

New swimwear to flatter average bodies

By Jennifer Johnson
Staff Reporter

At this time of year, swimwear can be a four-letter word for some and an excuse to show off a great body for others.

If the swimwear industry can help it, shopping for swimwear will become less intimidating and more enjoyable in the '90s.

The focus now in the swimwear industry is accepting the fact that there are several different body types, many of which do not resemble a fashion model's.

Dillard's Department Store is taking part in this new marketing

strategy by offering the service of "Swimwear Specialists."

Three women from the Gateway Dillard's Department Store recently attended a one-day seminar in Kansas City, Mo., to receive information from swimwear vendors around the country.

They learned how to display swimwear, what body types should wear what styles, and how to encourage customers to experiment when trying on swimwear.

Dillard's sales associate Diane Plummer said vendors encourage sales people to try on every bathing suit in their department to get a

better understanding of how the suits fit so they can help the customer from experience, not just speculation.

"I try on an average of two racks of suits every night, and it has really helped me to help customers because every suit fits a little bit differently," Plummer said.

Plummer also said hangtags on the swimsuits that show what the suit looks like when worn have been a big help.

"Seeing the suit on another body first is often a greater incentive to try it on than just seeing the suit on a hanger. Many suits look awful on the hanger but really cute on," Plummer said.

The styles this year are varied, reflecting manufacturers' efforts to meet many consumer needs. Some companies have dropped leg lengths because of complaints, while others have introduced even higher-cut legs.

Both Dillard's and Younkers Department Stores at Gateway Shopping Center carry about a 50 percent split between one- and two-piece bathing suits. Salespeople at both stores said that most women try on an equal number of one- and two-piece suits.

A popular style for bikinis this year is bandeau tops with high-waisted bottoms. The high-cut bottoms that come to the belly button or true waist have been a big success, several sales associates said. The fuller bottoms allow people with figures not quite fit for low-hip bikini bottoms to wear a two-piece suit.

"Sturdier" tops also are in. About 50 percent of the two-piece suits at Younkers have tank-style tops this year. This style is good for large-busted women and those who prefer more support for swimming.

One-piece suits are available in many varieties. The "old standard" is the solid-colored tank suit, or tank suit with a nautical crest. High-neck, maximum coverage suits

made of sheer nylon as well as skimpy suits of luxury lame-like fabrics also are available; it's all a matter of taste.

Designers such as Bill Blass and Adrienne Vittadini offer matching coordinates to go with their swimwear such as coverups that mock the suit design and matching sarongs or skirts.

"Many people don't go for the whole set though, because by the time they've put out \$65 for a swimsuit, they won't pay another \$65 for a designer coverup," Plummer said.

In the junior departments at Younkers and Dillard's, neon colors are big this year. Many of the suits are black with neon colors.

Suits for this age group often have a main bodily focal point such as the stomach, thighs or hips to accentuate firm, fit bodies.

High fashion suits this season are styles reminiscent of the '40s and '50s. Halter-top suits are in, as well as suit tops that show "the return of the wired bra."

The Post & Nickel currently is carrying Gottex swimsuits in black and white solids in the underwire style. Also, Nouvelle Eve in Omaha's Old Market is carrying a line of black suits by Liza Bruce that express the "40s look."

Younkers and Dillard's do not have any of these styles yet, but their stock is only in the "cruise" phase, with more suits coming in later this season.

The J. Crew catalog offers a wide selection of swimwear which includes these '50s look and underwire suits. While it is a disadvantage to not try a suit on before purchase, J. Crew does allow swimsuit returns.

Most department stores don't allow swimsuit returns, so catalog ordering may be a good alternative for those who would like to try on suits in the privacy of their own bedrooms.

As often happens in men's fash-

ions, there aren't as many men's styles to chose from in swimwear. The look this year in swim trunks has gone back to the mid-thigh length.

Leggoons at Gateway, a "surfer" store all the way, has even shortened their popular knee-length brightly colored swimsuits to mid-thigh length.

"A lot of people have stopped in looking for the longer knee-length suits and were disappointed when they didn't find them," Kim Peak, assistant manager, said.

Leggoons will be receiving some longer length suits within the next few weeks to meet the needs of their customers.

The biggest fabric used in swimtrunks right now is Supplex Nylon. Supplex has a reputation for being as "strong as steel," has a cottony-soft feel and is very lightweight. It's also available in a number of bright, neon colors that were not around last year.

"Last year the basic neon colors were available in swim trunks, but this year the color line has expanded -- including neon pink, purple, yellow, orange and blue," Post & Nickel salesperson Chad Tolly said.

Younkers is carrying a variety of men's styles this year. They also are carrying bright, neon colors and report that vertical stripes are big.

Younkers carries the standard brands -- Speedo, Izod, Gant, Polo -- and "OP is making a comeback again," sales associate Jim Chapek said.

While less often is more in women's swimsuits, the opposite is true for men's high-fashion styles. One-piece tank suits and thick knit trunks with very short legs are in on the men's high-fashion front.

It usually takes a very fit man to look good in these styles. Younkers Department Store has some of the short, thick-knit trunks coming in later this season.



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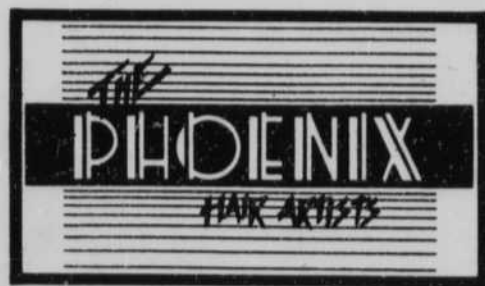


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Career fashions allow room for more color, bolder accessories

By Jennifer O'Clka
Staff Reporter

College students preparing for job interviews should consider not only the traditional dark blue interview suit, but also newer, more colorful styles.

Deb Schreiber, sales supervisor at Caren Charles, Gateway Shopping Center, said she thinks the myth of the navy-blue interview suit is dead.

Schreiber said more people want color in their suits.

Color portrays an image of confidence, boldness and a dare-to-be different attitude, Schreiber said. These bright "confidence colors" include bright purple, green, yellow and autumn-like rust and mustard. Also, she said people who are even more daring may choose chartreuse.

Schreiber said autumn colors are popular in any season, but pastels limit the outfit to spring and summer.

Color works best for people interviewing in creative fields, Schreiber said. Students interviewing for conservative professions, especially those in business, usually stick with traditional suits, she said.

Schreiber, who is a senior at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, said students sometimes are too conservative when choosing interview suits.

Also, Schreiber said, students need to complete their outfit with scarves and jewelry. Students usually don't make the mistake of overdoing accessories, she said.

Many students buy suits of cricket linen, she said. Cricket linen is a rayon and flax mix, and is a linen-look material without the wrinkles and other hassles of linen.

Also, she said, rayon and polyester blends are popular because of their easy care and nice look.

Caren Charles sells mix and match separates. Schreiber said jackets range from \$68-\$115 and skirts from \$30-\$60. A complete outfit, including a skirt, jacket, blouse and accessories, runs about \$175, she said.

Sources from other stores say they still see the traditional approach as popular.

Mary Spethman, manager of the Tailored Woman, 220 N. 66th St., said her store deals with man-tailored suits in basic navy and charcoal. She said she has seen conservative styles more than trendy ones.

Spethman said skirt styles vary from pleats to straight skirts, but tailored men's style jackets remain popular.

Spethman said students must consider quality when buying an interview suit. They are expected to dress as well as the interviewer, she said.

Spethman said suits at her store range from \$245-\$485 with free alterations.

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