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JULY • AUGUST 2015

THE SOCIETY

DIARIES
TEXAS

LOVE STORY

RAVISHING BRIDES & DASHING GROOMS
On Their Dreamy Day

WEDDING
GENTRY GLAM:
Party Girl
Chic Prevails

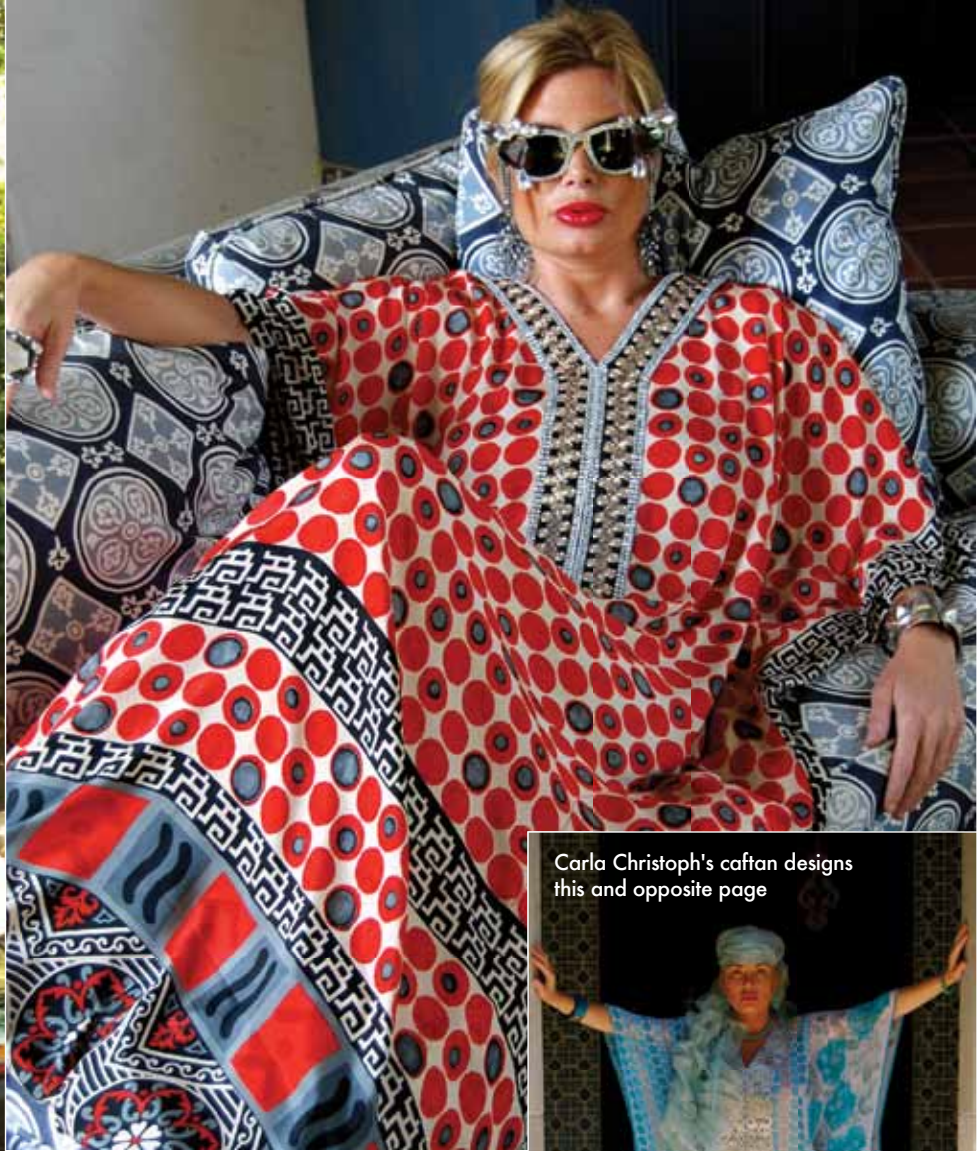
HAVE CAFTAN,
WILL TRAVEL
Vintage Classic
Gets Exotic

OLD, NEW,
BOLD & BLUE
Perfect Gifts
To Give

+ 5-STAR EVENTS
GALORE:
Clooney, Fiesta Debs,
Paris and You



Carla Christoph



Carla Christoph's caftan designs this and opposite page



CAFTANS: CONFIDENT & CAPTIVATING

Easy breezy is the new answer to summer high style and caftans represent that beautiful spirit, thanks to Houston's Carla Christoph as *vintage style enthusiast Lance Avery Morgan* catches up with her

MENTION THE WORD CAFTAN TO JUST ABOUT ANYONE and the mind quickly conjures exotic Morocco, hookah pipes, Palm Beach doyennes and mid-century high style. In fact, the caftan came into the modern fashion lexicon by Christian Dior, known for cinched waists and padded hips, when he designed it as a coat in the late 1950s.

BIARRITZ FOR DINNER

Then came Pucci, Yves St. Laurent and Halston with their 1960s and 1970s interpretations of caftans for stars such as Sophia Loren, Grace Kelly, Liz Taylor and a plethora more style mavens from glamorous rock stars to jet-setting socialites who could pack it up quickly and be in Biarritz for dinner. That glamour, dear ones, is back thanks to

recent renditions by Gucci, Stella McCartney and Roberto Cavalli, to name a few. Enter Carla Christoph, Houston-based caftan designer extraordinaire who has taken the garment known for lounging and given it a Texas twist like never before with her company Carla Christoph Designs.

Luxury fabrics? Check. Bejeweled necklines? Yep. A perfect fit that is also slimming? Done. In fact, mention the word *caftan* to anyone and it means *Have a great time. Right now.*

Christoph, the Chicago native-turned-Texan who lives in a Moroccan-inspired home, started her fashion designing talents in fashion design



Princess Grace and Prince Ranier of Monaco at a reception honoring them during a visit to San Antonio's HemisFair '68, Peacock Alley, St. Anthony Hotel, October 1968



Elizabeth Taylor, 1960s



merchandising school... and by having a busy social life. Her love of fashion started early as a devotee of caftan-wearing former *Vogue* editor and style hero Diana Vreeland. "I would go into stores with my mother and give my opinion on what she should buy for herself and I always wanted things that looked older for myself from a very young age," confides Carla Christoph.

That point of view led her into the world of style meeting commerce. "I had a few caftans in my closet from India and Morocco, so when I wanted to design a few for myself four years ago they garnered so many compliments. I then had the idea of designing 24 pieces and selling them from my home, and most of them sold. So I was off to races with a website so that customers across the world can enjoy them, too."

GLOBAL GLAM

Dressing the part herself as a caftan mogul in the making, Cristoph muses, "I literally wear a caftan every day – a short one, a long one, you name it." She loves collecting accessories – the bigger the better. "I don't do small and I've always been self assured in being my own self."

Just who is the Carla Christoph Caftan woman? "She works in whatever she pursues, she entertains and she travels... and she is confident,"

Christoph is quick to note. "It may begin with wearing a caftan top and with all the compliments she gets she quickly adds full-length caftans. Plus, they can be worn with a sandal or dressed up with a heel."

Even though the embellishments are sourced through friends and colleagues in India, no fancy trims are needed if the wearer wants to go with a plain white linen number, according to Christoph. She designs something for everyone, yet she notes that her elaborately adorned caftans are a favorite of most of her clients.

When it comes to her fabric options, the sky is the limit for Christoph. "I personally love doing graphic black and white. I'm no beige girl," she insists. "We have a wide range of lots of color and many fabrics. I feel like I can visualize before what it looks like upon completion when it's just a creative idea."

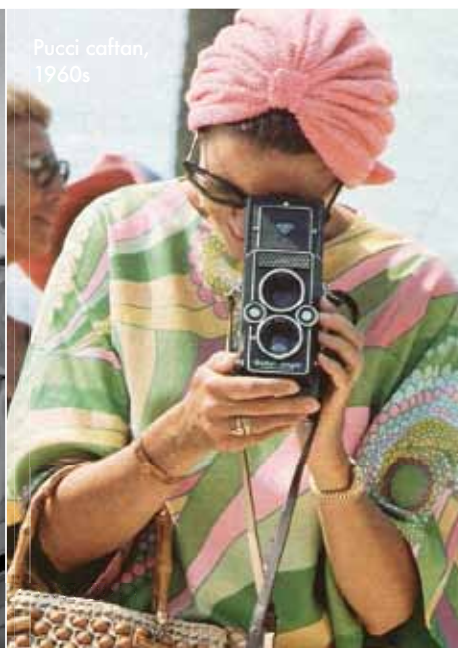
Each caftan is as much a work of art as its individual wearer. It is a great sense of accomplishment when Carla Christoph sees a client looking beautiful while wearing one of her creations. "It makes me feel so wonderful. I get so many texts and emails," she confides. "I always ask that clients send me a photo wearing my design. Those heartfelt messages are what it is all about to help others be their best." For more information, visit Carlachristoph.com 



Pink caftan, late 1960s



Caftan, 1960s



Pucci caftan, 1960s

