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FREDERICK MELLINGER:

Frederick's of Hollywood is located in what used to be a Kress department store on Hollywood Boulevard. It's got those department-store windows and department-store ceilings and, going down to the basement, one of those wide, wide department-store marble winding staircases.

Five minutes late, Frederick—the Frederick of Frederick's of Hollywood fame—comes bounding down those marble stairs two and three at a time. He's in a hurry. He sees us and says: "Come on, follow me," and swoops into his office. Three women who have also been waiting follow us in.

Frederick Mellinger (the King of Passion Fashion) is getting everything set up for us. It's going to be a private fashion show for RAGS' benefit. These two amply endowed young ladies are going to disappear into this dressing room where they are going to slip into some of Frederick's outrageous little numbers. Then they are going to parade around the room wearing this stuff while Frederick delivers his rap about what they are wearing and what it means.

The third woman is more matronly. She is introduced as Mrs. Van ("in charge of quality control"). Mrs. Van alternately takes in the scene and helps the girls with their fashion items. (She formerly worked for the Broadway, a large California chain, and had never heard of Frederick's until a friend sent her a Frederick's catalog a few years ago. She thought it was a dirty joke. But now, serving more or less as Frederick's right-hand woman, she really seems to dig her work.)

Frederick, in this setting, comes on rather like Oleg Cassini. He looks something like Oleg Cassini.

Out walks this red fake-leather jump suit with lacing all the way up the thigh. The lacing is there, Frederick explains, "to arouse the interest."

Next we see a demonstration of the Squeeze-'Em Lift-'Em bra, designed

I love your clothing & what is more important to does my husband & I. Patricia C. Coter Redland, Va. Pa.

My doll was simply a knockout. It made me feel great. It was all my husband was so terrible proud of me. Thanks again for making a wonderful thing. Vicki Helby Johnson, Ill.



so the front part can be folded away, revealing the nipples (!), yet still providing support. This bra has these strange little holes on the interior wall of each cup, so placed that, in order for a lady's nipples to poke through, the lady's breasts would have to be cross-eyed. Prompting the unanswered question: "What are those holes for?"

The white tail on the bikini made of Australian rabbit is removable.

The belled, wet-look lounging outfit with see-through sleeves and a neckline slashed to the waist is, Frederick points out, the archetypal Frederick's turn-on.

The bra with the holes comes walking out and Frederick identified it as the peek-a-boo.

Behind his spacious desk are the family photographs—including his son (who, Mellinger says, wishes his dad were a banker) in a Cub Scout uniform. On the walls were oil paintings (nudes, of course) and one of those giant illuminated plastic landscapes reminiscent of an Olympia or Budweiser beer ad.

Out comes a slack suit in hot pink, followed by a sequined baby doll nightie with rigid half-moon cups, followed by shoes with fringe hanging from "skyscraper" (four-inch) heels, followed by a translucent/luminescent lavender lounging coat trimmed with imitation fur. Nobody would make these shoes for Frederick, so he purchased the lasts for them and is now the only company in the country capable of making these juicy spring-operators. Frederick feels that, when they're in again he'll make millions. For that matter, the shoes sell well today. He notes that the shoes lengthen the line of a chick's legs, a desirable thing for shoes to do, in Frederick's book.

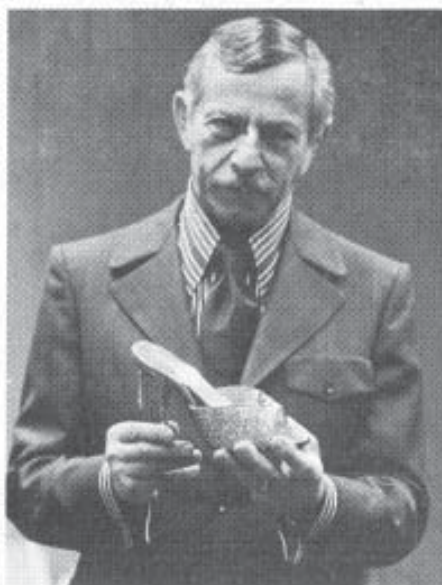
There seems to be a recurring theme.

"We're taking an ordinary woman and trying to make her into a wanted woman, a woman wanted by a man,"

THE KING OF CHEESE

by Jerry Hopkins

photos by Baron Wolman



Mellinger says. "We try for the sexy look. Every garment in our line has a reason for being there. You ought to see what we can do. Our switchboard girl is a 21-year-old tomboy and we turned her into a 26-year-old hooker, and I mean that in the best way possible. We took a skinny model

a terrible time the last six months because of this rebellion, but we've sold more bras than ever. I feel it's because the stores have forgotten the customer. They've stuck with the 'soft bra,' the bra that covers but doesn't firm. We've always wanted to glamorize the bust."

AFTER

DON'T have a droopy aging bust!

BEFORE

To give a higher bustline, plus glamorous cleavage to the small to average bosom... these wonder-workers feature stitched-in push-up pads.

It is true, by the way, that Mellinger has produced a bra and panties for a dog. The dog, named Mooch, will appear on a Jim Bacchus television show. And all six cups of the bra, like much of the stuff in Frederick's catalog, are padded.

and moved it around, and added on here and there, her *agent* didn't even recognize her.

Mellinger likes to tell the story about the time Russ Meyer first brought June Wilkinson into his Hollywood Boulevard store. "I couldn't believe it," says the king of passion fashion, "but Russ swore they were real. He told me I could hit 'em with a baseball bat and I wouldn't dent 'em. We had to tear two dresses apart to fit her. We had to sew a size 10 bottom to a size 18 top."

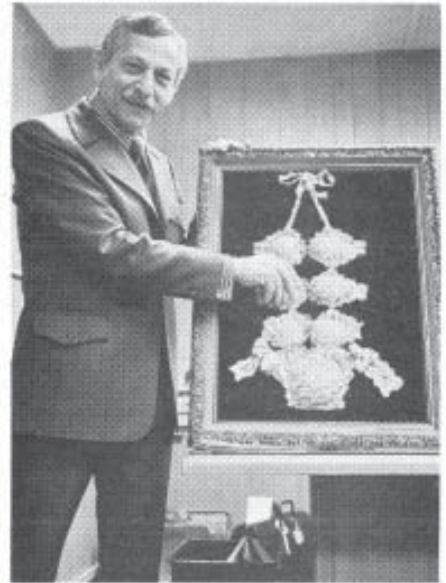
"I guess our ideal is like the Petty girl: thin-waisted, short-waisted, with a well-formed bust. When a woman comes to us and she's got a spare tire, we put her in something to compress it, or call the attention somewhere else. If her boobs are full, but they're saggies, we give her something to lift them up, give her the cleavage she wants. It's sort of like being in the meat packing business."

He loves to show off his favorite garments—the inflatable bra (with two tiny air mattresses built in); stockings with padded calves and girdles with cutaway rears; a sheer bra with built-in rigid nipples (for the bra-less look); panties imprinted with a human hand, snaps at the end of each finger, so that when you unsnap the fingertips, *hello there*; hosiery with the customer's name custom-flocked on one leg, her phone number on the other one.

And according to Mellinger, "meat" should be packed. "I feel that kids are behaving as . . . I won't say child, but they're rebelling," he says. "They've always seen their mothers wearing bras, so they go without. Well, six months and they'll be hanging down to here."

"Every so often we have Male Night Only," says Diana Dixon, Mellinger's gal-Friday. "There are two requirements: You must have a sense of humor and lots of money."

"The bra industry has gone through



The Set \$5

FREDERICK SAYS,
 "Go without food,
 go without drink —
 BUT NEVER, NEVER GO
 WITHOUT GLAMOUR!"

sleepwear shop, although that's what gets the publicity. A majority of the \$10,000,000 grossed in 1970, in fact, came from ready-to-wear goods. Crotchless panties may sell briskly enough to stay in the Frederick's line, but not enough to put Mellinger's two teenaged children through school. Visit

82-9291 LOVELEGS
 After years of searching and scientific research, Frederick's finally brings you a revolutionary crotchless panty with padded edges, invisible to everyone. Designed to contour your body, this padded panty will be as soft as flesh, simply slide on to a "crotch" and there you are! **\$35 PAIR**
 Also available in **82-9292 COVERS UP**, the side-of-glanceless panty. Light or dark in color. Also available in **82-9293**. **\$19**
 Specifics right or left leg. **\$15**
 Sizes 10-11.

LEG PADS

the store, leaf through one of his 72-page catalogs (issued six times a year), and it becomes abundantly clear that Mellinger offers not just sexy accessories, but entire wardrobes of passion fashion.

So far, the ladies from Women's Lib haven't discovered Frederick Mellinger and he says he isn't exactly eager for that day to come. But consider this: Women's Lib has made much of *Playboy's* male chauvinism and *Playboy* won't accept Frederick's mail order ads.

"*Playboy* says we're too commercial," Mellinger said. "*Playboy* says we're selling what they're giving away."

And as if that weren't enough, the 13-year-old daughter of the Frederick of Frederick's of Hollywood suspects he's a dirty old man.

It's tough in the meat packing game. 🐾



She explains that the cheapest dress in the shop is \$23, and panties start at \$4.

Frederick's of Hollywood is no less than 40 stores, stretching east to Cincinnati and south to Dallas. And Mellinger owns all but three of them. (The others are franchised.)

"We even have a store in Omaha," he says. "I mean, my god, Boy's Town is nearby and we still sell as much bitchy clothing there as in Las Vegas, where we've got three stores."

Frederick's isn't just an undies and