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The Master of Us All

By Blume, Mary

Condition: New. Publisher/Verlag: Macmillan US | Balenciaga, His Workrooms, His World | "A sparkling life of the monumental fashion designer Cristobal Balenciaga. When Cristobal Balenciaga died in 1972, the news hit the front page of The New York Times. One of the most innovative and admired figures in the history of haute couture, Balenciaga said that he was the only designer who dared to do as he liked. He was, said Christian Dior, "the master of us all." But despite his extraordinary impact, he was a man hidden from view. Unlike today's celebrity designers, he saw to it that little was known about him, to the point that some French journalists wondered if he existed at all. Even his most notable and devoted clients never met him. But one woman knew Balenciaga better than anyone else. The first person he hired when he opened his Paris house, furnished with only a table and a chair, Florette Chelot became his top vendeuse--as much an adviser as a saleswoman. She witnessed the spectacular success of his first collection, and they worked closely for thirty years--until 1968, when Balenciaga abruptly closed his house without telling any of his staff. Youth-oriented fashion was taking...


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