

Preppy look resurfaces as country club chic



REAL DEAL
CARI WALDMAN

Ever have an urge to ditch the tight little black numbers in your closet and buy a Izod polo shirt and pair of madras pants?

Well, here's your chance. Ready or not, the preppy look is once again hip. And, for lack of a better label, this time around it's being called country club chic.

The look is somewhere between what you might be wearing on a golf course in Charlevoix and year 2000 versions of Rob and Laura Petrie from the Dick Van Dyke Show.

Nautical motifs, polka dots, gingham prints, clam diggers, flat-front Bermudas and golf-inspired shoes all are in the forefront of the look, an eclectic one suitable for both men and women to wear day and night.

Of course it can be worn to the country club and on the golf course. More importantly, the trend has no limits and makes for easy dressing for all locales and occasions.

Like 80s prep, the shapes are tailored and simple. Unlike its predecessor, though, country club chic is far from monotonous and conservative.

From young, club hip-hoppers to the classic, distinguished set who never stopped wearing the look, post-modern preppy can be worn by any age group.

To keep it fresh, stay away from pink and green embroidered ladybugs on your lapels, knee socks with loafers, and sweaters over the shoulders. (They're signs you're stuck in 80s prep mode.)

The trend scores big on the comfort scale. Best of all, it's easy to incorporate your own individual style and personality into country club chic.

Think classic clothes, Armani for example, and kick it up a few degrees with pieces or accessories that have sex appeal.

For him, khakis are essential, and those with a slimmer leg and no pleats are the most recent designs. Men's shirts hug the body, much like they do in women's wear, although there is a renewed emphasis on button-down shirts in textured plaid and modern sport prints.

Among the trends highlights for women is a revival of the blouse. Cropped, cap-sleeved peasant tops and shirts with men's styling have been fashioned in feminine, pastel, sheer silks, as well as, polka dots and madras prints in cotton and shantung.

Button-front shirts are back, too. Tucked in, left out or tied at the waist, these classic shirts couldn't be more sexy when buttoned low and paired with a pair of fitted, ankle-grazing khakis.

Also back in style is the shirt dress. This time around, however, the fabrics are cool and laid-back. And, denim and stretch poplin are excellent choices.

I like the shirt dress: worn fitted; without all the buttons done; and both with or without a skinny belt. Pair the dress with flat sandals, open-toe shoes or flip-flops.

While I'm sure you have something hanging in the back of your closet to get you started on the country club chic look, here's an A to Z list of stores where I spotted key pieces:

- AX Armani Exchange, the Somerset Collection in Troy, for cap-sleeved, peasant tops
- United Colors of Benetton for madras pants
- The Gap for polo shirts (Hey girls, try a boy's polo shirt in size XL; they're cropped and fitted for a third of the adult size price.)
- Inside's Closet in downtown Birmingham for Kandahar golf shoes without spikes
- Kmart for Dr. Scholl's and flip-flops
- Loehmann's for gingham button-down shirts with ruffled sleeves
- Old Navy for ankle-grazing, flat-front khakis
- Ralph Lauren departments at area department stores for gingham print pants in silk and tops with polka dot prints.

Cari Waldman is a free-lance writer and stylist who lives in West Bloomfield. Please send your style and shopping questions to Cari at OERealDeal@aol.com.



Mission possible: Marie Masters searches for slimming and attractive swimsuits at Hudson's at the Somerset Collection in Troy. The suits will be featured in the June edition of her Internet fashion magazine for women who live in the Midwest.

Fashion and geography

Web site aims to put Midwest style on the map

BY NICOLE STAFFORD
SPECIAL EDITOR
nstafford@oe.hometown.com

Dressed in a simple ivory suit and coral top — a measured splash of the season's hottest color — Marie Masters has come to the Somerset Collection with many missions.

A free-lance writer, self-described clothes horse and Troy resident, Masters' concrete mission is to find a slimming bathing suit to feature in the June edition of her Internet fashion magazine Midwest Woman.

Launched in March with a target audience of women between the ages of 30 and 65, the quarterly publication's motto is fashion for America's heartland. The "e-zine" also pays close attention to Midwestern lifestyles and will be updated monthly.

"We're looking for a Miracle suit today," says Masters, making her way towards Hudson's, the retailer she hopes to feature because it's based in the Midwest. The bathing suit will be photographed for a feature on figure-flattering swim wear.

And, while Masters is taking a "real clothes for real people" approach to her web publication, uniting women in the Midwest with functional fashion is only one of her larger missions.

"It's more than just fashion. It's the whole lifestyle," she says. "It's a celebration of women living the four-season lifestyle."

In Masters' opinion, Midwestern women's fashion needs and wants differ from their counterparts on the East and West coasts.

Yet, "we're kind of dictated by West Coast and East Coast fashion," she contends.

True, it's not clear which force — fashion trends or lifestyles — is more dominant and defining in women's closets, but there's undoubtedly a connection.

One clothing category that's significantly impacted by geography and lifestyle is outer wear, says Masters. For example, women who live in the Midwest must have at least a winter coat, pair of boots and raincoat, given the season changes. Transition clothing, pieces suitable for wear between seasons,

are other essentials.

While Midwestern women are well aware of their wardrobe needs, they may not realize how such requirements impact their shopping decisions, overall image and clothing budgets.

Most importantly, Masters would like to see women from the Midwest take charge of their fashion destiny and have influence over clothing designers, much in the same way fuller-figured women have in recent years. "I think the trends have kind of been handed down to us. I would like for us to export something," says Masters. "And, if we haven't established a style, I'd like to see us do that."

Such a process will be on-going, as well, she adds. Since women's lifestyles are constantly evolving, "fashion has to evolve with us," says Masters.

Thus, her job will be to continually tap into "what women want," she says. "My goal is to make women feel good about themselves."

Midwest Woman is located at www.midwest-woman.com.

Collectible compact exhibit stops at Neiman Marcus

It's been said good things come in small packages.



Sometimes, the packages are just as special as the contents. And, that's often the case with fragrances, particularly compact perfumes designed to hold solid perfume.

Blurring the boundaries

New era: Este Lauder's millennium compact is available for purchase at the exhibit.

between fragrance and art is Este Lauder's traveling, museum-style exhibit of perfume compacts, on display now through May 8 at Neiman Marcus at the Somerset Collection in Troy.

Tracing Este Lauder's long history of creating the elaborate compacts, the exhibit contains nearly 100 of the company's designs, including several from private collections.

The hand-made compacts, which contain a pat of solid fragrance, reflect a broad range of styles, from traditional cameo designs to Art Deco.

In addition to the exhibit, which is

making a five-city tour in the United States, a master craftsman will be on hand to demonstrate how a one-of-a-kind perfume compact is created. The process, including conception, typically takes about three months.

Also, six compacts designed by Este Lauder for Neiman Marcus will be available for purchase.

Este Lauder has offered limited-edition perfume compacts during the holiday season for more than 30 years. A distant cousin to the more ubiquitous powder compact, the glamorous perfume vessels, have attracted a following of collectors in recent years.

Exquisite display

What's Este Lauder's exhibit of nearly 100 hand-crafted solid perfume compacts created over three decades

When: Now through Monday, May 8

Where: Neiman Marcus, the Somerset Collection in Troy, first floor

Contact: For details, call (248) 643-3300

ADDED ATTRACTIONS

a display of designer shoes such as Ferragamo, Donald Pliner and Bucci plus \$25 off purchases through April 30. For details, call (248) 642-1965.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26

MAKEUP EVENT
A representative from Christian Dior presents From the Runway to Your Way, an event designed to help shoppers take advantage of current makeup trends through April 29, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., Cosmetics and Fragrances, first floor. To schedule an appointment, call (248) 643-9500 ext. 466.

THURSDAY, APRIL 27

CAROLINA HERRERA SHOW
Saks Fifth Avenue, the Somerset Collection in Troy, hosts Carolina Herrera's Fall 2000 Collection with informal modeling through April 28, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., Designer Salon, second floor. For details, call (248) 614-3393.

Retail, style and special store events are listed in this calendar. Please send information to: Malls & Mainstreets, c/o Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 505 East Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009. Fax: (248) 644-1314. Information must be received by 5 p.m. Monday for publication the following Sunday.

MODEL AIRPLANE SHOW
Livonia Mall at Middlebelt and 7 Mile roads presents a model airplane show featuring radio control air shows, exhibits and other demonstrations through April 30, noon-10 p.m. Air shows are slated 10 a.m.-9 p.m. April 29 and 11 a.m.-5 p.m. April 30. For details, call (248) 470-1160.

SHAKER CONTEST
Liveland Wonderland Mall hosts the Livonia Parks and Recreation Department's Nasty Sneaker Contest with prizes for the worst sneakers, noon, Food Court stage. For more information, call (734) 522-4100.

SHOE MONTH CELEBRATION
Maxwell men's clothing, 116 N. Old Woodward in downtown Birmingham, celebrates shoe month with

OUTDOOR CLUB DAY
Eastern Mountain Sports, the Somerset Collection in Troy, offers a 20 percent discount on all in-stock merchandise to members of outdoor organizations, 10 a.m.-9 p.m. For additional information, call (248) 816-9681.

SATURDAY, APRIL 29

CLUB MONACO SHOW
Club Monaco, the Somerset Collection in Troy, presents a trunk show of their spring and summer collections, 2-5 p.m. For details, call (248) 649-2605.

ART VAN CELEBRATES
Art Van Furniture celebrates the 15th anniversary of their clearance centers with in-store entertainment, food, refreshments and special savings, 2-4 p.m., locations in Livonia, Novi, Waterford and Westland.

SUNDAY, APRIL 30

BOUQUET SHOW
The Troy Marriott, 200 W. Big Beaver, hosts a boutique show featuring unique clothing, jewelry, toys and gift items through May 1, 11:30 a.m.-6 p.m. on April 30 and 10:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m. on May 1. For additional information, call (248) 661-6740.