

fashion notes

56-year-old rodent is latest fashion hit

HE'S FUNNY. He's colorful. He's American.

And those are some of the reasons why Mickey Mouse has become the hottest thing to hit fashion since the alligator and polo pony, says Max Raab, head of J.G. Hook and its subsidiary, Mickey and Co.

Mickey and Co. is one of the companies licensed to create clothing and accessories with Mickey designs and logos.

Raab now figures his company will sell more than \$20 million wholesale of Mickey Mouse items, three times the amount original projected when a Mickey Mouse campaign was devised.

THE MICKEY Mouse revival started when European designers adopted him as a graphic to T-shirts, blouses, sweaters, pullovers, slacks and any number of other items, often using flashy colors and giddy poses.

Although Mickey Mouse Productions has loosened up a bit in the way Mickey can be portrayed, he still has an image to uphold. He can't be seen with liquor or cigarettes and "Mickey never gambles."

He must always appear dressed, although not necessarily

in the same manner he has appeared in newspapers and movies or on TV and watch faces. Mickey's original red suspenders are often considered passe by the designers and his clothes tend to be on the bright and mod side. As often as not sunglasses adorn his visage.

The Mickey merchandised by Raab's company, however, sticks with the original appearance—pipe stem arms and legs, giant feet and shoes and shorts with two big buttons in front. There is a certain timeless quality about the vintage Mickey, Raab contends.

EVEN WALT Disney's company allowed Mickey's appearance to be altered somewhat over the years as artists changed his ears, shape and physique.

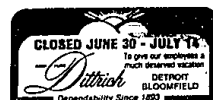
Subtle differences never hampered the mouse's popularity, however, and he is just as loveable today as when he was first introduced 56 years ago (hard to believe he's that old, eh?).

Raab doesn't see any cooling off of the current penchant to own Mickey Mouse items but he admits that it could happen. What then? "There's always Goofy and even Snow White," he says hopefully.



Mickey Mouse on anything is the name of the fashion game these days. Here Mickey adorns a polka-dot print, oversized

sweatshirt in 100 percent French terry cloth.



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