



Stylin'

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Narrower, Natural Styles for Men

The lines are sleeker and fabrics more natural, creating a better-feeling, more stylish Class of '79 menswear.

Narrower lapels and collars, more cotton and wool blends and added texture are some of the trends in suits and sportswear for this year's spring and summer styles. Those changes are part of an evolutionary change stretching back over several years.

The revolutionary change this year may be inspired by the disco movement -- the return of the double-breasted jacket, to go along with the pleated pants is vogue this season.

Overall, the look for '79 is dressier, said retailers and other menswear experts interviewed by the Chronicle.

"Most of the ladies are wearing skirts this year," said Luciano Franzoni, stylist with Hart, Shaffner and Marx in Chicago during a visit to Winston-Salem. "If the man likes to compete or at least stay in the same ball park, he's forced to dress up himself to keep her from feeling uncomfortable and him from feeling outclassed."

"Everything's natural this year," said Franzoni. "There are a lot of blends -- wools and polyesters and silk and polyester."

"Everything is narrower," added the Chicago designer, referring to lapels and shirt collars.

Local retailers interviewed agreed on those two major points, however, there were some differences based largely on the distinctive personalities of the respective store.

"The natural fabrics are more prevalent this year," said Dick Stockton of Norman Stockton, Inc.

"You've got the cotton and wool combined with the synthetics."

"The natural fibers have a better feel," added Stockton. "They don't look like polyesters, which sort of look like plastic."

However, the natural fibers mean the buyer has to keep two things in mind,

said Stockton. "Don't get the suit too tight. Being soft, it may give at the seam." He noted the suits will not hold their shape as well as an all-polyester suit.

Polyester and cotton blends will be particularly easy to care for, said Willie Stevens of J. Henry's on Trade Street. "They're machine washable and will save a lot of people money on dry cleaning." He said the fabric will be found in everything from coats and shirts to tank tops.

"There's a nublier, nappier appearance" to the texture of today's styles, said David Stith of the downtown store of Frank A. Stith and Co.

Steve Tuttle of Mr. Hi-Style referred to the dominant texture as the "hopsack look." He cautioned customers "to buy it big, because if you get it tight it doesn't look right."

The difference in the suit lapels this year is as much in their depth as in their width, said Stith. "The lapels are made shorter, the ties and collars are narrower."

"It's a better look; it's cleaner and less flamboyant," he added.

When it comes to dresswear styles, there's as much variety as there are different stores.

Stevens and Tuttle are backing the double-breasted suit and jacket, unlike some of the other merchants.

"The double-breasted is back," proclaimed Stevens, based on a recent trip to trade shows in New York. "I saw a lot of men wearing them up there, with the new pleated pants."

He pulled out a copy of Gentleman's Quarterly, showing a new double-breasted design that can be work as a single breast or double-breasted suit.

Tuttle can see the resurgence of the style in his own store. "The double-breasted is back strong. I don't think everybody is going to go back to it, but the guy who buys to stay in style will put it on. I'm selling them and I've had to re-order twice."

A more dominant trend is the unconstructed jacket, with a sleeve that can be

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Willie Stevens of J. Henry's displays polyester cotton walking suit, one of the comfortable blends popular for spring and summer wear.



Staff photo by McCullough

Author Phinx and Elmira Vance previews what the "in" look this spring will be. Phinx models a three-piece polyester dress suit and Vance models a full skirt and long sleeve blouse. The two will show case their designs in an upcoming fashion show. See story page 8.

SKIN CARE TIPS

Buy some plants and keep your skin beautiful this winter.

A riddle? Not at all. Dermatologists will tell you that dry heat in buildings draws moisture from the skin in cold weather. To replace the needed moisture and prevent skin from drying out, buy plants and keep them well watered and misted. (Unless

you're allergic to plants, of course). They add humidity to the environment.

Keep thermostats set to comfortable but not excessive temperatures in winter. Use a vaporizer or humidifier in rooms where you spend much time.

Take quick, warm baths, not long hot ones. Hot water also removes moisture from the skin.

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