

Clothing makes stylish gifts for the holidays

JOGLING THROUGH crowded stores in an attempt to find just the right gift for a special person may have made your holiday mood anything but festive in years past.

But this holiday season, finding the perfect gift may be easier, since fashion stores are filled with wonderful items from glittering stocking stuffers to luxurious fur coats and jackets.

"Since almost every woman loves fashion, you can never go wrong choosing a fashion item for a gift," said Lynn Scott, fashion adviser for the Wool Bureau.

And choosing a fashionable gift is fun. "You may even be tempted to buy something as a treat for yourself," she said.

Fashion items in wool not only look good, but are good gifts because they're practical, as well, she said. "A wool sweater or jacket will last for years if cared for properly, and the recipient of your gift will remember the gift giver long past one season."

Sweaters, an ever-popular gift item, are updated this year in jacquards and bright prints like cabbage roses or huge paisley. The oversize sweaters make a bold fashion statement and are great for a weekend of fun or a special occasion.

Knit hats are making a comeback, with matching scarves and mittens. For more avant-garde headgear, try a scarf that doubles as a hood.

"The freshest look this season is anything in wool jersey," Scott said. "Designers are using the fabric for everything from pants to coats. It works because the fluid drape of jersey can be fashioned into almost anything."

If you or the "giftee" are in the market for a holiday outfit, start with an ensemble that is sedate enough for family gatherings but that can be dressed up for glittering parties.

Scott suggests "the little black dress" in soft wool jersey. For razzle-dazzle, add a chunky rhinestone necklace and dangly earrings. Wear a string of pearls for a more demure look. If the dress has classic lines, it never will go out of style and the fabric will hold up for seasons to come.

Or try a fuzzy wool cardigan sweater in holiday brights of hot pink or turquoise.

Holiday gifts are meant to be fun, whether you're giving or receiving. And with all the luxuries available in stores this year, there's no need to be frustrated when trying to find a perfect, stylish gift.



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