

Turning Heads Lyn 'O'vations

By Regina Lynch-Hudson

To Lyn Frances Skyes, hats are the ultimate expression of power dressing. By the early nineties, hats became Lyn's obsession. She sought the advice of master milliner P. K. Hines who graciously gave her a crash course in millinery design. Her first project, a straw, military style, braided hat trimmed in horse hair, unleashed innate skill that had lain dormant since her days in fashion design classes. Soon after, she enrolled in a millinery course. Her originality and innovation marked her among the most prized students in the class.

Lyn had always been spellbound by the haughty hats worn by English royalty, so she didn't limit herself to training in the United States. While surfing the Internet, she stumbled across the Wombourne School of Millinery in faraway Wolver Hampton, England. Years later, an airfare war enabled Lyn to hop a flight to London, followed by a meandering train ride to the countryside and the small farmhouse where she received her training. As houseguest of the instructors and the only student from the United States, Lyn's adventurous spirit impressed and inspired fellow classmates.

Lyn has become one of the fashion world's most stylized millenary maven. She pairs classic shapes with modern interpretations and oftentimes unexpected fabrics. She embellishes her designs with Swarovski crystals, bugle beads, silk ribbon, and feathers or over-the-top hand-made trim, feminine derby's, top hats, Jackie-O pillboxes and traditional as well as nontraditional styles of head-adornment, the milliner's designs turn heads.

Today, mentoring young designers and introducing them to the forgotten art of millinery is an integral part of Lyn's core business. Her experiences have proven that there's always a silver lining, if only we are able to let go, dare to dream, and seek the help of others. And, in Lyn's case, the silver lining may be inside the folds of a dramatic fedora or sophisticated pillbox.

