

errol's fabulous fashions

Story: Lesley Dellatola
Pictures: Lien Botha



A young man who has had to face some enormous challenges on the fashion scene is the 27-year-old Coloured fashion designer of Cape Town, Errol Arendz. He 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 made clothes for *Charlie's Angels*, which were flown by the magazine *Fair Lady* to Hollywood some weeks ago for a fashion feature. He 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. In addition, he takes part regularly in presentations by the South African Wool Board of clothes by the Republic's own designers.

Errol Arendz presents his own fashion extravaganza every year at the Mount Nelson Hotel in Cape Town and in Windhoek.

Clients from top couturiers in Europe now visit him, and he has several regular clients from Geneva.

Fashion, says Errol, is synonymous with wealth and culture. "I find the ethnic approach very boring and forced."

He looks upon his whole career as a challenge.

It all started when a friend presented a showing of his garments at her home in Constantia. She invited everyone she knew. Mrs Barbara Barnard, one of her guests, later visited his 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 him famous.

Mrs Barnard, the wife of heart transplant pioneer, Dr Chris Barnard, wore it at a fashion parade during the opening of the Maharani Hotel.

"With the world the way it is, people want diversion, fairy tales," Errol says. "This is what I try to give them". He has an Arabian Nights sa-

lon in Buitengracht Centre, Cape Town, overlooking a magnificent view of Table Mountain and the city below, and it is here that he interviews clients and is interviewed himself these days about three times a month.

The son of a well-to-do building contractor, he was educated at Christian Brothers College, a boys-only school. "At school everyone laughed at me and giggled at my drawings," he said. But today there are six boys who are interested in fashion designing. "They don't laugh any more after what has happened to me," he explained.

His father did not approve either in the beginning, but realising his son's determination, he set his own wishes aside and decided to help him. Subsequently Errol studied at the Ivor Kirsten School of Fashion Design in Johannesburg and visited the salons of Dior, Cardin and Balmain in Europe. He also worked there for a short spell, but found that he felt

more at home working for Zandra Rhodes in London.

He now has 9 seamstresses on his staff and is supported in all he undertakes by his sister, Gloria.

- 1 The exotic reception area has fabric billowing from the ceiling. Mirrored from ceiling to floor and close carpeted, the salon is decorated in shades of bronze, pink and sage green
- 2 What started as a one-man business now has a large staff of seamstresses
- 3 Garments from these workrooms find their way to many parts of the world
- 4 Errol in his office with his sister, Gloria, who is his personal assistant, promotions organiser and press officer. She also models
- 5 Errol Arendz, South Africa's brilliant young Coloured designer, has a beautiful view of Cape Town from his salon window