

Greek designer Alecca Carrano focuses on the 'mature' woman

Greek designer Alecca Carrano, a known name in fashion circles in Europe and the US, has a subtle and subdued style of using simple yet sensuous cuts to flatter a woman's body.

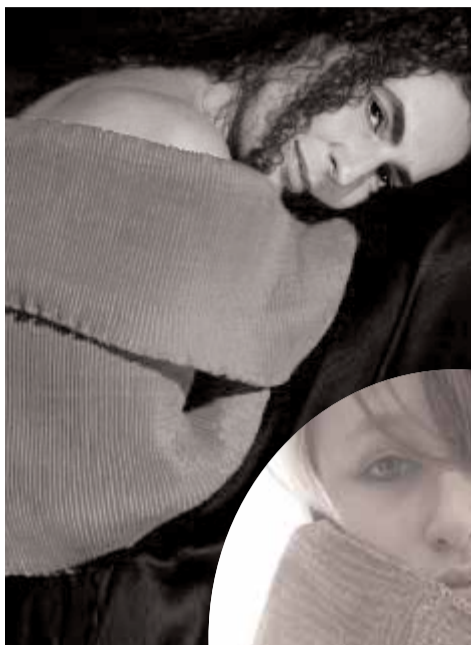
She offers a range of evening gowns and transparent wraps that have a very 1920s look, apart from art-deco designs.

"I design for the mature women who are comfortable with their bodies. There is no naked feel to the clothes, but they are low-necked and flowy - enough to make a woman feel womanly," Carrano told IANS on the sidelines of the Delhi Fashion Week (DFW) here.

Hers is a predominantly white collection apart from a few red dresses with a dash of purple. She uses fabrics like silk, organza, chiffon and linen.

"White shows volume and shape and if people like my designs, they order them in different colours of their choice," Carrano explained.

Though the embroidered and block printed designs on Carrano's clothes are her own, the workmanship is Indian as her factory is located in the capital's suburb of Noida.



She sells her creations through Indian fashion stores Bombay Electric (Mumbai), Ffolio (Bangalore), Ensemble (Mumbai), Amethyst (Chennai), Cinnamon (Bangalore), apart from Ogaan, which is a very loyal client of hers. This apart, her clothes are sold through various lead-

ing international fashion houses across the world.

Of Greek origin, Carrano was born in Lebanon and raised in Vienna. Her multi-cultural heritage and experience has lent directly to her fashion sensibilities.

Carrano, a graduate of New York's Fashion Institute of Technology, began her career as a fashion editor in New York and then worked for fashion magazine Vogue Italia.

She showcased her collection at the Dubai Fashion Week just last week and now has got the chance to exhibit her creations at DFW after failing to showcase her brand at the Wills Lifestyle India Fashion Week (WIFW) for two consecutive years.

"I have been staying in India for the last two years but I haven't been able to show my collection. I applied at WIFW for two years, but they turned me down both the times because they don't take foreign designers, they only take people of Indian o-

igin.

"I am happy I have got the chance this time and it's going well. I am getting a response that is way beyond my expectations," Carrano said.

Though she seemed content with the response of Indian and international buyers at the fashion week, Carrano is displeased with the state of business in the Indian fashion market.

"Customers here don't take any risks. I have been in the industry for 18 years, but nowhere do fashion houses return a garment to the designer in case it doesn't sell. But here they do so.

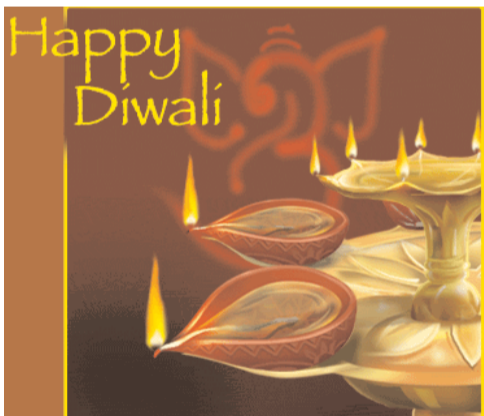
"And when the garments come back, they are not at all in a saleable condition. They need to be dry cleaned. So my only complaint is that very few people here are business people. Others don't take any risks," she rued.

The designer says that due to her subtle taste of designs and colours, she cannot relate to the Indian fashion market.

"I admire the clothes here, they are beautiful, but I am a very subtle designer. I don't use any contrasts, or bling or anything that is Bollywood like so I can't relate to it," she said.

Carrano has a liking for creations by Tarun Tahiliani, Manish Malhotra and Gaurav Gupta.

Festival of Lights celebrations begin



Theophanous interview over alleged rape

Senior Victorian MP Theo Theophanous has been interviewed by detectives over allegations he raped a woman in the parliament 10 years ago.

Fairfax newspapers reported Mr Theophanous was accompanied by his lawyer, Tony Hargreaves, to the St Kilda Road police station but was questioned alone for more than an hour over the allegations.

Mr Theophanous stood aside from his three ministerial portfolios last week pending a police investigation into sexual assault claims against him.

The alleged victim of the assault told Fairfax newspapers last week he had raped her in Parliament House in 1998.

Sexual crimes detectives have interviewed the alleged victim in Greece, where she now lives.

Mr Theophanous, 60, a married father of four, has not been charged and vehemently denies the allegation.

It is believed he also provided a written statement to police on Tuesday. Fairfax said police would interview several other witnesses before preparing a brief for the Office of Public Prosecutions.

Followers of Hinduism, one of the world's most ancient religions, will soon be celebrating its largest festival. The Parliamentary Secretary for Multicultural Affairs and Settlement Services, Laurie Ferguson, today extended his best wishes to those Australians who are about to celebrate Deepavali.

"Deepavali, shortened to Diwali in North India, is also known as the Festival of Lights, literally named for the 'rows of lamps' that are lit in celebration," Mr Ferguson said.

Festival celebrations often begin before the actual date (this year, 28 October) and symbolise the victory of good over evil, light over darkness and knowledge over ignorance.

"Deepavali is a positive and uplifting celebration that represents hope, renewal, forgiveness and compassion," Mr Ferguson said.

Deepavali is becoming more widely celebrated in Australia, due to increasing migration from the Indian sub-continent and of the Indian, Tamil and Sinhalese diasporas from around the world including Fiji, Malaysia, Singapore, South Africa, Kenya and the United Kingdom.

Like the Chinese and Lunar New Year celebrations, Deepavali is growing in popularity among the wider Australian community.

"In the past few years the NSW and Commonwealth Parliaments have been the sites for Deepavali celebrations. This is in recognition of the growing prominence of the Hindu community in this country," Mr Ferguson said.

"I wish all Australians celebrating Deepavali the very best," he added.