

Men's fashion: slim, sexy, streamline

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK - Designers here have turned out the sexiest, steamiest, sleekest, slimmest clothes for men in decades.

At the Seventh on Sixth spring 1997 menswear shows, it was all beefcake and body beautiful, the body exalted, toned and terrific. It doesn't matter whether a guy's basic physique resembles burly weight lifters, gnarly surfers or reedlike pearl divers, the body is buffed in the best possible condition this season.

The silhouette is long and lean, devoid of unnecessary decoration and gimmicks, distinctly masculine and macho.

Suits, particularly one-and-two-button versions, are the standard-bearers of the season. There are corporate, casual, even leisure-suit looks comprised of matching jackets and trousers that put new spins on the business of tailored clothing.

Paired with classic shirts and ties at Ralph Lauren and Hugo Boss, or teamed with open-collared sport shirts, T-shirts and second-skin sweaters at Calvin Klein, DKNY, and Tommy Hilfger, suits are the workhorses of a man's wardrobe.

Dressed down or up, today's suits start with a strong shoulder and narrow through the torso to the waist and hip. They are slim enough to require a single or double vent for ease. Sport coats take the same silhouette and bring it in closer to the body.

Some designers are looking backward, to movies such as "Saturday Night Fever" (without the chains). Others look forward to the next millennium and space travel.

Still others are influenced by menswear from distant shores: India for Donna Karan's Nehru jackets, the British Crown Colonies ensembles from Joseph Abboud, Cuba and Malaysia for Nicole Farhi, John Bartlett, and JOOP, where handsomely finished sport shirts can substitute for coats in very hot climes.

Sportswear holds the slim line. Flat-front trousers and a new generation of jeans with stretch properties top the bottoms list. Surfer jams and close-to-body shorts of all lengths are more casual takes. Golf jackets are pivotal. Short-sleeve sport shirts and whisper-thin T-shirts and pullovers round out the picture.

For serious jocks, endurance and high-test gear is the order of the day. Biking shorts, wet suits, swim boxers and briefs in performance-driven fabrics are offered by designers and mass manufacturers alike.

Designers are big on monochromatics, sometimes in brazen colors. The catwalks were awash with blues: indigo, azure, sky, baby, electric, teal and aqua!

Then there are surprising pastels: melons, citrus, pink, purple, lavender, lime, algae. Add in the basics, such as tan, tobacco, gray, black, and white. These are teamed in matching or tone-on-tones combos.

What makes these interesting? Touches of embroidery, color blocking, space yarns and the sheer sheerness of the fabrics.

Factor it all in and you can bet that the best accessory of the season is a great set of "abs."

Manners, etiquette matter

Just good common sense, say experts

By Kevin Blocke THE SPOKESMAN REVIEW

SPOKANE, Wash. - The Christmas season brings with it tons of holiday fun and mayhem.

Nothing is more fun, or confusing than a formal dinner.

Sitting down to a dinner with more than one fork or spoon can bring any adult to their knees and draw buckets of perspiration as you try in vain to figure out which utensil to use first. Unfortunately, formal dining etiquette doesn't involve asking the person in the next car for a spot of Grey Poupon.

It's knowing what to do with the four forks on your left and the three knives and two spoons on your right. It's also knowing how to dress and how to interact with others in a formal social setting.

Thirty-five Gonzaga University students were schooled in the fine art of dining at the Cataldo Dining Hall on campus last month.

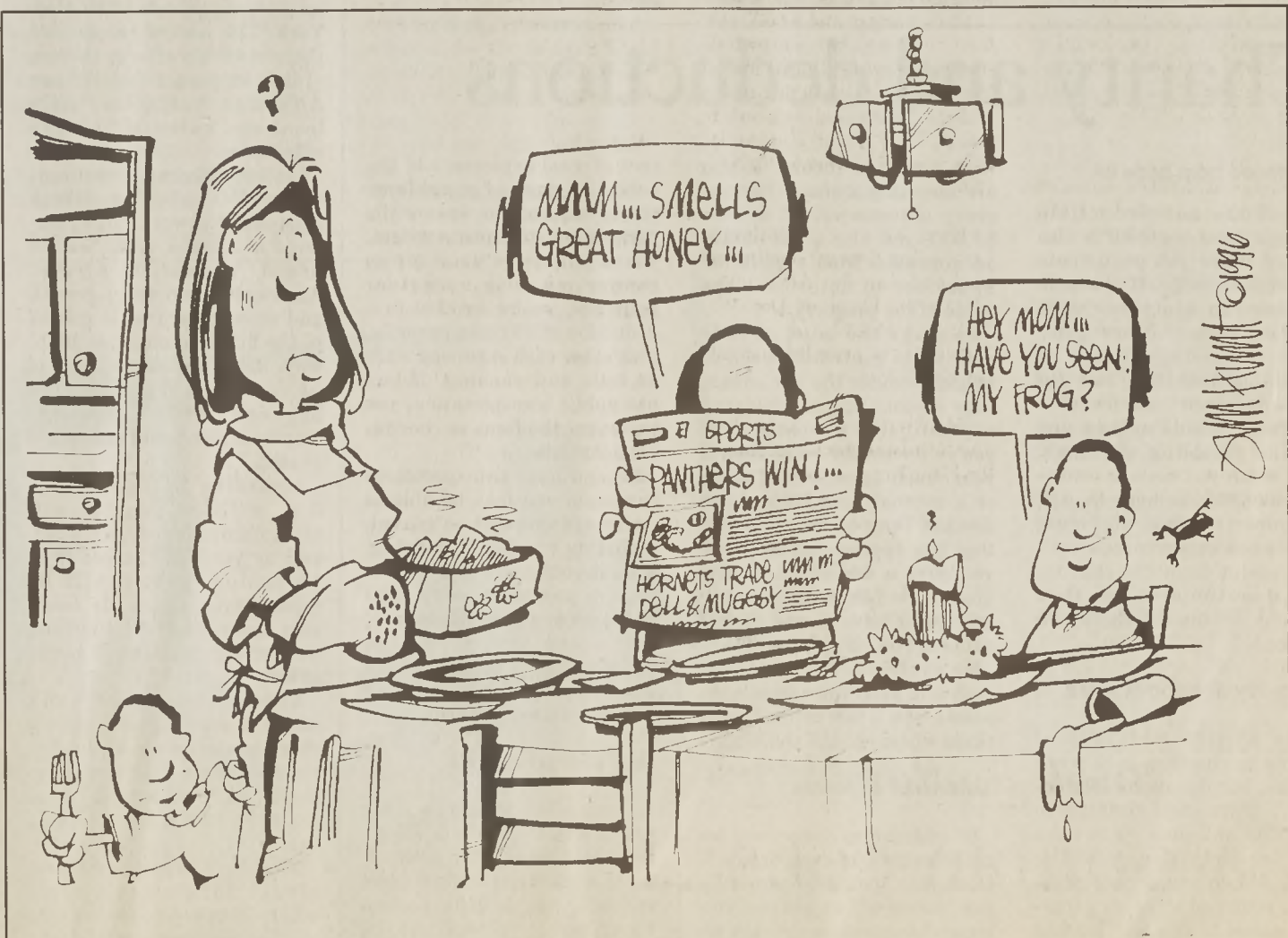
Paul Komelasky, general manager of the Spokane Marriott, offered the formal training in an informal setting.

"Know this: You're always being watched," Komelasky said. "An impression of you is formed in the first 30 seconds (after) you meet someone. If you make a bad first impression, it's going to take you more than 30 seconds to correct it."

He told the students that good social skills are just as important to career advancement in one's chosen field as talent and resourcefulness.

"Business etiquette alone won't make you the head of the company," Komelasky said. "But it can be a factor in determining whether you get there or not."

Fortunately for the young man who wore his Nike baseball cap from the dinner's start to its end, no hiring decisions were being made at this dinner.



And luckily for the young woman who inadvertently sent a piece of Florida alligator etouffe into the lap of the person across from her, no promotion was on the line.

Marlin Clark, director of the Gonzaga Career Center, came up with the idea of the etiquette dinner six years ago.

"Proper etiquette is something that everybody should know," Clark said. "When they get out of school they're going to be working with people who don't eat at McDonald's every day."

Clark, 48, said he is astonished by the improper - some-

times even vulgar - table manners displayed by today's youth.

"I'm from a generation that was trained with these etiquette values," he said. "As a kid, you never put your elbows on the table or chewed with your mouth wide open."

During the six-course dinner, in which the entree consisted of Indian baked rabbit perigueux stuffed with pate of prime rib, Komelasky offered advice:

It's important to be a good conversationalist, he said, but motor-mouths are frowned upon.

He also said:

- Don't arrive for a formal dinner or luncheon more than 8 minutes late.
- Be positive. "No one wants to be around a whiner."
- As for silverware, use the outside utensils first and then work your way in with each course.
- And if you're not sure what to do, sit back and hope the person next to you does.
- "If you've got a lobster sitting in front of you and you aren't sure how to proceed, it's all right to ask the waiter or waitress for instructions," he said. "It's bet-

ter to ask than to end up having it in your lap."

• And if your appetite isn't completely satisfied at the end of a formal dinner and you're thinking of asking for more, don't.

It's considered rude. A serving is a serving is a serving. Manners matter, Komelasky said.

"Good etiquette is just good common sense."

Jerri Young of The Charlotte Post also contributed to this article.

Spending for the holiday needs budget

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

STARKVILLE, Miss. - With all the advertising charms aimed at consumers during the holidays, many people are carried away by the Christmas spirit without remembering to manage their money.

Families often make the mistake of neglecting to prepare financially for the holidays. It can be difficult to finance much celebration without consideration of where the money is going to come from beforehand. Families often make it through Christmas using credit, but then have trouble paying the bills in the new year.

Beverly Howell, extension family economics and management specialist at Mississippi State University, said there are

several ways to get through the holiday season successfully.

Howell suggested planning ahead for Christmas expenses to be prepared to make good spending decisions.

"It's very common to get caught up in the holiday season and make financial decisions that are not to one's advantage," Howell said.

One of the best ways to prepare for Christmas is to make a budget early.

"Stop and take a look at your expenses, and make sure you take everything into consideration," Howell said. "When people think of Christmas expenses, they often think of the cost of gifts. However, there are several other expenses such as decorating, cards and postage, extra food, and any travel costs."

Once a practical budget is determined, the family must come up with a means to finance it.

"For most families, taking the extra Christmas money out of a regular paycheck just isn't going to work," Howell said.

Howell said an ideal way to prepare for Christmas expenses would be to figure a budget, divide the total cost by 12 and save a fraction of the money each month. Another way to avoid a money crunch in December is to stagger gift buying throughout the year.

"Some families deal with the extra expenses by taking on extra work or relying on credit,"

Howell said. "Before you make the decision to rely on credit, look at how the additional debt is going to fit into your budget later."

Some other money management tips Howell offered were to make a list, to shop early and to use the same consumer shopping skills that you would during any other time of the year.

"When you make a list, include as much information as possible. Include sizes and price ranges. The more information you have, the less likely you will

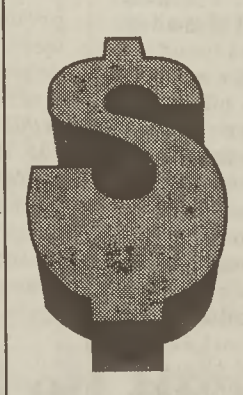
be to make a bad buying decision.

"Also shop early. When you wait until the last minute to shop, the options are fewer and often more costly," Howell said.

Always remember to read labels and warranties and know each store's return policies when buying gifts. These actions help avoid problems for the gift receivers.

Howell said there are alternatives to spending a lot of money during Christmas, and everything doesn't have to be bought.

"Certainly Christmas does not always have to involve money to the extent that we often feel it does," Howell said. "Christmas is a wonderful time for sharing talents, making gifts and offering services."



Welfare women advised about abortions

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOSTON - Pregnancy counselors now are advising young women to take another factor into account: welfare reform.

Along with offering information about a host of childbirth considerations, counselors are advising women about the state welfare law that took effect Sept. 1. The bill bars women from getting more benefits if they have more children while on welfare.

Although it is unclear whether the law is leading to more abortions, it has become a factor in making that decision, counselors say.

"It's not that women say, 'I'm not getting (more) welfare, so I'll get an abortion,'" Barbara Day, a Boston Medical Center social worker, told The Boston Globe. "It's more that it's part of the total calculation on whether to have an abortion."

In Massachusetts, welfare

typically gives \$496 a month to a parent and child. Until the law was changed, each additional child increased the monthly check by about \$90.

In the past, social workers say, women generally have not been motivated to have more children by the promise of more welfare benefits. But they may be motivated not to have more children if it will strain a fixed budget, and counselors say they have a duty to deliver that informa-

tion.

"We're telling them they should not expect to get benefits," said social worker Julie Clements, who works at the Uphams Corner Health Center in Boston's Dorchester section.

Day said that about half of the 80 low-income women she has counseled since the law took effect have had abortions.

Abortion opponents said they feared the welfare bill would lead to more abortions,

as a similar law did in New Jersey.

Joseph Doolin, director of the Catholic Charities and Cardinal Bernard Law's spokesman on welfare issues, said he has heard from social service agencies that more women feel pressured to end a pregnancy. He said the number of abortions in New Jersey rose 15 percent when a so-called "family cap" was imposed.