



In Search of Ski Togs

By Lucille Adam

Sportswear Buyer, The T. Eaton Co., Limited

LEAVING London at one o'clock and motoring to Croydon airdrome, I took the 1.15 plane to Zurich, on the first lap of my 12,500 mile trip to buy ski clothes in Europe, arriving there shortly after five o'clock. Dozens of people were sitting in the airport cafe, in the open air, having coffee and watching the planes coming and going. This form of diversion is a popular one on the continent in the summer, and a sunny day brings family parties as well as individuals to watch planes coming from the north, south, east and west. As the passengers come into the station it is interesting to speculate on what tongue they speak and what country they come from, and it is fascinating to watch the pilots of military planes in training going up in formation.



Next morning I got down to the business of buying ski clothes for our stores in Canada. It was a pleasure to call on the manufacturers I had done business with previously and to find their assortments more extensive and more attractive than ever. They have enjoyed good export business this season, so that encouraged them to spend more money on designs and fabrics, resulting in collections of ski clothes and accessories that are smarter and more colorful than ever before. As I was going around the market, I heard the name of Picard again and again. Some spoke it reverently, others spoke it enviously, but when I inquired about this gentleman, I found out that he was an eminent designer, that he lived in Lausanne and had the smartest ski shop in St. Moritz. I decided I should go to see him, so I telephoned for an appointment, took the afternoon plane to Geneva, then took a train from there to Lausanne. I found him in his store, which is one of the most modern I have seen. He sells exclusive clothes for women, buying the finest

on the European markets, but making his best things himself. He has another shop at Evian in the summer, where he sells women's sport clothes; but his love is his St. Moritz shop where he and his wife spend the winter enjoying the variety of sports. There he gets his ideas for his next winter's collection, and his styles are always far ahead of anybody else. He has an international reputation with the smart women who go to St. Moritz and Picard has designed sports clothes for dozens of notables. When he showed me his collection, I found that his most outstanding ski suit was one with a pleated skirt, skilfully done to make it slim fitting, and Mr. Picard said the ladies would wear this style of ski suit in St. Moritz this winter in preference to one with slacks.



He also had smart suits with slacks, and these were all the slenderizing jumping pant style. Another outstanding piece he had was a magnificent black broadcloth dinner suit, with gorgeously embroidered lapels and cuffs. A blouse with a real lace ruffle completes the costume. Mr. Picard's accessories were most interesting. The Swiss government has permitted him to use their archives and he has hand-blocked scarves whose designs are centuries and centuries old. Their color combinations, as well as their rare designs, are enchanting. Among the many things I bought from him are some little aprons that the girls wear when they are preparing lunch up at the ski chalet. A nice large square matches and it can be used to



tie up your hair to keep out the smell of steak and onions.

From Lausanne I went back to Zurich to keep appointments with collectors from various provinces of Switzerland. A collector is one who contacts the buyer, finds out what type of merchandise is wanted, submits patterns, takes the order, then distributes it among the handicraft workers in his province; as a result the gay and happy color combinations and designs peculiar to this ever delightful country of Europe appear in our hand-knitted caps, sweaters, mitts and socks.



Another bright sunny day saw me back at the Zurich airport waiting for the plane to take me to Budapest. We flew over the Bodensee and I saw the fortifications Switzerland was building on its shores. Budapest is a pure delight. The more one

sees of that city the more one loves it, and every trip to it reveals more and more attractions.

The next day I looked over the bright colors, the unusual designs and the originality of the ski accessories bought from the Hungarians. It amazes one to find such varied interpretations of ski clothes when the countries of Europe are so close, and practically all the natives on the continent have the privilege of ski-ing in their own country.

From Budapest, I went to Berlin, there taking a plane for Copenhagen, where I contacted another collector who does business in the Faroe Islands. From him, I was able to buy some quaint reindeer slippers, all made by hand and most comfortable to wear. These slippers have an advantage over many manufactured ones. You can go out in the snow with them on and still have dry feet—the snow does not cling to reindeer fur. I left Copenhagen



after lunch and had tea in the air-drome at Stockholm. About six o'clock I left for Helsingfors in Finland. We flew over water for a long time, then we were flying over country that looked surprisingly

like Northern Ontario. At eleven at night I was having dinner in the hotel, having had my breakfast that day in Berlin, lunch in Copenhagen, tea in Stockholm. What a comfortable and pleasant way of travelling!

The next morning I was aroused early. With the head of the Board of Trade, I set out in

the bracing air to call on manufacturers and collectors and I found most artistic things. Finnish hand-made trunks, hand-painted in bright colors, reinforced with hand-forged bands of iron attracted me, because I felt sure someone would want those for a home in the Laurentians, either for storing clothes or by the fireplace for a seat and a wood-box combined. The Laps that live near the Arctic circle make very nice slippers and boots, also out of reindeer hide. They knit mitts and socks in delicate, colorful patterns.

Helsinki is a modern city and the people and the language remind me of Czechoslovakia. One occasionally sees an ancient droschky on the street, reminiscent of the days of Russian influence. Paavo Nurmi has a smart men's shop on the main street, and a large, modern department store caters to all. The people I did business with were most co-operative. They seemed to be all working for the interests of Finland.

From Helsinki I went back to Sweden and loved Stockholm. The city is beautifully situated on the water, and the rocky shores adjacent to it remind one of the Muskoka district. The standard of living is high in Stockholm, people are sports minded, it seems everyone must own a motorboat, and life is enjoyed. From the province of Delacarla I got beautiful hand-knits, riotous in color.



From Stockholm I went to Oslo where I chose my best cut and best fitting ski suits. These are made by tailors who make men's clothes, and they are tailored to precision. Only the best of fabrics and trimmings are used, resulting in ski suits that go to the finest stores in England and the continent. These Norwegian manufacturers, true to their ancestors, still travel extensively looking for new ideas to promote their business. To a Canadian, Norway is home-like. The countryside around Oslo reminds one of the Laurentians and everyone you speak to, young or old, is a skier. From Oslo, my trail pointed home, and I arrived in Newcastle, England, wondering whether there would be snow on Canada's Kandahar trail this winter, and looking forward to my holidays to be spent on Mont Tremblant in February.



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