



FRANCES ALLEN Desert Roundup

Fashion—in all its wearable forms—took center stage in the Desert last week with “Una Festa Italiana, A Celebration of Fashion in the Desert 2009,” presented by Fashion Group International of Palm Springs and Desert Communities, Inc. Formed 19 years ago, FGI-Desert promotes the worldwide activities of 80-year old Fashion Group International, a predominately women’s non-profit network, advancing professionalism in all things fashion and related industries.

Brazenly begun over a luncheon for 17 women, (remember, it was 1930 and the “let’s do lunch” movement had yet to get started),

today more than 5,500 global fashion trendsetters spread FGI’s gospel of “giving fashion a forum.”

This year’s Desert celebration began stylishly the night before the Festa Italiana luncheon with a reception given by the undisputed doyenne of Desert fashion, Jackie Lee Houston, for Lourdes Chavez, the Festa honoree, as well as for the event’s sponsors and fashion participants including noted jewelry designer Caldwell Sutherland and Edwards-Lowell Furriers of Beverly Hills.

While membership in FGI-Desert is so broad-based that just wearing clothes is probably



PARTY TIME—The Desert’s fall social season has begun in earnest with a cocktail reception on the eve of “Una Festa Italiana” presented by the local chapter of Fashion Group International. Pictured (from left): FGI Regional Director Diane Marlin-Dirkx, jewelry designer Caldwell Sutherland, hostess Jackie Lee Houston and Rosemarie Troy.

Photo by Pam Krause

enough to qualify you for admission, the selection of the design honoree is more illustrious, and this year’s was no exception.

Although it is not quite clear how the fashion designs of

California-based, Mexico-born Lourdes Chavez fit into una festa Italiana, there is no doubt that she has excelled in the breath and beauty of her creations, both in this country and abroad, making

her a worthy recipient of this year’s Crystal Style award. She is in great company, as her name is now added to the list of past recipients including David Hayes, Nicole Miller, Peri Wolfman, Zandra Rhodes, James Galanos, Fe Zandi and John Paul DeJoria.

It is also not clear how the Chavez designs fit in with the acknowledgement of the current hard economic times mentioned in their remarks by the event’s co-chairs, Lana Stadler and Rosemarie Troy. Ms. Chavez is quoted as saying in an interview with fashion journalist and FGI-Desert’s Regional Director Diane Marlin Dirkx: “I do not design for those who go to work.”

Well, she certainly has the French haute couture attitude down right ... Targét, anyone.