

# Alair par excellence

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Pictures: Lien Botha; by courtesy of Barbara Barnard and *Fair Lady*

A YOUNG man who has had to face some enormous challenges on the fashion scene is 27-year-old Coloured fashion designer of Cape Town, Errol Arendz. Errol was called upon to provide the garments for a fashion spectacular presented concurrently with the opening of the five-star Maharani Hotel in Durban and has, in collaboration with others, made clothes for one of *Charlie's Angels* which were flown to Hollywood some months ago for a fashion feature by the magazine, *Fair Lady*. Errol has also made garments for the Nederburg wine auction fashion show, and 14 breathtaking creations for his debut this year on the South African Haute Couture Syndicate's fashion presentation sponsored by Revlon at the Wanderers Club in Johannesburg.

Errol Arendz presents his own fashion extravaganza every year at the Mount Nelson Hotel in Cape Town, and in Windhoek, South West Africa/Namibia, he judges at Stuttafords' *Young Designers* shows. He has also put on presentations in the five-star President Hotel in Cape Town.

He has made clothes for Jenny Kay and Margaret Gardiner, holders of the Miss South Africa title, who won their titles in his dresses. Clients from top couturiers in Europe now visit him, and he has several regular clients abroad.

Fashion, says Errol, is synonymous with wealth and culture. He does not like tailored clothes, "although the customer is always right", and prefers soft, feminine outlines. "I like a great contrast between men and women, clothes-wise. The men must be elegant and well-groomed, the women like flowers, not straight and hard." But, shrewdly, he states quite unequivocally that fashion is purely indoctrination, and that anything can be made to seem right with the passing of time.

The designer looks upon his entire career as a challenge. "I hear about everything that is going on, and very often clients find me a shoulder to lean



on," he says. This is not surprising, taking into account his warm-hearted, unassuming frankness, and his down-to-earth approach to his success which he still finds hard to believe.

It all started when a friend presented a showing of his garments at her home in Constantia. She invited everyone she knew, including Sydney Baker and the *Fair Lady* fashion team. Barbara Barnard, wife of heart surgeon Christiaan Barnard, later visited Errol's rooms and chose garments off the rail. One was a stunning white lace evening dress which had been hanging there for a year and cost R135. It was the dress that subsequently made Errol famous. Barbara wore it at the photographic session in the Crystal Room at the opening of the Maharani Hotel, and it was featured in *Fair Lady* and in the *Sunday Times*. Errol Arendz was made. Later, taking part in an Intergold (Chamber of Mines) fashion show combining the goldsmith's art with South African fashion designers' ideas, he created a fabulous guineafowl feather evening jacket, teamed with jewellery created by Franz Huppert. His brilliance was not only declared, but



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1. The white dress which made Errol famous. It was worn by Barbara Barnard at a photographic session at the Maharani Hotel in Durban.
2. Errol's flair for the sumptuous is heightened by an eye for simplicity, shown off to perfection by Barbara Barnard.
3. Errol Arendz specialises in romantic, elegant ball gowns. He believes in glamorising women.
4. Demurely simple, this dress contrasts dramatically with the opulence of the Maharani Hotel in Durban.