



**LOUD MUSIC FROM THE JUKEBOX**, and the food from the buffet is cold: fittings generally take place some days before a fashion show. It can take up to two days for all the details to be settled, the order of showing the outfits and the accessories to go with each. Fashion designers bring their pets with them, to stop themselves from getting too bored. Pictured here is Lolita, Veronica Etro's fox terrier. Milan, Italy. September 2002.

**THE FACT THAT IT BREAKS ALL THE RULES**

of everyday life is what gives luxury its prestige. It's often hard to say what other purpose it serves: 'It cost me three million, and I enjoyed it for three minutes,' said Charles II of Spain after he'd seen the Diana fountain which he had commissioned in the garden of La Granja. Nowadays luxury accessories like handbags can fetch anything between \$500 and \$13,000. Those who buy them have long since ceased to be exclusively from the upper classes: in the last twenty years the market has won over a new, middle-class clientele. The democratization of luxury has presented the fashion industry with record new turnovers, but it has also had a lasting effect on the demands now made on the fashion houses: today they are forced to bring out new designs, trends and models at ever shorter intervals in order to satisfy the constant need to be individual, to be different. Nevertheless, the customers still expect top quality. 'Luxury,' said Coco Chanel, 'is not the opposite of poverty, but of vulgarity.' Milan, Italy. September 2002.

