

Magid Bernard: Women's fashion



WHO ARE THEY?

Husband and wife designers Magid Mehrabadi and Michele Bernard: The New Orleans-born Bernard met Mehrabadi when both were students at the University of New Orleans; she was studying fine arts, and he was an engineering major.

► **From Ia. to L.A.:** After launching their fashion design business in the Crescent City, husband and wife design team Michele Bernard and Magid Mehrabadi moved their line to Los Angeles in 1989. The label, Magid Bernard, is now available at their Los Angeles boutique and in 12 stores across the country, although none in New Orleans. Instead, they hold trunk shows twice annually here to meet with local customers personally.

They were last in town in September. Two long rolling racks covered with clothes nearly blocked all the windows in Bernard's Windsor Court suite, transforming the elegant space into a makeshift boutique for their fall women's wear collection of separates, dresses, tops and the signature piece of the season: the car coat.

The line includes several asymmetrical hems, bias-cut dresses, A-line skirts (some with box pleats), and the car coat, a jacket that can be paired with a skirt for work or thrown over jeans for play.

The trunk shows, held in their hotel room, have kept faithful customers here happy. But since Hurricane Katrina, there's a new glitch in the system. Some of Magid Bernard's local clients aren't local anymore.

Marianne Mautner, who lived in Lakewood South until the storm, now is in Atlanta. But she wouldn't miss the chance to see Bernard.

"I flew in," said Mautner, as she was greeted with a hug and a kiss by the designer at the door. "I came in for the Saints game, Michele and the [Jewish] high holidays. It all worked out."



MODEL JENNIFER HANFHEY



PHOTOS BY BRAYDEN MATTHEWS, MODEL JENNIFER HANFHEY

That's the sort of attachment customers have for the collection, Bernard jokes that longtime clients think of them as the "neighborhood seamstress."

Bernard begins pulling pieces off the rack. Her collection transcends trends. With jackets ranging from \$3,500 to \$4,000, these are pieces customers expect to wear for several seasons.

"I have this jacket," Mautner said, "and every time I wear it, I hear, 'Oh, that is fabulous. Where did you get it?' Her clothes are timeless, classics."

► **Demi-couture collection:** Bernard calls the Magid Bernard collection "demi-couture," since the pieces are custom fitted for each customer.

In bold European fabrics, the looks are elegant, but definitely for the more established woman, both in her taste and income.

► **How to get this look:** Magid Bernard's next trunk show will likely be in February or March. For details, call (213) 623-5665.

— By Susan Langenheing