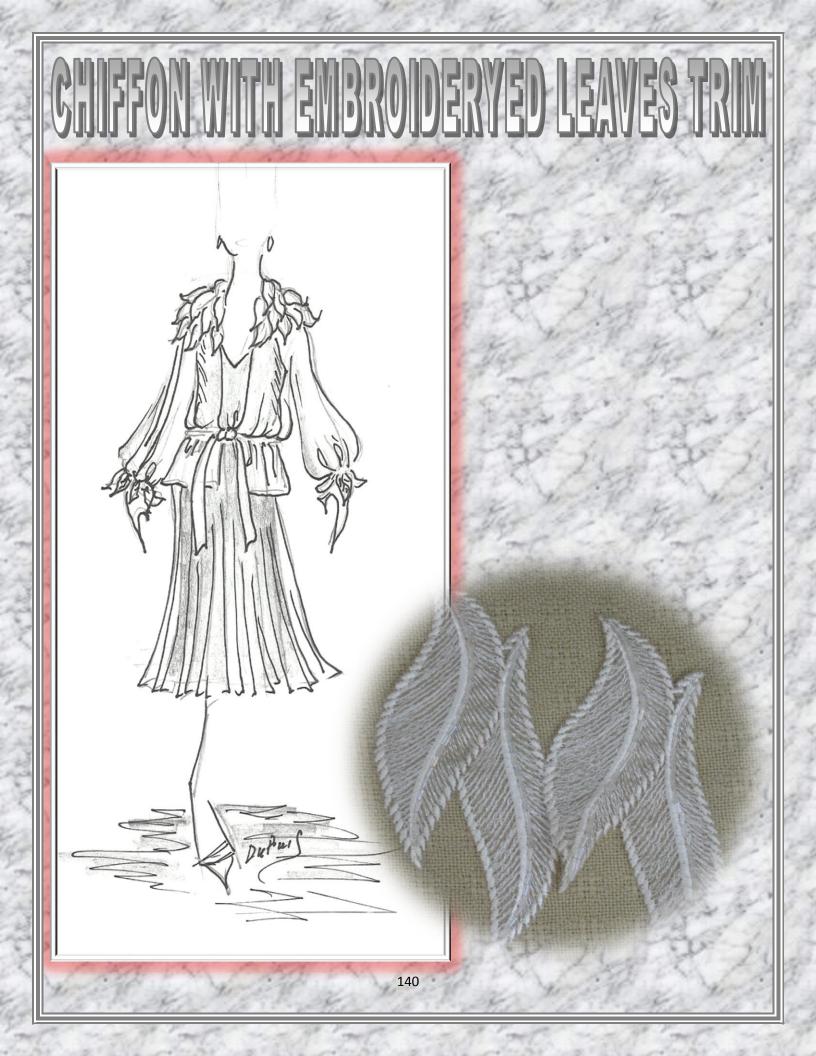






GOWN AND COAT



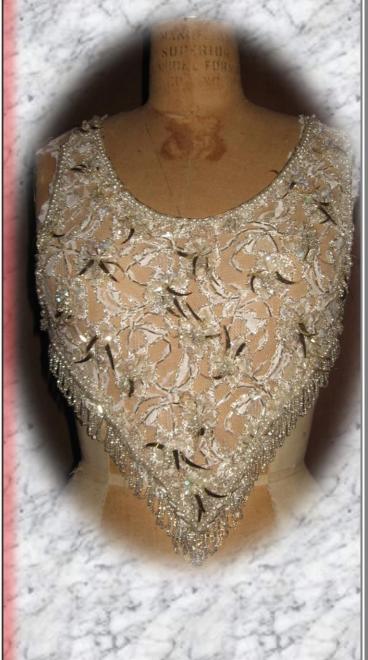


BLACK WOOL CREPE



BEADED BODICE INSERT





BEADED TRIM ON JACKET





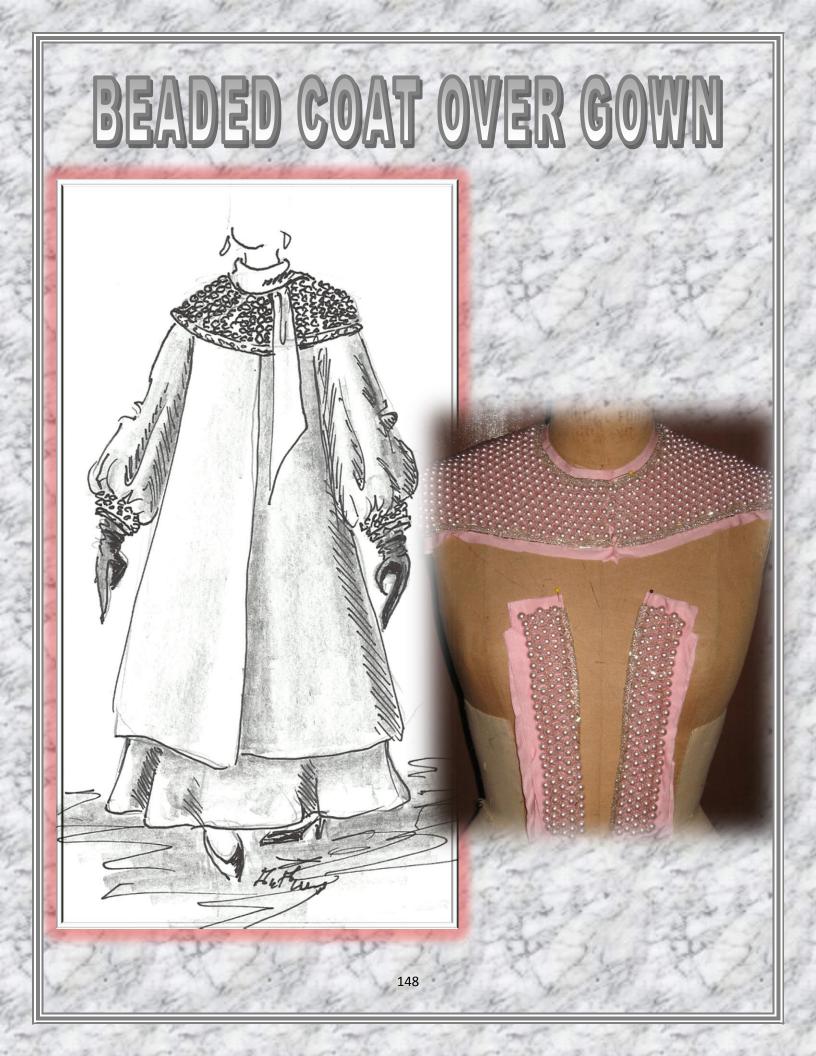


BEADED SNAKE GOWN





BEADED LOOSE TOP OVER CHIFFON



GREEN PARROT GOWN



SUNBURST PLEATED BODICE





EMPIRE LINE BEADED CHIFFON

EGYPTIAN GOWN 152

SIDE CASCADED CHIFFON WITH BEADED BODICE



BEADED HIPLINE



