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# Underwear becoming fashion in itself as men become less intimidated to buy

By **Gerry Beltz**  
Senior Reporter

We've all worn it, shopped for it and bought it, but have we ever really thought about it as a fashion? Underwear. It's not just for women to buy anymore.

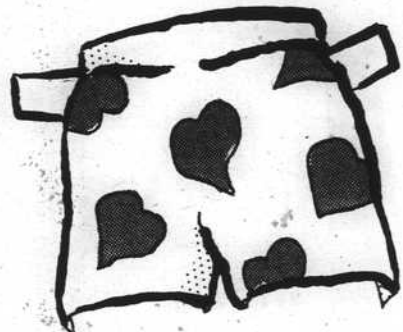
"We have a lot more men coming in and shopping than in the past," said Marcia Porter, manager of Kacy's Lingerie, 6900 O St. "The men are becoming more sure of themselves and are not as intimidated about buying lingerie as they used to be."

Although Porter's clientele was not divided down the middle, she said it's pretty close.

"I'd say about 60 percent of my customers are female," Porter said, "and 90 percent of the clothing inventory is female-oriented."

Victoria's Secret stores had a slightly wider split, said Monica Mitro, spokesperson for Victoria's Secret.

"We have about an 80 percent female clientele," she said, adding that this is information coming from the agents visiting the stores, and is not something that is kept in records.



*"The men are becoming more sure of themselves and are not as intimidated about buying lingerie as they used to be."*

**MARCIA PORTER**

manager of Kacy's Lingerie

"It's basically a women's business," Mitro said.

Victoria's Secret stores don't need to worry about following current trends, Mitro said.

"Victoria's Secret are the leaders," she said. "We have our own trends."

"We have a new collection that comes out every three months. It is ever changing."

Locally, the trend was going retro, Porter said.

"Right now, it's the movie-style glamour," she said, "Eva Gardner, Marilyn Monroe, in both sleepwalk and swimwear."

Location also had a lot to do with how the store discovered trends, Porter said.

"Like anything else that is progressive," she said. "It comes to the mid-states after both coasts."

In the boxers vs. jockeys debate, boxers seemed to be winning that battle.

"Boxer shorts are very popular for both men and women" Porter said.

Cynthia Glynn, fashion director for Younkers, said there had been an increasing design trend in men's boxers.

"Novelty patterns," she said. "Whether it be sports, cartoon figures or whatever, something a little more unusual."

Porter added, "It's something men have decided is a comfort they want to enjoy."

Silk boxers also had shown an increase in popularity, and were the only male-oriented clothing items carried by Victoria's Secret, Mitro said.

"It's the feeling of the silk," Porter said, "plus the fact that silk is much more easily cared for than it was five years ago."

It's not just the guys wearing the boxers either, Porter said.

"Women find them comfortable, and can pass them off for shorts and outerwear, too."

When it came to swimwear, the field was wide open, Mitro said.

"The uniqueness of the fashion is that anything goes," she said. "Anything from full-coverage suits to string bikinis."

Local swimming apparel was staying a bit more traditional, Porter said.

"Bikinis are still worn, but have become a little more conservative," she said. "Mainly high-cut legs but covered belly buttons."

# Basic clothes, bright colors are hip for new spring fashion line

By **Emily Wray**  
Staff Reporter

Basic clothes and bright colors are the code words for spring's newest looks. These trends, along with fitted wear, transcend gender lines.

Color seems to be the most important part of any piece of clothing for the spring season.

"We are showing a lot of black and white, along with brights, yellows, lime greens and light blues," said Mark Savage, store manager of Structure in Gateway Mall, 61st and O streets.

"Spring is just color," said Kelly Furlong, manager at Banana Republic in One Pacific Place, 10335 Pacific St. in Omaha.

"Mixing and matching bright, funky colors or color-blocking by wearing different colors together is very popular," Furlong said.

Many stores seem to be on the same style wavelength, too. Eddie Bauer and Banana Republic also touted basic, traditional wares.

"The traditional look is popular, with denim, khaki and things like band-collared shirts for men and women," said Liz Gorman, a spokesperson for Eddie Bauer headquarters in Redmond, Wash.

"Khaki pants are a good look and almost everybody has a pair in their closet," Furlong said.

"Basics are always in, like a crisp, white shirt, and polo shirts," she said.

Gorman said that logo T-shirts were

classic, whether in short or long sleeves. Polo shirts are hip, too.

"Polo shirts are always great. We have a large array of colors, including plaid," Gorman said.

Savage touted the merits of plaid, too.

"We have a lot of plaid suitings this year, muted plaids from our retro collection, which brings back seventies and eighties fads," Savage said.

Vests are popular, too.

"Vests are something that we continue to feature and develop, and Eddie Bauer does them well," Gorman said.

Structure also carries a wide array of vests and black denim, Savage said.

"Things that continue to perform well are the basics, like polos, logo T-shirts, jeans and khakis," Gorman said. "It's the collection for the college market."

Other styles that are popular include zippers on everything at Structure and active wear at Banana Republic.

Furlong from Banana Republic likes the fitted look for both men and women.

"Fitted, short sheath dresses for women and men's tailored and fitted clothes are in," Furlong said. "Getting away from big, baggy looks is the big thing."

The college market is a big draw for these retailers. Gorman said that college students made up a broad part of

their market core group, which is ages 20 to 45.

We get customers from older high school students, college-age students and people up to 40 or 50 years old, Gorman said.

Structure's target market is age 25 to 45, Savage said, but it's a wide range, from junior high up to age 75.

"College students are real important to our business, especially in Lincoln," Savage said.

"We cater to all ages and are geared to just about anyone," Furlong said.

"Our early spring line is in, and we're getting another one in soon."

Gorman said Eddie Bauer featured casual, comfortable clothes that are a good value.

"Structure's styles are a casual European look," Savage said.

Mixing and matching is key at the Banana Republic, Furlong said.

"There's a lot of freedom with what you can do with the clothes," she said.

To be in the thick of things for spring at any of these stores, remember to buy basic clothes and bright colors.

