

CAMPUS COWBOY

By THOMAS JESSIMAN

Ridin' tall in Western style

NO MATTER how you look at it, the Western look is in. Mechanical bulls are springing up all across the country in bars and even discos; country music is in the midst of a terrific upsurge; even Hollywood has gotten into the act with *Urban Cowboy* and *Honeysuckle Rose*.

If anything is distinctly American these days, it is the cowboy hat, and now not only the hat but also the rest of the Western wardrobe are selling well in the clothes market. The look has spread to Paris, where it has become chic to stroll the Champs d'Elysee in a buckskin coat with frills.

And even here in Chapel Hill, where most store owners answer the question "Do you have any Western wear?" with "No, but we have a sale on scallop and frog belts," the look seems to be catching on. A new store, Dunn-Rovin Western Wear, has opened up in Carr Mill, with all the essentials for any urban or not-so-urban cowboy.

"All the styles change," said Wesley Long, owner of Dunn-Rovin Western Wear. "Western hasn't been in yet, and it's time for it."

"First there was mini-skirts and now it's switched to jeans and those are Western clothes and part of the whole Western look," Long said. "Everyone wears jeans these days and with just a shirt or a hat too then you got the look."

You don't even have to ride horses to wear Western clothes. "Nowadays all the horses are being killed and sent overseas, and we sell more to people who don't ride than people who do," Long said.

Unlike the preppie look, which can cost hundreds of dollars and takes years to learn how to wear just right (some people never do master the pink-and-green collage), the Western look can be managed without the complete outfit of boots, hat, belts and shirts. Just one of the components can give your wardrobe a much-needed lift.

Probably the biggest seller in the Western look is the hat. Long takes his business to bluegrass festivals in the state and he said hats and hat bands are the most prolific sales items. Two types of hats are available at Dunn-Rovin Western Wear, straw hats which run between \$18 and \$22, and felt ones which are more expensive at \$15-\$60. Feather hat bands vary from \$6 to \$30 and Long has even made up some special blue and white ones for Chapel Hill.

The big name boots like Tony Lama, Acme and Durango are all well-stocked at Dunn-Rovin and they range from \$50-\$150. For \$139.95, one can even buy the same style of boot, the black and

white Tony Lamas, that John Travolta wore in *Urban Cowboy*. "Boots sell real well and a lot of businessmen in the cities wear them to work," Long said.

And Western shirts with livelier colors and different cut in the back from their Lacoste or Oxford counterparts are so versatile that they can even be worn with khakis and penny loafers. Well, almost. Dunn-Rovin has a wide variety of all the Western shirts, priced between \$12 and \$25.

For those who want to get very serious about the Western look, a black leather vest is available for \$85 and a rattlesnake belt buckle can easily be fitted on to any of the belts in the shop. And a mule-saddle mirror is as good a Western acquisition as the classic steer horns.

As Sissy in *Urban Cowboy* made very evident, the Western look should not be limited to men alone. Long said he sells much of his gear to women, and he has a stock of special boots with higher, fancier heels for the ladies. He even sells a purse that looks like a miniature saddle—as his son Don, said, "We got all the gadgets here."

The best way to look at Western wear is as an addition to your wardrobe. There's no need to be a fashion mogul and buy the



DTH/Charles Vernon

Thomas Jessiman in Western garb ... From Dunn-Rovin Western Wear

complete set—lock, stock and barrel. But even two months from now when fall fashions are entirely different, a pair of boots or a cowboy hat will still be good purchases.

And you might be real glad you got to the end of this story when you're standing in Troll's one night wearing your Stetson and someone comes up to you, like Sissy and John Travolta in *Urban Cowboy*, and asks "You a real cowboy?" Hell, it sure beats "What's your major?"

Thomas Jessiman is associate editor for *The Daily Tar Heel*.

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