

# The Society Seamstress Returns

*The Haute Bunch Is Back to Using the Little Lady Who Can Whip One Up*

BY SUSAN M. KIRSCHBAUM

What's coming between women and their Calvins, Donnas and Ralphs? A big fat pinchusion. In an age of global brands, when the windows of Madison Avenue increasingly mirror those on Rodeo Drive and Avenue Montaigne, personally tailored clothes—or "custom," as it is known, as if Edith Wharton had suddenly wandered into Starbucks—are becoming the quiet status symbol of choice for those who can afford them.

With demand accelerating for clothes

that fit just so—clothes that *no one else*

has—tailors from Milan to Savile Row are

flying in from their overseas showrooms

and whipping out their tape measures in

Park Avenue parlors and Hollywood ha-

ciendas. Not only do the clothes look great,

the client also gets to fancy herself as muse,

recalling the days when Audrey Hepburn in-

spired Givenchy.

Patricia Ward Kelly, the widow of en-

tertainer Gene, is one reveling in the return

of that era. Ms. Kelly fondly remembered

what her husband used to call "a conceit":

a special detail, like the satin peek-a-boo

anethyist lining in a garnet gown she com-

missioned. She recently switched loyalties

from high-end ready-to-wear to a private dressmaker on

La Brea Avenue in Los Angeles, around the corner from

her house. "The results are magical," she said.

Young society babes on this coast are also eagerly



JAMES HAMILTON

GRAPHAIC FOR FITTINGS: GABRIELLE GARLSON IN HER WEST VILLAGE STUDIO.

taking part. Nadja Swarovski's family company sells crystals to Versace and other major labels, but Ms. Swarovski recently consulted Princess Diana's former

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