

CASUAL

Casual dress and business dress are coming closer together for men, says Doug Hoffman, whose stores are outfitting the fashion-conscious for spring.

"The days of men wearing navy business suits all week and then dressing like zebras on weekends are over," Hoffman said.

"Now the smart man knows his best look and strives to maintain this image of good taste whether he is working or playing."

This proprietor of stores at 115 S. Woodward, Birmingham, and in the New Orleans Mall at Ten Mile and Greenfield in Southfield sees cotton as the top fabric for men's casual wear this spring.

Cotton pants and shirts, knit shirts with contrasting linen colors and traditional short sleeve shirts will be the big items in sportswear in area clubs, he believes.

The look of the season on the golf courses, boats and

at informal gathering also will include slickers, sweaters and lightweight pants with drawstring waists, Hoffman predicts.

For business and evenings out, he believes men will choose light shades, muted patterns and natural colors in their suits. Jackets will be a trifle shorter, lapels a little narrower and everything in quiet good taste.

Hoffman sees the casual suit as a disappearing fashion, but there's a dissenting opinion from Chip Tolbert of the Men's Fashion Association, who suggests that its "second-generation" look is very much alive as the kind of outfit that can be correlated with the sharp new separates.

The leisure suit, said Tolbert, is "a new and better version that overcomes the cookie-cutter look which was the weakness of the original breed."

Tolbert noted that the first expression of the leisure suit was back in the 1930s when slacks suits became a smash hit. They were very basic in concept and aimed at warm-weather wear, in colors and fabrics strictly for relaxing

and in mated sets of shirts and slacks.

Next step was the safari suit born on the African plains. It was quasi-military with pockets like those on uniforms and many had epaulets as well as belts.

A third direction took its cue from both military and western wear. Those were the short, waist-length models and resembled either the famous Ike jackets of World War II or the abbreviated "rider jackets" worn by cowpokes.

Today's leisure suits are far more sophisticated. Tops and bottoms are related, not necessarily matched, in ways that are more subtle and in styles that may include as many as four or five units. The relating factor can be a fabric, a trim or a confluence of design that mates the tops to the bottom. Units include shirts, slacks, tops, walk shorts and jackets.

Current leisure outfits can be worn short as well as regular lengths and will be available in regular weights.

"The leisure suit is no longer a uniform," said Tolbert.

(Continued on Page 40)



Classic sportswear can be innovative in design while providing maximum comfort, as evidenced by this all-cotton deck shirt coordinated with brush cotton stripe slacks, found at Jordan Khan of Birmingham.



Contemporary styling and muted spring colors accent this spring sweater designed by Gil Cohen. The jacquard crewneck coordinates with slacks, shirt and scarf separates.



For cool comfort, a rugby shirt in chrome yellow and bottle green knit teams with yellow walking shirts. A cable knit cardigan in green and bound in yellow completes the outfit by Arthur Richards Sports.

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