

Men's fashion lean to outdoors

by JAN COOLEY
for The Outlook

Versatility is the watchword for men's clothing this spring and the "Country Gentleman" look is making it happen.

"What we used to call Ivy League is today called the Country Gentleman," says Bob Bergeron of W.R. Hicks Co. He describes the look as "casual dressy."

It begins with a sport coat of herringbone, donnegal, tweed or tick weave in blended but distinct colors that go with a variety of pants, including jeans, according to Randy Stone of Gordon Stone's Key to Fashion. Suede patches on the sleeves add to the casual touch.

"Sport coats are for the first time in five years overtaking suits," says Stone.

Jack Feetham of The Blade says, "Even the younger fellows are wearing sport coats with Levi's now. Or corduroy sport coats."

Bergeron explains the look's popularity. "People tend to favor clothing that can be worn with other things."

This doesn't mean suits are on the way out. "You're still going to have your dressy pin stripes," says Stone. "And a touch of plaids are starting to come back in rich colors."

Color is another big word in men's spring wardrobes. "They're showing the fairly bright colors like white and red," says Fred McCaulou of McCaulou's Contemporary Clothing. "On the other hand, they're showing khaki and olive drab."

Hilary Leclair of W.R. Hicks Co. says, "Khaki is a very popular color because it goes with so much."

Feetham says the season offers "lots of colors in sport shirts — pastels in plums, cherries, limes and yellows." Stone is aware of a big resurgence in greens and expects burgundy to become a strong color for men.

Dress shirts are following the trend. Lines that traditionally have shown eight color choices now have up to 32, according to Stone.



Staff photo by Kelly James
Brent Baker displays active wear for spring — a tennis outfit by Jockey.

ding to Stone. "You're going to see tons of colors this spring," he adds.

Dress shirt collars are getting smaller and the button-down collar is regaining importance. Lapels are slightly smaller and ties are narrower. Knit ties also are making a comeback.

"One of the really big things is cotton sweaters," says McCaulou. "Men can wear them well into the spring and summer because we have so many cool days." Sweaters are another way of adding versatility to a wardrobe because they can be worn instead of a shirt or with a shirt for a layered look.

Cotton and other natural fibers such as silk, wool and linen are gaining in popularity. According to McCaulou, manufacturers have improved the process for fabrication quality, controlling shrinkage and making natural fibers easier to care for and wear. The different textures, such as tick and slub weaves, give a surface interest to men's clothing.

Another changing trend is in casual pants. Blue denim, which has dominated the market for several years, is dropping off significantly. "What has taken over is the secondary fabrications — twills, sheetings and cotton blends in lots of colors," says Stone.

"Casual slacks is really where the interest is. I think it's an outgrowth of this preppy thing," says McCaulou. "Jeans are now an option, not just 'the thing.'"

Leclair says younger men still like jeans, especially the faded look, and shrink-to-fit seems to be coming back. Feetham says, "Jeans are still popular — not anywhere like they used to be but still popular."

Also on the decline is the Western look. "Western hats have gone pffft!" says Stone. "Western shirts have tapered off somewhat, although they're still pretty popular. Boots are still strong because of comfort."

The biggest spin-off from the Western look is the fit. Men seem to prefer it to the fuller tradition cuts, and Leclair says older boys still like trim cut pants.

New spring styles sprout from different directions

Plan ahead, the experts say, and save time, money and effort. So you're planning your spring wardrobe, figuring out what you need to keep body and soul — or at least body and closet — together. But planning it all out this year takes some doing.

First, you have to decide if you want to join the Navy, the Foreign Legion, the Grand Ol' Opry, an Indian tribe, a frontier cavalry platoon, a Southern plantation, a South American rumba troupe or an Oriental dynasty.

Those are some of the choices 80 California designers offered in a show of fashions for women for spring at the California Mart in Los Angeles.

Going nautical was one of the big influences with lots of white dresses with square collars piped in red, and red-and-white striped middy shirts over crisp white shorts and light-weight pea coats.

But there were also lots of frontier Army officer shirts right out of the Western movies — you know, the kind of shirt with a bib that buttons down to a deep V and looks nice on Ronald Reagan on the late, late show.

Or would you rather snap up some earthy American Indian prints or go exotic with Oriental prints?

There'll be little place on this spring's dress racks for the American business-woman looking for her usual navy spring suit or pastel sweater if these California designers have much to say about it. Nothing was tailored. Overall, the look is much softer, easier and more feminine than ever before.

It's a lot of fun, though, with fantasy dressing to match your every mood: There were plenty of deep flouncy Southern-belle ruffles and lots of country looks, big pilgrim collars edged in ruffles, smock jackets and dresses, petticoats and pinafores, bloomer shorts and ruffles, tiers and flounces with camisole tops.

The Oriental connection shaped up in Chinese pajamas, cropped and full pants, jackets with braid and frog fasteners and asymmetric closings.

And sportswomen heading for the open field can expect to find lots of jodphurs, sturdy knickers, linen shorts to various lengths and big country

jackets.

Among the best of the show:

— John Radaelli's white organdy party dress with black piping around strapless bodice and deep hem flounce with matching white organdy wrap also piped in black.

— Zoe's ruffled big top, easy and full at the shoulder, over trim white shorts. A simple skimp which could be left long and plain, or pulled up to mini-length.

— St. Simon and Valluccio offered the Indian look with earth colors, linen shorts and pants to all lengths, then jazzed them up with short metallic boots in bronze or copper. Metallic touches abounded for spring, in necklaces, belts and boots.

— Nautical themes by Easy Street, Reba, Carole Little and Ceil Hughs and others. Carole Little shortened a square red mess jacket and edged the sleeves with gold braid. Eclipse, a junior house which sells across the country to such stores as Neiman-Marcus and Casual Corner, is going in heavily for nautical-themed dresses and separates.

SPRING FEVER '82

New lengths, new looks from the Jean Machine's Spring Fever '82 collection. Suspender walking shorts by Britannia. Three-quarter length Clam Diggers from No-Man's Land by Jesse Jeans. Rocky Mountain's clean Drop Pocket jeans with flattering button tab bottom. And the colorful Nauticals in '82 Spring Tops. Spring ahoy!

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