

Fuel costs, odd-even days at the gas pump, uncertain business prospects and other assorted worries are part of the warp and the woof of the fall fashion scene.

The American male is going to select his fall wardrobe with a practicality that hasn't been seen in years. His choices will be based on realism. But, as yet, that's not stopping him from dousing his woes with a generous jigger of fantasy to get away from it all.

Underscoring the choices this season are two looks. Seventh Avenue calls them assured and assertive. The difference, we are told, is evident in the shoulders.

The former is a type of clothing long associated with the Eastern Establishment. The silhouette is soft shouldered and free of trendy gimmicks. The latter includes bigger shouldered, often designer or designer-type clothes which are definitely more contemporary, cosmopolitan, youthful and more European in appearance.

Assured fabrics tend to be dressy worsteds for business and tweedy for suburban styles. The fabrics, colors and textures, however, have taken on new direction. The traditional gray flannel will have an iridescent quality. Standard chalk stripes will glow with new character as each is paralleled by a berry tone stripe. Even herringbones are being shown in totally different multi-color combinations.

HIGHLIGHTS of the season will be suits that are revitalized classics, and progressive looks in lush fabrics and new colors. Unexpected colorations such as blue chalk stripes on brown, camel stripes on Oxford gray, and a chalk and burgundy dual stripe on Cambridge gray are exciting renditions of the classic patterns.

Vested suits will still account for 70 percent of the new season's output. However, double-breasted suits will make inroads among the more mature and younger men who are looking for something new.

This is not a season to relax efforts to slim and trim the torso. A slimmer silhouette will predominate. Shoulder expression will give the impression of slimming the individual who has lost his trim waistline. Assertive silhouettes begin at the shoulder and move down following the contour of the body and slimming at the hip. The shape of the trousers is narrower and in advanced looks, slightly tapered.

Sportcoats will re-emerge this season, while the blazer retains its popularity. The Country Look is a major direction in sportcoats, which will be seen in fabrics ranging from wide-wale corduroy to luxurious camel hair. In between, there will be soft woolsens and blends.

Slacks will harmonize with the jackets in worsted flannels, cordu-

roys, whipcords, coverts and gabardines. Look for sportcoats in both dress up and dress down styles.

Unconstructed jackets will stake out a claim in an area that is somewhere in between dressy/casual and purely casual occasions. Identity clothing will be dictated by a man's personal taste as interpreted by designers, designer-inspired and branded sportswear.

NOVELTY in menswear abounds. Shoulder emphasis and pocket detailing will be evident. Sport shirt fabrics will range from outdoorsy brushed flannel to luxurious silk. The narrower leg slack has arrived, but dress slacks, though slimmer and straighter, will not be uncomfortably tight. There will be single, double, and triple pleated styles, but the most directional style will be the single inverted pleat.

Topcoats will receive as much attention this season as will women's outerwear. Dressy styles, many with fur collars, will set the tone. The newest length is longer — 48 inches, which may owe its origins to the energy crunch, less driving and more walking.

The dressy wool topcoat has staged a comeback. So much so that it promises to challenge the trench coat for popularity. However, the trench coat will continue to hold the edge in rainwear.

Solid shades — tan, taupe, gray and navy — will predominate the coat market this season; but there will be subtle true and broken herringbones and some other patterns.

Sure to be noticed as new and now, velvet dinner jackets and wing collar shirts will stand out on the formal scene. Red bow ties and pocket squares will appeal to anyone with a sense of adventure. The fashion stance for evening is one of true elegance. Greater fashion stability this season should encourage more men to invest in a tuxedo.

ACTIVE sportswear ranges from quilted jackets to versatile reversibles. Sport furs are a new category. The proliferation of western styles, including those in designer collections, are meant for the urban cowboy not the rancher. The look is authentic enough. Fit is the important factor.

Dressier shoes will complement dressier, more elegant clothing. In addition, a new status casual is the rubber-soled, leather deck shoe. Western boots have become fashionable city wear.

Fortunately, the variety of the season's styles is so great that every man will be able to find the image he wants. Entering young executive or board chairman, landed gentry or back-packing wanderer, sports activist or simply a spectator — any and all styles are within reach simply by selecting the fashions and accessories which fit the occasion to suit the image which one wants to project

Outlook for '79 assured

Others opt for assertive



The dressy wool topcoat has staged a comeback. Even the traditionally popular trench coat is being interpreted in wool blends. The crisp military look is further enhanced by the new longer length.



Sure to be noticed as "new" and "now" is the velvet jacket, which can be worn with wing collared shirts for dinner and less formal tweeds and herringbones for daytime. Although men will be selecting their fall purchases with an increasingly practical eye, there will be novel touches to keep things exciting.

Greater fashion stability this season should encourage men to invest in a tuxedo. A generation that grew up on strictly informal entertainment is beginning to discover the fun of dressing up.