

Fall outerwear offerings emphasize leather

Bomber, antiqued or stretched leather jackets prove big sellers.

By Betsy Clayton
Emerald Reporter

Fall in Eugene, Ore. Rainy cool weather faces you daily for the rest of the term. Last year's coat doesn't look too promising. It's time to find something new.

"Bomber jackets are definitely the most popular for coats right now," says Dianne Carson, manager of The Closet clothing store at Valley River Center.

Along with the bomber look, the antique or stretched leather coat is a big seller in both men's and women's stores in the Eugene area this fall. Helen White, manager of Meier and Frank men's department, sees an emphasis on all types of leather coats for the season.

Steven J, a men's clothing store downtown, has suede and pig skin jackets. "We just got them in. They'll sell for sure," says owner Steve Nosler.

The trench coat and longer wool coat offer another look in outerwear that's fashionable yet practical for local weather. Benetton has come out with a line of oversized wool coats for men and women. "They have shoulder pads, simple lines and a soft look, and they range from full-length to mid-calf," says Gretchen Empey, a Benetton employee. She adds this coat is comparable to the trench coat, but it's a new look.

Both Nosler and White say the traditional trench coat is selling well. "It's the number

one style in dressier coats for men," Nosler says. The trench coats he carries are like the traditional German trench coat with a smooth, hard finish.

White says the long overcoats sell fast. Meier and Frank carries olive, khaki and navy trench coats made of a heavy wool.

The denim jacket is still going strong and this fall has found some new dimensions in styles. The Closet's most popular denim product is the acid-washed, cropped jacket. "The denim look has been around awhile. It seemed to begin with the Levi jacket and it's progressed from that," Carson says.

Denim is very practical for this climate, Carson explains, because it can be layered with sweaters and shirts in the winter and worn as a light jacket in the summer.

Carson says the denim look is a little different this year

in looking material rather than acid-washed. "We have longer jackets that come past the knee that are lined with fleece and we have shorter ones, too, that sell better with the guys," she says.

Both Steven J and Meier and Frank are selling denim jackets

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— Dianne Carson

because the coats are short or long. "There aren't many in between cuts like last year," she says.

The Benetton denim coats come in different looks, too. Empey says they carry a broken-

this fall. White says the Ralph Lauren-lined jean jackets are really picking up business.

Layered looks of flannel shirts, light wool jackets and sweaters are strong in both men and women's fashion. Nosler

says he sells a lot of the Woolrich hunting/logger-type plaid wool jacket. "It's all purpose and water repellant," he says.

He also says Steven J sells a lot of hand-loomed, bulky sweaters that mix well with flannel shirting. Another look in shirts is a motif pattern print of huskies, hunters or sleds. "These are very popular. Last year we sold out before the season even started," Nosler says.

The new trends in outerwear fashion seem to be a bit more casual than last year, says White.

For women, Carson sees more casual trends, too. "The acid jeans, cotton sweatshirts and bomber jackets are all popular," she says, explaining that these looks are more relaxed.

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