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# Fashions this season are showing some leg

By KATHY PETERS  
Staff Writer

News in fashion this fall is getting shorter all the while.

At least for women, that is. They're getting squeezed into skirts sized to fit . . . er . . . 5-year-olds.

So get out the Nair, women. This year, fashion-conscious ladies are going to be shaving all year round. Gone are frills and over-over-sized sweaters. In are slightly tighter, sleeker looks.

"What has been more dramatic (this year) has been the change in style," says Barbara Shane, manager of Separate Quarters on Durham-Chapel Hill Boulevard.

The hemline is the biggest style change for the season, according to Karen Brautigam at Montaldo's in Eastgate Mall. Fashion experts around the area agree wholeheartedly.

How short is short? According to Shane, skirts at or slightly above the knee are in vogue. And these tight minis are being paired with comparatively calm opaque tights or thick hose, slightly oversized sweaters and flats for day wear, according to Shane.

"It's as though they made this drastic style change and made it more subtle by toning down the accents."

Shorter isn't the only way to go. The longer skirt is making a big hit as well.

Women who aren't ready to be daring needn't worry, because there are many options.

For the fashion-conscious, pajama-style pants with slightly wider legs are edging out flowing skirts. They can also tone down the look with subdued colors. Gordon Hill of Benetton on Franklin Street says that new colors — pale brown and burgundy — are designed to minimize the shock of the short skirt, "so you don't look so outrageous on the street."

For the die-hards, challis skirts are still plentiful in the fall fashion line-ups, and Donna Bass at Belk-Leggett says many of her customers are sticking with them.

When it comes to topping the outfit off, sweaters are slightly shorter than last year, according to Betty Tinnin, department manager for junior sportswear at Belk-Leggett in University Mall. Yet long-over-short or long-over-long are still the predominant looks for fall. Pairing long sweaters with short skirts so that just a little of the skirt is peeking out can be a difficult task, according to Shane.

When it comes to color, pack away the hot pinks and the magentas and even some of the pastels. As far as fall colors go, it's the year for the redhead, with earth tones predominating, Shane said. "Khaki is by far our strongest color, with brick or terra-cotta accents," she says.

Forest green, orange, army green and brown are abundant. "There's a big emphasis on brown, from rust to chocolate brown. It varies in shade all the way to butterscotch brown," says Michelle Henshaw, accessories department head at Montaldo's.

Winter white is still classic. Black, the other fashion classic, is back, and

le noir may be gaining force. At Separate Quarters, khaki and black is one of the hottest new color combinations, according to Shane.

Sweater dressing is also back from last fall, but it now has a new twist. According to Hill at Benetton, the sweater and sweater-skirt combination is giving way to the one-unit sweater dress.

To complement this fall's fashions, scarves are a popular accent piece this year, according to Shane. They're coming in all sizes and shapes, thin and thick, and all patterns are fair game.

"We've had tremendous scarf sales. If anything, they're more popular than ever before," Henshaw says.

As far as accessories go, bigger is still better, according to Henshaw. "I think it's just catching on in this area. I think people in big cities have worn big accessories for a long time."

The two other big words in accessories are turquoise and leather. Many

stores are selling turquoise bracelets even better than silver, which, according to Henshaw, was popular last spring. Wide leather belts with snakeskin and other prints (such as the ostrich print) pressed onto them are also the rage. African prints for both accessories and clothing are also hot items, according to Brautigam.

Metallic accessories are losing a bit of their shine, and while most local stores are carrying flash, they have minimal amounts of it. "Everybody did turn around and discover that there were metallics everywhere. They'd get to the prom or the formal and discover that every other girl had metallic handbags like theirs."

But where metallics and other accessories are toning down, this fall's daringly short, tight skirts and sleek styles are making a statement. "I think it caught the whole buying public by surprise," Brautigam says. "It's a cleaner look, and it's a fresher look."

**What's hot:**  
short, tight skirts  
earth tones  
alligator prints  
bulky accessories  
turquoise  
sleeker cuts  
acid-washed denim  
pants' braces

**What's not:**  
the prairie look  
lace for daytime  
challis skirts  
magenta  
plain oxfords



DTH/Charlotte Cannon

Fall sportswear affords many combinations. Men's jeans courtesy of Town and Campus. Other clothing provided by The Lodge.

## The look is Classic American

By KATHY PETERS  
Staff Writer

Italian men may be known for their beguiling flirtatiousness and Brits for their sexy savvy, but American men are making their moves this fall with a fashion sense that reeks of Americanism and exudes a casualness that could only be born in the U.S.A.

"In sportswear, everything is going back to the American . . . dressed-up sporty look," says David Salley, manager of The Hub, Ltd. on Franklin Street.

The outdoorsy look is moving out of L.L. Bean and into a more upscale look that's still carefree but dressier. It's a dressed-down look that's more dressed up, Salley says.

And local merchants are feeling the change. Both Salley and Bob Simpson, owner of The Town and Campus on Franklin Street, say acid-washed jeans and denim jackets are selling in crazy-like proportions. Thalhimer's in Durham's Northgate Mall also has washed-out jeans at the top of its sales list, according to Melvin Parker in men's sportswear.

Jean shirts are hot, according to Salley, but they have a looser fit and a cleaner silhouette than the '70s' cowboy classic.

Along the same lines, slacks are sleeker. According to Gordon Hill at Benetton on Franklin Street, none of the unisex shop's pants are cuffed this year, and they're tailored to fit the

slim look.

Even the traditional solid American business shirt is being pepped up to a slightly oversized shirt sporting broad stripes. In some shirts, patterns striped across the chest only and extended to the sleeves create a slightly updated, classic look that Simpson says is selling well.

"In general, American men are getting more style-conscious," Salley says.

Sweaters are getting richer, too. They're showing up in subtler weaves and more luscious fabrics, according to Salley.

What's the casual trend leading up to? Simpson says to watch for the dressy look in sportswear that's coming for the holiday and spring seasons — "the more wrinkled the better." According to Simpson, the unstructured look Don Johnson popularized a few years ago fizzled after awhile, but because of the dire need for something with casual finesse, it will be back soon. Already, Salley says, sport coats are dressed down and selling in more patterns.

But some things never change, and aside from the subtle alterations in cut and pattern, fashion is sticking to the basics, according to Simpson, who says shoppers are unlikely to see anything shockingly new this fall.

Basic autumn shades, including olive drabs and earth tones, are back

from last year.

As far as dresswear is concerned, there have been considerable changes since last year, according to Salley. "Last year, what was happening was a giant Italian flux of imported clothing," he said. Because of the decreased strength of the dollar, Americans can no longer afford Italian clothing, according to Salley, and that has forced changes in the typical American business suit. The Italian sport coat with padded shoulders has taken a back seat to a more continental look — a sport coat with the extension of the natural shoulder and pleated trousers in finer fabrics.

Bow ties may be heading out, but braces (you know, suspenders) are still selling strong, according to Salley. Patterns and more elegant paisley prints are keeping braces up to date.

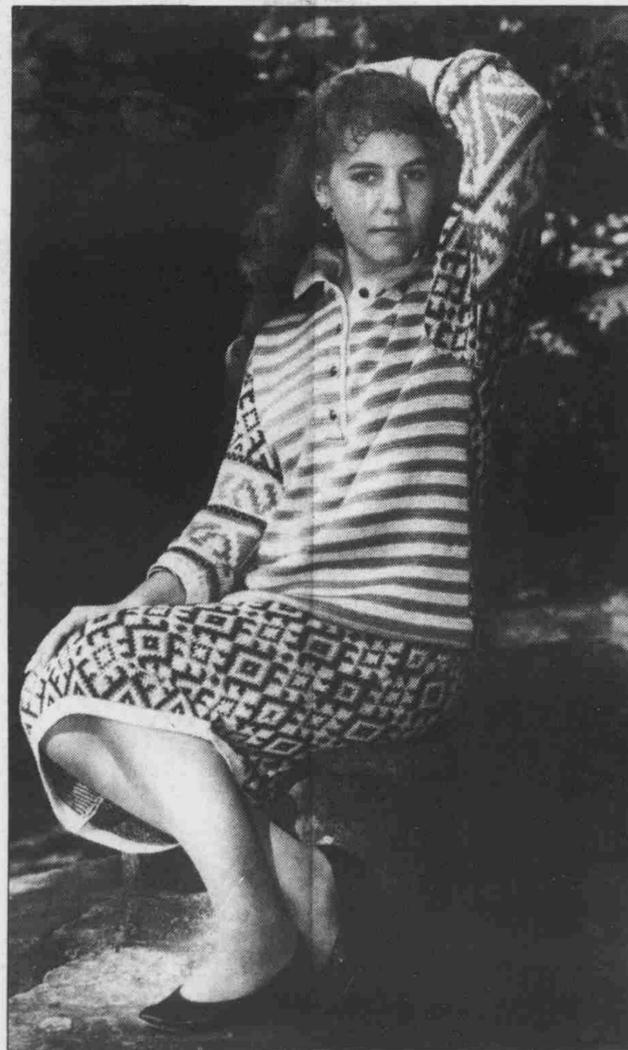
Speaking of paisley, the verdict is undecided. The color and background are getting darker and bolder, according to Salley, Simpson, on the other hand, says paisley is still popular but that the paisley proliferation of the past few years has virtually taken it off the market.

But whether men are perked up in deep paisley or fitted forever in acid blue jeans, there's a classic sense out there this fall. Classic American, that is.



DTH/Charlotte Cannon

Black formalwear is always a classic. Cashmere-wool blend trousers and cotton shirt courtesy of The Hub, Ltd. Dress courtesy of Modern Times.



DTH/David Minton

Casual sweaters and sweater-skirts remain college favorites. Outfit courtesy of Benetton.