

cover story

LOOKING BACK — AND SOMETIMES DOWN — AT TRENDS OF THE '90S

BY DAVID JASPER • The Bulletin

One must be careful dissing past trends because what goes around comes around. Mock the mock turtlenecks of the '90s and you'll make a mockery of yourself when they come back into fashion. Nevertheless, here's a look back at some fashions and other trends the '90s unleashed on the world.

SWEATER VESTS

Janice, that minor character on "Friends," wasn't the only one saying "Oh. My. God. Chandler Bing!" This lame, milquetoast fashion choice seemed to only make his sarcasm land harder.

CIGARS

For a few years in the mid-'90s, everyone in the U.S. seemed to have a big stogie dangling from their mouths like a world full of wannabe Rush Limbaughs.

SPICE GIRLS

Hey, speaking of wannabes, "I'll tell you what I want, what I really, really want ..." went the girl group's megahit "Wannabe," which makes me really — actually, it's a pretty good song.

BOY BANDS

Speaking of single-gender music groups, let's see, there was always the pretty boy (for ex., Justin Timberlake), the trouble-prone bad boy with the punchable face (Donnie Wahlberg), the one with the overly groomed facial hair (AJ McLean), the conventionally handsome one (Nick Lachey) and an impossible-to-remember one (insert name here, if you can think of him).

NEW AGE SPIRITUALISM

Thanks works such as "The Celestine Prophecy" and other books by the likes

of Deepak Chopra, a new religion of sorts was born, replete with a soundtrack by the likes of Yanni and Enya.

Giant jeans — Fun fact: JNCO jeans, those oversized, floor-dusting denim nightmares, made a comeback in 2017. A year later, Maxim magazine, which is pretty damned '90s itself, wrote, "We may have a sign that '90s nostalgia is over, like any passing trend. JNCO is going out of business and is liquidating all of its inventory. The dream of the '90s is dead, my dudes." Rest in power, king.

LAD MAGS

"When Maxim arrived on U.S. shores in 1997, it immediately subverted any platform ideas of taste, class, and self-reflexive masculinity," wrote Paste Magazine in 2017. "It's almost disappointing how well it worked." Indeed.

DAVID DUCHOVNY

Yes, he went on to more success as a tragicomic writer/ladies man on "Californication," but thanks to "The X-Files," Duchovny was uuuuuge in the '90s. There was even a 1999 pop song by Bree Sharp who begged of him, "David Duchovny, why won't you love me?"

SWING DANCING

While it was cool seeing Stray Cat-strutter Brian Setzer's second act, there was something surreal about a dance style of the 1940s having a resurgence more than half a century after its heyday.



Virgin Records

INLINE SKATES

Not quite retro-cool like roller-skates, and not as rad as skateboards, inline skates had a very strong moment in the '90s. There was even an inline category of the X-Games, another '90s invention. But wait. "What's curious about the sport — like the recent resurrection of choker necklaces and high-waist jeans — is that it may be the new cool thing again," wrote outthereoutdoors.com in 2018. Still, go to any public skatepark and you'll primarily see skateboards and scooters.

ADAM SANDLER

A breakout "Saturday Night Live" cast

member whose career is still going pretty strong with leading roles in films such as 2019's "Uncut Gems," even if he'll never be a critic's darling. Sandler could both act and be fearlessly silly, weird, etc., making his early film collaborations with Tim Herlihy — movies such as "Billy Madison," "Happy Gilmore" and "The Wedding Singer" special — if sometimes offensive by today's standards. Oh hell, they may have been offensive then too, but kinda funny.

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