

# Designer...

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"The European fit looks good standing up, but it's definitely not a comfortable suit for businessmen," Bill Bures, manager of the downtown Ben Simon's store, said.

### Not real comfortable

"Granted they do look good, but they're not the most comfortable thing to wear everyday," Bures said.

Bures said men like the European fit because of the look and style, not because of a particular designer's name.

An exception, he added, are Calvin Klein clothes "which sell like gangbusters."

Bures said his store was in its third good year of selling men's designer fashions, mainly Yves St. Laurent, and attributed it to the fact that men are more quality conscious than before.

"It's a sign of the times," he said. "People are conscious of value, more so than I have ever seen them."

Bures also said that many men were being more careful in their shopping habits after finding out in national magazines how some designers are overpricing their product solely because of their name.

This is where salesmanship becomes important, Bures said.

"We want people to buy our best made suit," he said. "Take our word for it, we want to give them a true value. We're not trying to pull a fast one, we want people to come back."

### Younger men more impressed

Bures said younger people were more likely to be impressed by a designer name.

And although students are not spending more money on clothes than before, he said, they are dressing up more, "in something besides fatigue pants and flannel shirts."

Tom Lintz, manager of Jason's clothing store for men, echoed Patterson's view that

men are not buying clothes as often as before but are buying better quality.

"Everybody is becoming more cost aware," he said. "If they (designers) give them quality, designers will be in good shape."

"But if they try to cut quality," he added, "you betcha' they'll go down."

Lintz said that Italian designers have made their look more available to American men by scaling down the style and making it more relaxed.

For example, the shoulder area was the main downfall of the old European fit because its tight fit cut down mobility, something not appealing to men who had to move in the suit all day.

### Newer fit is more comfortable

But the new European fit, Lintz said, is not as square in the shoulders and not as padded, making it more comfortable.

Giorgio Armani developed this style of wear in 1975, and it was promptly dubbed the "unstructured" look because it had no lining, padding or excess fabric to get in the way of free movement.

The merging of the old European fit and American style of fashion has worked well, mainly because of added comfort.

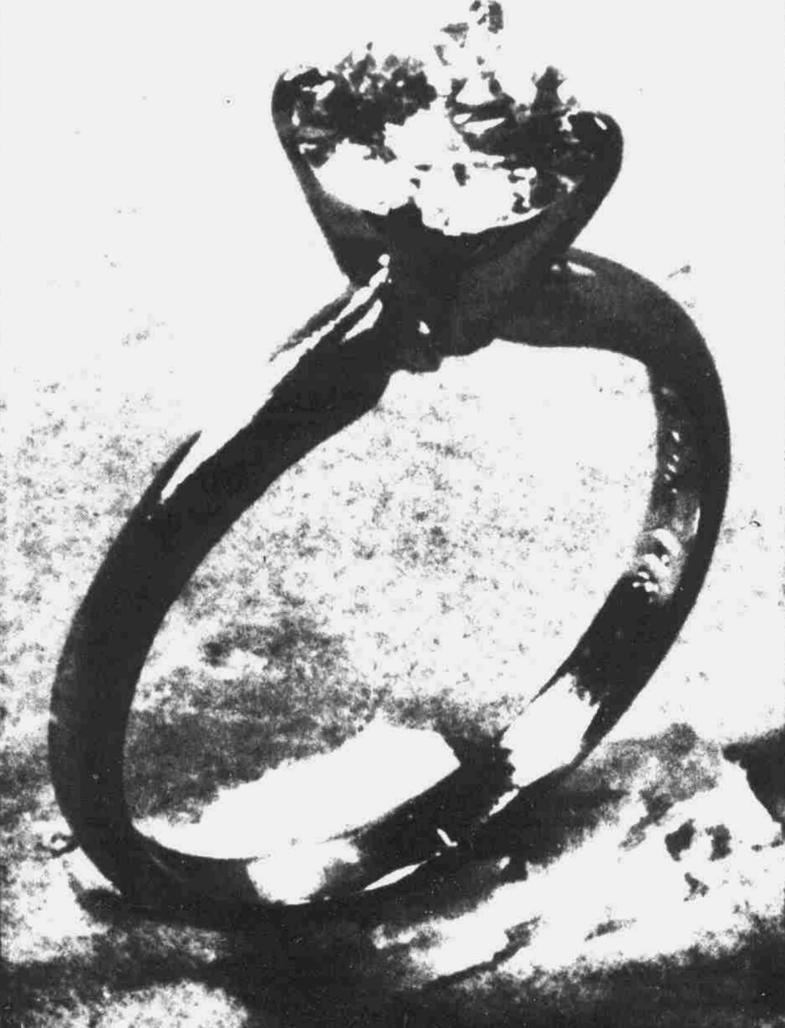
"Lots of times men will look for a name first, but if the fit isn't comfortable they won't buy," Lintz said.

But if you are one of those people who don't feel like spending an entire paycheck on a designer suit, take heart, because of 17 million suits sold in 1979, 75 percent were priced at \$100 or less.

And, if you want to achieve Armani's "rumpled" look that Richard Gere popularized in the movie "American Gigolo", you can always use the popular student's method - leave it on the floor of your room for a week or so until it gets that desired "rumpled" look.

*A.T. Thomas Jewelers*

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