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SUSANNA: security for the successful woman



Eighteen years ago, Susanna, originally from Korea, arrived in the country of her dreams. She enrolled at the prestigious Fashion Institute of Technology, where in her first year she won the annual fashion contest. While attending school Susanna worked on Seventh Avenue. "I probably worked for everyone because I got fired so often," she says in a charming flood of words. "I had limited English, so I did any kind of job, clean floors,

trim, press, cut pattern, fit. I could design and sketch, I did everything except I didn't sew... I still can't sit at a machine and sew." Her interest was designing for film, so she came to California to look for a studio job when she finished school. In Beverly Hills she met a Chinese couple who owned a small boutique on Santa Monica Boulevard and became the design/partner in the shop. It took nine months for her to learn that California women dressed to suit a lifestyle considerably different from that in New York and Europe. "I had no public experience," sighs Susanna, "my first collection was black, brown and beige... wrong for the bright, cheerful climate of Southern California." In a frenzy she fell off a ladder and injured her back and decided to ask God for help. "I told God, give me a seven-year chapter," she remembers. Susanna wanted to become a millionaire. The date was October 2, 1976. She went to see two former clients and each woman ordered outfits which gave Susanna a total of seven hundred and ninety dollars. A woman who did alterations on Santa Monica in Beverly Hills agreed to give her space for three hundred dollars. A friend lent her nine hundred and seventy dollars and, with the help of a decorator, she was able to fix up the shop. On October 21, she opened the doors of her boutique and after a week she started to sell. Five months later a producer's wife came in and bought six hundred dollars worth of clothes. She brought some friends in and business started to grow. Her dream of designing for movies has fallen into place. "We do one hundred production a year.

"I love the public," says Susanna, and judging from an impressive client list: Angie Dickerson, Cybill Shepherd, Mary Ann Mobley, Bette Midler, Mrs. Kenny Rogers, Mrs. Danny Thomas and Leigh Taylor-Young, the public loves her in return.

In 1977, Susanna met her husband, Pierre Forest, a former Montreal businessman, in a French restaurant in Westwood, California. Now her best friend, her partner, her support system and her most loyal fan, he handles all of the marketing and merchandising involved in the business. She is proud that her clothes are made in Beverly Hills of natural fabrics imported from all over the world. She likes serving professional executive-type women. "As they become successful, I become successful," says the strong, outgoing Leo. Today, the 34 year old beauty has a \$2 million a year business and her second seven year plan is already ahead of schedule. J. A. Q.

Photographed on the following page, a black wool-crope jacket trimmed with black and gold braid worn with a matching skirt. Susanna, Beverly Hills. Hair by Victor Vidal for Clotier, make-up by Daniel Blanco for Clotier, casting by Gayle Means.