

Italian Elio Fiorucci, who is president of a string of international

shops, describes his clothes as "throwaway fashion that you don't throw away." They'll soon be stocked in his latest venture, a two-level Fiorucci boutique on the sixth and seventh floors of Water Tower Place. To open May 6, the shop will be owned and operated by Paul B. Magit, who once owned the Paul B stores in the Chicago area.

Fiorucci, in Chicago last week, often has been called "the most imaginative fashion force in the world" because he combines fashion with a sense of fun and showmanship, in an atmosphere that has been called a "glorified amusement park." This must be a successful formula, because the 43-year-old marketing expert owns two shops in Milan, one each in New York and Beverly Hills, Cal., and more than 1,000 franchised shops around the world.

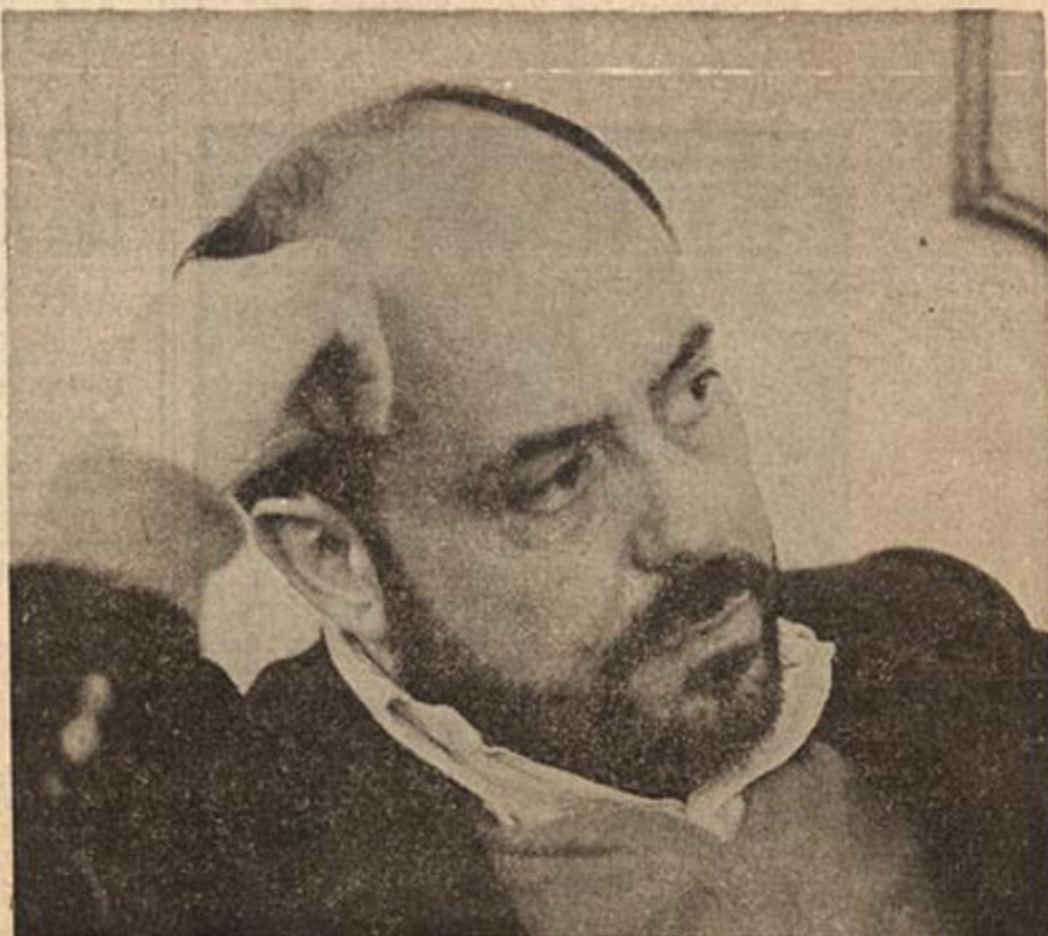
WHAT'S HIS secret? "Fiorucci is a lifestyle store," he says, "where people come to buy things for their houses, their bodies, for their minds. They come to have fun. Normally, fashion is created for people with money. Fiorucci is created for rich and poor alike. People who buy clothes and accessories in my stores don't need to identify with a status item like a signature bag or pair of shoes. They simply like to enjoy life and wear fun things."

Basically, the merchandise in a Fiorucci store is geared to the customer from 13 to 25, and to the young at heart. Colors are bright, fabrics are pure, shapes are simple, and prices range from \$2 for a poster to several hundred dollars for boots. Average price is \$40 for a top or skirt.

Expect to find straight-legged jeans and see-through vinyl bras, plus plastic shoes, expensive boots, dresses, and tops of all kinds. Most of the women's clothes are from a team of Fiorucci designers under the guidance of Fiorucci himself.

THE CHICAGO store also will stock Betsey Johnson's disco clothes, and soft, pretty sportswear from Clalia Casagrande, a designer from Marra-kech. To round out the merchandise picture, the store will carry a complete line of clothes for men, designed by Martin Guy of Parma, Italy; Fioruccino, a children's line; plus accessories, posters and magazines, etc. All will be displayed against a backdrop of loud music and bright neon lighting.

Fiorucci is adamant about keeping



Elio Fiorucci is the man behind the exciting chain of Fiorucci shops.

the image of his stores aimed at the young. "Many stores start out by catering to the young customer," he says, "but as that customer grows older, the stores' merchandise tends to become more sophisticated, more expensive; it almost becomes couture-like. Fiorucci is one of the few stores still geared to youth and also to the young matron who wants to buy something for fun, something that isn't serious or an investment."

THE FIRST Fiorucci store opened in Milan in 1967; Fiorucci had inherited a slipper business from his father, but he wanted to attract a younger clientele. So he put in shoes and clothes for teens and young people.

"This was the period of Carnaby Street in London, of Mary Quant and her mini skirt, the Beatles, and the youth movement," Fiorucci recalls. "I wanted young people in Milan to find a new style of dressing, which was more colorful, free, and anti-conformist. I put these types of clothes in an atmosphere of fun, music, and bright lights, which proved to be a successful formula."

"Today, young people have fun with clothes. When they see something in the shop they like, they buy it because the price is not prohibitive. And they know they will come back because there is always something new in stock that they can't live without."

In Chicago, the Fiorucci store will occupy about 8,000 square feet and will be on two levels. "We had to cut through the floor to create the stair-

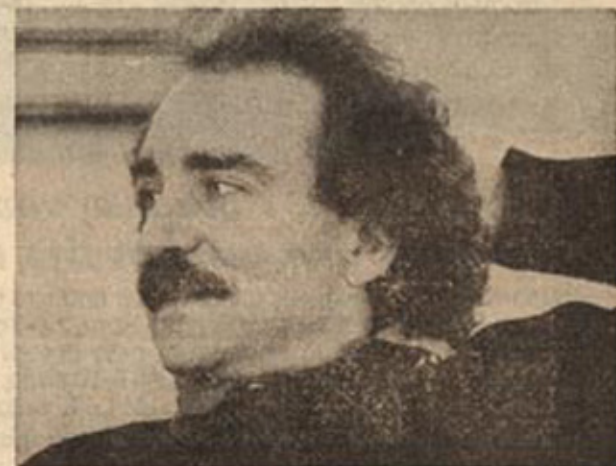
way," Magit says, "but it was worth the trouble and expense. The overall environment will be clean and electric-looking with walls of white tile and white enamel plus black glass mirrors."

"Gray industrial carpeting is used throughout, while fantastic neon sculptures and a marvelous sound system will add to the customer's enjoyment." The shop also will have an espresso bar and pinball machines.

Magit and his staff will hold "auditions" for sales staff from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Friday at the Apollo Theater, 2540 N. Lincoln Av.

Marilyn Sitz

Tribune Photos
by David Nystrom



... Paul B. Magit is the owner and operator of the newest Fiorucci shop to open May 6.