

The Girls of Meadowood

When it comes to dressing with style,
nobody in Bloomington does it better.



SOME OF THE FASHIONABLE
GIRLS OF MEADOWOOD, FROM LEFT:
Geneva Spencer McQuigg, Lee Cohen,
Maxine Dillard, Marge Clayton,
Pat Mulholland, Thea Hosek,
Honey Baldwin, and Zetta Ann Weaver.

BY Lee Ann SANDWEISS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY Shannon ZAHNLE

BLOOMINGTON IS KNOWN
FOR MANY THINGS, BUT HIGH
FASHION IS NOT ONE OF THEM.

The town's unofficial dress code might be called laid-back casual. But there is one place in town that's the exception. Drop in at the Meadowood Retirement Community for social hour any Friday evening or on any special-event day and you'll find the residents strategically dressed to the nines.

The inspiration for fashionable dressing is essentially built into the Meadowood lifestyle, according to Mark Kraner, director of Independent Living Healthy Generations.

"When you reach a certain age, lifestyle is very important," says Kraner, who notes that the average age at Meadowood is 85. "What sets Meadowood apart is our social involvement. We have 260 events here a month—more than any country club. People get into the spirit of the events and dress thoughtfully, if not beautifully."

Longtime residents note that the men have changed their style of dress over the years more than the women have. "Ten years ago men always wore a jacket and tie to social hour—now maybe half do," says Virginia Rogers, a 15-year Meadowood resident.

For the women, dressing up is fun, but nobody feels pressured to do so.

"We are competing with the calendar, not other people," says Geneva Spencer McQuigg, an 11-year resident who makes her own intricate, boutique-worthy jackets from recycled fabrics.

Bloom recently attended an afternoon tea party and a Friday night social hour and came away convinced that when it comes to dressing with panache, nobody does it better than the girls of Meadowood.

Next, Afternoon
Tea



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Tea party hostess **Virginia Rogers** retired from IU after a 40-year administrative career.

Mildred Reich, mother-in-law of IU orchestra conductor David Effron, is timelessly chic in her belted, iridescent, brown silk jacket and wide-leg black slacks.

Nancy Martin could easily be mistaken for British royalty in her two-piece blue dress and elegant hat, which she bought in London.

From left, **Virginia Rogers**, **Geneva Spencer McQuigg**, and **Maxine Dillard** chat over tea and cakes in the Rogerses' airy sitting room.

Maxine Cooper loves shopping in downtown Bloomington; she found her periwinkle silk embroidered blouse and black gaucho pants at Chico's.



The Afternoon Tea

Virginia Rogers and her husband, Dave, built their large, freestanding home at Meadowood in 1996. The house and its meticulously landscaped garden are perfect for entertaining, as when the Rogerses hosted a tea party on one of the hottest days of the summer.

Despite the temperature, Virginia's flowers and her guests in their finery were equally vibrant. The girls of Meadowood embrace color in their dress and favor bold pinks, blues, and greens in prints and solids. There's no head-to-toe black in this crowd; white dominates and is the go-to basic color. All of the women accessorize with care; shoes and jewelry

complement outfits but are never matchy-matchy, and while a number of stunning accent pieces were purchased from Bloomington shops such as à propos gifts and jewelry and Tivoli Jewelry, just as many were handed down from mother.

A tea-party traditionalist, Louann Dillon wore her bracelet-length white gloves for the occasion. "The last time I wore them was for high tea at The Ritz-Carlton in Sarasota, Florida, for a lady's 85th birthday," she says. "I have three pairs of white gloves—short, bracelet, and elbow length—which I have had for ages. Once in a while they come in handy."

A number of guests wore fetching hats. Nancy Martin's black straw fedora with its bold sweeping ornament was a standout. It's an accessory one imagines might be worn by Kate Middleton or another member of English royalty. So it's not a total surprise where Martin found it. "I bought it in London when I was there for a wedding several years ago, and I needed a hat," she says in her genteel Southern drawl.



Louann Dillon (left) in a black silk print dress and one of her three pairs of white gloves. **Thea Hosek** (right) sports a colorful top with a long lime-green skirt and beads. Hosek says lipstick is her favorite accessory—Revlon "Love That Pink" has been her signature shade for decades.



Teal

The Social Hour

Meadowood residents and staff concur that Friday Social Hour is the dressiest time of the week.

“Friday Social Hour tends to be pretty upscale. It’s held prior to dinner, and it’s often themed,” says Mark Kraner. “We have one for every holiday, all IU home games, and special events like the Indy 500 and royal wedding. Complimentary wine, beer, and hors d’oeuvres are served, families come, guests are invited. It’s all fun stuff to kick off the weekend.”

“If you’re bored here, you have a problem,” jokes Virginia Rogers, who also has a theory about her fashionable peers. “Older people look better dressed up. It covers up the wrinkles.”

Dressing up adds a special note to social hour and puts everyone in a festive mood. A lot of residents find this weekly event the perfect opportunity to mingle and meet new residents, according to Barbara Reichle, president of the residents’ council. “There is a fascinating mix of people here. Many of them are very accomplished individuals, but they never try to impress you. You need to draw them out.”

On this warm summer evening, a number of residents strolled from the indoor social hour to the gazebo overlooking the pond and engaged in an animated discussion about a recent trip many residents took to Lake Michigan.

“The travel here is nothing short of fantastic,” says Reichle. “This is a happy, remarkable place.” 🐾



Friday Social Hour is the dressiest time of the week.



OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Vicky Felton likes clothes with an ethnic flair, like this smoky-blue silk suit with an embroidered Chinese floral motif.

Retired from high-power careers, **Jack and Pat Mulholland** enjoy the lifestyle Meadowood

offers. Jack is former treasurer of IU and was the first director of the Community Foundation of Bloomington and Monroe County, and Pat is a retired admissions director for the IU business school’s MBA program.

Norma Beversdorf, widow of IU composer Thomas Beversdorf, says her personal style has

changed over the years. “Now it’s all for fun—what I’m in the mood for. I like scarves that fly in the breeze and big rings,” she says.

From left, **Pierrette Harris**, retired from the Swiss diplomatic service; **Ed Clark**, a retired professor of chemical engineering; and **Vicky Felton**, former economics profes-

sor, represent some of the fascinating mix of Meadowood residents.

Not to be outdone by the women, some Meadowood men dress in their snappiest attire for Friday Social Hour. Here, **Ledford Carter**, a charter resident and retired filmmaker, sports his tangerine-and-white Hawaiian-print sport coat.