

CAREER WEAR

CLASSICS WITH A PERSONAL TOUCH

A brief history of what women wore to work: In the 1980s, it was all about power dressing, a concept illustrated in John T. Molloy's best-selling *The Woman's Dress for Success Book*. Women emulated the structured business suits of the executives they worked for and aspired to be, right down to pert paisley bows tied beneath their button-down collars. A decade or so later, Casual Friday offered a degree of relief from the formality. But Casual Friday became Casual Every Day and that led to flip-flops in the White House.

Fall 2010 finds a balance, with influences from both ends of the spectrum.

"Dressing for success today is more self-expressive and personal than it was back when women were following those rigid rules," says Sharon Graubard of Stylesight, an international forecasting and trend analysis firm in New York.

At the same time, she says, styles are returning to some of the traditional shapes and silhouettes of the 1970s, when pantsuits were brand new. Bell-bottom trousers, fitted waistlines and blouses with bows are back, but not so much the strict menswear suiting fabrics. There are other mid-20th Century reminiscences as well. The "Mad Men" secretary inspires knee-length pencil skirts, tailored day dresses, and snug sweaters and cardigans. Christian Dior's '40s New Look is evident in hour-glass shaped jackets and flared skirts.

By Pamela Dittmer McKuen

It's the detailing that updates these beloved classics. Watch for gathers and tucks and lots of other fanciful stitching. Stephanie Colson, owner of the Ms. Priss boutique in Beverly, reports exaggerated sleeves, fringe, sequins and ruffles everywhere.

"The exposed zipper is huge for fall, on dresses and blouses as well as skinny pants," she says.

Another touch of freshness is the slight hint of nonchalance, such as a combo of



Clockwise:

Boots by Burberry Prorsum.

Short sleeve shrug jacket & A-Line suit skirt in Italian wool "Pied de Poulet," tan & brown by Archerie.

Capelet dress, cotton & metal cloth, black, by Archerie.



shape, perhaps one that pleats at the waist and narrows at the ankle.

Go for a tweed or small pinstripe instead of a solid. Even better, don a skirt. "The pencil skirt is a given for fall, but there are a lot of knee-length A-lines, too," says Cellini. "We've gone very skinny and very mini for many years, and now it's the opposite."

"Skirts are showing a lot of newness—a lot of dirndls and full circle skirts," says Graubard.

After creating high-end canvas bags and home furnishings for 20 years, designer Jillian Kaufman Grano of New York chose skirts and dresses as the focus of her fashion line, Archerie. The fall collection includes shifts, shirtwaists and coatdresses. Jumpers are topped with cardigans or shrug jackets to set suit-y moods. Long-sleeved, bow-necked slip dresses are worn alone or layered with A-line skirts or shrugs. Black or textured tights pair with everything.

"For winter, layering with skirts and tights and boots are as warm if not warmer," she says. "And your pants aren't dragging in the snow." □

plaids and checks or a bit of lace peeking from beneath a hemline, says Graubard.

Black pants are a year-round staple in the Midwest, but they don't have to be boring, says personal stylist Noelle Cellini of My Best Foot Forward in Chicago. Try a new