

the fashion plate

Warm idea—go buy your own fur coat

"Baby, it's cold outside. There's no better time than right now to buy a fur coat."

That's what Pat Patton, public relations person about town, said to herself when she braved the cold winter winds on her way to buy a pair of blue jeans at Somerset Mall.

Instead of heading straight for her destination, which was Saks' blue jean department, the sight of the furs in the windows of Furs by Roberts stopped her dead in her tracks.

Musing over the fate of two milking curly lamb fur acquisitions from years ago, still hanging sadly in her closet and unfit for human wear, she said she thought, "Why not?"

Browsing through the furs, looking with longing at the sables, the transplanted southern belle met Ed Roberts, the senior member of the Roberts clan. A few questions later, dealing with her lifestyle and the primary purpose of a fur in her wardrobe, Ms. Patton found herself enveloped in opossum fur.

"I COULDN'T take it off," she said. "I've never been so excited about a purchase in my life. Just think, I bought my own fur coat."

The curly lambs were relics from her college days, she said, "when father picked up the tab." And that used to be the case. Even in the early '70s, rarely did a woman buy her own fur coat. That luxury was the responsibility of the man in her life.

Voicing to care properly for her new fur, she sailed off to get her blue jeans. Then, outfitted for a planned weekend trip to New York, off she went.

Ms. Patton, who hails from Lexington, Tenn., says there is no cold in the world like a Michigan

winter. "A woman needs a serious fur coat here, just to keep warm," she said.

"I've tried the layering bit, even longjohns, but once that cold wind hits, I shiver for the day." Isn't that the truth.

It was the cold that prompted Ms. Patton to invest in a lovely lush fur but many people are being prompted to buy furs as an investment, said Ed Roberts.

"If you think you need a new fur now or will need one by next year, this is the time to buy it," he said. "Prices aren't coming down."

WHEN ASKED how the lifestyle questions help determine what kind of fur a woman should have, Roberts said, "A business woman who drives, is in and out of the car and is always rushing around should have a sturdy, long-wearing fur."

Furs that can take the hardest wear include mink and sable but they are often too expensive for the working woman's budget. Besides, he said, a mink coat is not usually considered the mainstay of a working wardrobe.

"Opossum is a serious fur that can be worn for business, yet works well for casual wear, as well. Raccoon, nutria and muskrat all fall into the same practical category," he said.

The prediction for furs for the '80s is that trends for the sake of newness will take a backseat to quality and simplicity in furs that are practical but far from boring.

As fashion designer Pauline Trigere said, "I think women are realizing that furs are a way of getting warm and cozy without adding all the bulk of extra clothing."



Pat Patton picked opossum — warm, practical and beautiful — when she bought herself a fur coat. It's from Furs by Roberts. (Staff photo by Dick Kelley)

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A fashion and water-ballet show will be staged by Hudson's Thursday 7-9 p.m. at the poolside of the Detroit Plaza Hotel.

All proceeds from this benefit show of 1980 California fashions will go toward the Detroit Fashion Group Scholarship Fund. The scholarship will be presented at this year's Detroit Fashion Group Career Day.

Brenda Rosenberg, Hudson's vice president of fashion merchandising, will be commentator and special guest. Anne Cole, of Cole of California, will present her retrospective swimwear collection with swimsuits from the past 100 years.

Admission is \$10. To obtain tickets, contact Rosemary Bannon 533-0578 or Letha Coon 358-5407.

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