



THE VFG NEWS

SHARING OUR PASSION FOR VINTAGE FASHION

Spring 2023





Note from the President

BY MAGGIE MUELLNER (MAGSRAGS)

I have been a VFG member for nearly 16 years, served on the board for the last two years, and began my term as VFG president almost two months ago. The more involved I get, the more impressed I am. The VFG is an all-volunteer organization, and we are blessed to have volunteers with impressive skills and talents carried over from other walks of life or acquired while helping the VFG. I think we accomplish a great deal with the resources we have. This year, we are expanding our social media presence with a VFG YouTube channel, and planning at least one video workshop for members—hopefully more. Stay tuned!

With more volunteers, we could do even more. Please consider contacting our Volunteer Coordinator, Mary Henderson (The Vintage Merchant) to offer your time. If you have special experience or interests, chances are we can put them to good use. And on-the-job training is always an option!

Elvis and Me: Supplying Authentic 1950s Fashion for the movie Elvis

BY MELANIE SHROYER (RETRO KANDY VINTAGE) IN CONVERSATION WITH VICTORIA DRESE (BLUE WREN VINTAGE)



Vintage Fashion Guild member Victoria Drese (Blue Wren Vintage) remembers a school dance as the beginning of her vintage interest. As the years passed, her interest grew. "Over time, I started buying vintage pieces for myself, mostly from local vintage stores in Sydney, Australia (where I am from) and then later from sellers on Instagram," she states. "The era I enjoyed the most was the 1950s."

Victoria continued collecting until she purchased a clothing lot to get just one piece.

"So, I decided to sell the other pieces, and this is where it all began. I started my own Instagram @bluewrenvintage and sold items through Instagram," and then "expanded into having my own website."

Movie excitement began for Victoria in December 2020 during the Covid pandemic.

"I received an order on my website for several 1950s dresses. The mailing address was the Costume Department for Paramount Pictures, on the Gold Coast, Australia. My curiosity got the better of me, so I emailed the buyer and asked her what movie this was being used for. The buyer responded to me and said she couldn't reveal the name of the movie, but that they were looking for more 1950s-era clothing, and she asked whether I had more than what was available on the website. Why YES I DID HAVE MORE!!!"

While researching, Victoria discovered that an Elvis biopic was being directed by one of her favorites,



Australian Baz Luhrmann. His wife, costume designer Catherine Martin, was also a favorite. This had to be why they needed the 1950s clothes. She couldn't wait to get started. "I emailed the costume designer photos of lots of dresses and accessories. She consulted with Catherine on each, and I ended up sending two HUGE boxes filled with clothes to the costume department."

Victoria says that she has watched the Elvis movie three times. "It's hard to tell exactly, but I think there are maybe 40 or 50 of my dresses used in the movie, all of them worn by the extras, but some of them feature quite prominently. You can imagine my squeals of delight when I would see one after the other of my dresses on the big screen!

"What I really appreciated about working on this project was how thorough the briefings were—because of the briefings I could really narrow down the clothing, so the studio bought most of what I showed them (though they didn't use all of them in the movie). I also really appreciated the desire to keep to the integrity of the era. It was important to Catherine that the film truly represented the fashion during the time of the scene, so using authentic vintage pieces was a must. When I watch the movie, I can see how Catherine's fashion vision came to life, and her style, along with Baz's desire to remain as authentic as possible to the Elvis story, is a perfect marriage. "It was an amazing experience, and such a pleasure to partner with the team at Paramount. I would do it again in a heartbeat!"

Pursuing Purses: An Interview with Wendy Dager

BY MELANIE SHROYER (RETRO KANDY VINTAGE)

When researching handbags, the first place I turn to on the internet is [The Vintage Purse Museum](http://www.vintagepursemuseum.com) (www.vintagepursemuseum.com). Fellow VFG member Wendy Dager (VintagePurseGal) is the owner, collector, writer, and researcher for this fabulous online handbag museum. She has been collecting vintage clothing and accessories for 35 years and estimates that she has approximately 3,000 handbags, accessories, and purse-related ephemera in her museum. The Vintage Purse Museum is a completely free online resource filled with photos and articles about vintage handbag companies. I reached out to Wendy to learn more about her and her fabulous handbag museum.

MELANIE: How did The Vintage Purse Museum begin?

WENDY: I've been a vintage collector for a long time, but when I began focusing on bags, I accumulated them so rapidly that I thought it'd be fun to have a blog. I created one called Vintage Purse A Day, which later became The Vintage Purse Gallery (hence the social media and VFG name @vintagepursegal). Even though it was just to share the collection with other vintage purse aficionados, the word 'gallery' somewhat implies sales. I don't sell, so when the domain name vintagepursemuseum.com became available, I mostly phased out the gallery name, and built The Vintage Purse Museum website, which I've modified over the years. This main site links to The Vintage Purse Museum Photo

and History Archive (blog), which is the best place to check out the collection, including the facts and history I'm continually adding.

MELANIE: Do you remember the first handbag in your collection?

WENDY: I don't remember the first bag I purchased specifically as a collectible, but I can tell you about one I've had since I was a child and is now vintage. When I was about ten years old, my grandma had a boyfriend named George, who was from Hungary. George would travel there periodically, and he once brought back colorful woven drawstring bags for my sister and me. I still have mine.





MELANIE: Not only is your online museum full of beautiful photos of vintage handbags, but there is also a lot of great information on the designers and companies. How do you begin the research?

WENDY: Usually, the research begins when I get an interesting bag. It doesn't have to be fancy or unique (although my favorites are the quirky ones). Often, it's the label that gets me, especially if it's a name with which I'm unfamiliar. After I decide I want to know more about a handbag, my first destination is a newspaper archive (I subscribe to Newspapers.com), where I try to get as much info as I can about a specific handbag company or the style of purse. If I happen to find names of people associated with the bag company, I then search genealogy records (I subscribe to MyHeritage.com). Genealogy and newspaper resources are usually what lead me to relatives of handbag makers, and if I'm lucky, they respond when I ask if they'll do an interview for an article for The Vintage Purse Museum website. As a longtime professional freelance writer, I pride myself on my accuracy and want everyone to be satisfied with the end result.

MELANIE: What are your favorite handbags from the collection?

WENDY: Yikes. I always say this is like picking a favorite child, and, as far as my kids and grandkids know, they're ALL my favorite! But one bag that's really special to me is my beaded poodle-shaped

clutch. It doesn't have a label, but I believe it may be attributable to Walborg, which imported these bags from Belgium from about 1958-1959.



MELANIE: What is the most interesting and/or important aspect about collecting vintage handbags?

WENDY: For me, it has to do with its story. Who made it? When was it made? What inspired its design? Who wore it? Where did she wear it? You can't always answer these questions, but you can contemplate the answers and appreciate the unknown. If you DO know the answers to at least some of these questions, that makes it even more of a treasure.

Pursuing Purses: An Interview with Wendy Dager

MELANIE: What was the inspiration for your latest book, *Pain In The Purse, The Tax That Changed Handbag History*?

WENDY: When I was doing handbag research, which includes going through zillions of old newspaper advertisements, I kept seeing fine print on the purse ads: "Plus 20% Federal Excise Tax," and I thought "What evil is this?" It took me years to gather enough information to write a book about this niche "luxury" tax on handbags and other women-centric products. The tax went into effect in 1944, and mostly punished the poor and middle class for 20 YEARS. It was reduced to ten percent in 1954, and finally repealed in 1965, but it still made its mark. It not only affected consumers but also the handbag business and other industries, as well as fashion, feminism, politics and journalism. There was so much blatant misogyny surrounding this tax! When I was writing *Pain In The Purse*, I kept imagining my sweet, beautiful grandma, definitely not a wealthy woman, keeping her same handbag for 10 years because she couldn't afford a new one. So, yep, I got pretty passionate about this topic.

MELANIE: What's new for the Vintage Purse Museum in 2023?

WENDY: We have a vintage RV that's been outfitted for mobile exhibits (still needs some work to get it going), so I'm trying to connect with some people locally in Tucson to do some presentations. Mostly, though, I'm good with putting photos and history online for a global audience. I also really enjoy making fun little videos and am considering creating longer ones featuring themed purse talks and exhibits.



Visit Wendy's museum at vintagepursemuseum.com and the photo and history archive at vintagepurse.gallery

You can also find Wendy on Instagram, TikTok and Twitter @vintagepursegal and on Facebook at facebook.com/vintagepursegallery

To join her vintage purse share group on Facebook, visit facebook.com/groups/vintagepurshare

Wendy's book *Pain In The Purse, The Tax That Changed Handbag History* can be purchased on Amazon at <https://tidd.ly/3IBJced>



Gifts of Garb

Jonathan Walford (Jonathan) reported in the Fashion History Museum's winter newsletter that 2022 was a banner year for item donations—over a thousand garments and accessories were offered to the museum. Entering the permanent collection: A French green silk pelisse from the early 1820s; a women's pair of English green silk boots also from the 1820s; a woman's pair of English green and gold silk shoes from the 1730s (pictured); important examples of garments and accessories by Oleg Cassini, Pucci, Peter Max, Giorgio de Sant-Angelo, Jacques Heim, Helen Rose, Yves St. Laurent, Ferragamo, Bill Gibb, Vera Wang, Laura Ashley, Louiseboulanger, Celine, Akris, Hermès, and Jean Muir. There were also several important Canadian additions including a Feastwear jacket by Dorothy Grant, several pieces by Pat McDonaugh, and a homespun wool dress from the Acton, Ontario area made in the 1810s.



Bullocks Wilshire Tour

BY MARSHA PERLOFF (RANCH QUEEN VINTAGE)

Targeting the city's booming car culture, Bullocks Wilshire opened its doors in 1929 and was an instant sensation with the upper-crust of Los Angeles society. Designed in the Art Deco style, no expense was spared in the lavish building materials and furnishings, and its genteel customer service catering to an elite clientele was unsurpassed. For more than six decades, its reputation as the most fashionable specialty store in L.A. was richly deserved, and an excursion to its famed Tea Room was a mandatory stop for out-of-town visitors hoping to catch a glimpse of a movie star. It is a historic-cultural monument in the City of Los Angeles and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

But, even the famed Bullocks Wilshire was forced to close its doors in 1993 to face an uncertain future, as the once wealthy neighborhood surrounding it declined and shoppers fled to newly built suburban malls. In a stroke of good luck, it was acquired by Southwestern Law School in 1994, which sought to use it as their law library. Honoring its role as a steward of a treasured landmark, the school embarked on a thorough, decade-long restoration, returning it to its original 1929 grandeur, while adapting it to its current use.



On November 18, 2022, 12 guests were treated to a private tour of the beautifully restored Bullocks Wilshire building. The invitation had been graciously extended to vintage clothing vendors from whom the school had acquired Bullock's Wilshire-labeled items for their newly created collection, a special project conceived by the current Dean, Darby Dickerson, and Law Library Director Margaret Hall. Our tour guide, school Archivist Sara Halpert, gave us access to the exclusive boutiques on each floor that had made shopping there so special, including The Chanel Room, The Irene (Lentz) Salon, The Louis XVI Room, The Saddlery and The Doggery.



All throughout the store were the original one-of-a-kind murals, custom lighting fixtures and clocks, and display cases that now contained items purchased from vintage vendors such as Joules Vintage and myself—two Vintage Fashion Guild members who got to meet for the first time on the tour! As an L.A. native who revered Bullocks Wilshire my entire life, it was truly an honor to see pieces from my collection find their way home again to be included in this archive.



Blue dress above from Ranch Queen Vintage; black dress with white lace from Joules Vintage



Welcome to Our Newest Members

KATHY DUERKOP/Aintweswank: A denizen of the lovely town of Rice Lake, Wisconsin, Kathy has been selling vintage fashion for 30 years, and has some very cool items in her Etsy shop [CheapChickadeeCo](#). You can also find and follow Kathy on Instagram [@revolvingvintagecloset](#)

RUBÉN JIMENEZ JARA/AttaVintage: Hola to our very first VFG member from Spain! Rubén has a bright and beautiful store on Etsy, [AttavintageShop](#) as well as a physical showroom in historic Avila, known for its medieval town walls. You can also find AttaVintage on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#)

CHRIS CROSS/Roseanna Vintage: Our first new member of 2023 was Chris Cross of Lincolnshire, UK. She specializes in vintage jewelry, which she sells on [Etsy](#) but she also sells other vintage fashion items. Be sure to check out Chris's repurposing of broken jewelry into hair combs and tiaras. Follow Chris on [Instagram](#)

ELIZABETH VISCIANO/AuntBeezAttic: Elizabeth hails from Lockport, New York. She owned a brick & mortar costume shop for 34 years, and now showcases her vintage stock on Etsy at [AuntBeezAttic](#). She has also worked in community theater as an actress and costumer, and has developed mad skills in sewing and mending along the way.

KAY MILLER/Assassin Vintage: Kay is from St. Louis, Missouri, and her website [AssassinVintage.com](#) shows a fabulous selection of drool-worthy vintage. Kay also has a Brick & Mortar shop, so next time you are in St. Louis, you will want to plan a stop to shop! Follow [@assassin_vintage on Instagram](#) - so much to enjoy there too!

Don't let the parade pass you by: Join in!

Have you seen the Vintage Fashion Parade? Find it on the forums! There's a different theme each week to inspire you to post your best on-theme items, available or sold. Recent themes include [Grease](#), [Party Bags](#), and celebrating the anniversary of [Gentlemen Prefer Blondes](#).

Check out this week's theme [here](#)!





Carla (Carla Rey) has joined an eclectic group of dealers in the new shop Superette, located at 133 East Broadway in NYC. The hours are 12-7 daily. While the website (superette-vintage.com) is being built, you can follow [@superette_vintage](https://www.instagram.com/superette_vintage) on Instagram.

 facebook.com/vintagefashionguild

 [VFG on Pinterest](https://www.pinterest.com/VFGonPinterest)

 facebook.com/groups/vfgshop

 [VFG on Twitter](https://twitter.com/VFGonTwitter)

 [@vintagefashionguild](https://www.instagram.com/vintagefashionguild)

 [VFG on YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/VFGonYouTube)

 [@shopvfg](https://www.instagram.com/shopvfg)

