

9/9/07- Couture Fashion Week at the St. Regis Ballroom

For those who can't get enough up-close-and-personal designer fashion, there's **Couture Fashion Week** and **Bridal Fashion Week**, multi-day events showcasing luxury couture and fine fashion including eveningwear, elegant fashion, couture bridal as well as accessories. Attendees include upscale consumers, invited VIPs, the press and selected high-end store buyers.



Last night, I attended one of these shows, featuring Katerina Bocci from Albania, and Margaret Nagel of Canada. The two-designer show was held in the very elegant, crystal chandeliered ballroom of the very elegant St. Regis Hotel. After being at the tents during the day, the Couture Fashion Week's pre-cocktail hour with champagne, the appearance of the elegant Miss Florida, and the chance to check out some high-end handbags (gorgeous, with interchangeable handles) and other luxury items, was a treat. If there's one thing I learned about fashion last night, it's never place yourself in a photo next to a beauty queen!



First to show a small group of wedding gowns was the Canadian designer Margaret Nagel. Part of **Couture Fashion Week**. The designer is known for her hand crafted evening and bridal gowns, suits, coats, accessories and high quality one-of-a-kind jewelry. Mrs. Nagel's fashion designs are characterized by impeccable tailoring, attention to detail and an abundance of finely worked elements such as

embroidery, hand beading and double stitched seams. Apparently, she has expertise in working with high quality leathers, deerskin, suede and fur that she honed during the dozen years she worked with Heasman's Furs in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan! No leather or fur, but lots of white, ivory and bridal lace was presented at this, her New York debut. The sweet ensemble on the left, with huge bridal hat and veil, would flatter a young, first time bride, while the more elegant strapless gown would be perfect for a second-time bride or just for a woman who needs a flattering and sophisticated gown for a special event. As with many of the fashions I've seen this week, a ribbon sash/belt encircles this second gown.



Next, showcasing

a much larger collection of special event evening gowns was Albanian native Katerina Bocci.

I was sitting next to a young woman eagerly awaiting the arrival on the runway of her friend, model Madelene Lukic. If I got the information correctly, this was Madelene's first



appearance as a runway model. Judging from the photos, I'd say the tall and elegant Madelene did a fabulous job. Good luck in your career, Madelene!

The gowns in this collection were unique, but wearable. Still, with large ruffled colors, and many dresses in a "tulip" shape, they had an unmistakable "I-love-the-80's" vibe. After graduating from the renowned SITAM Institute of Design in Padova, Italy, Ms. Bocci opened her own fashion atelier in Albania. In 2001 she moved to the

Detroit. where local TV news anchors Lila Lazuras and Rhonda Walker are fans. She designer an evening gown for a photo shoot by Fadil Berisha Studio in New York with Miss Universe 2006 Zuleyka Rivera, and Miss Albania Sadina Alla in the 2007 Miss Universe pageant (that's Miss Florida in yellow, eyeing a striking black and red-accented gown).



A standout for me was this body conscious, brilliant blue, strapless, iridescent, tafetta gown, with a tulip-shaped hem tight to the hips. Worn with a suite of sapphires, you'd sparkle more than anyone in the room!

Here's the designer, in a simple black dress, with one of her models, taking her well-deserved walk on the runway.

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