

CLEANLINESS FACTS

TIPS AND TRENDS FROM THE SOAP AND DETERGENT ASSOCIATION

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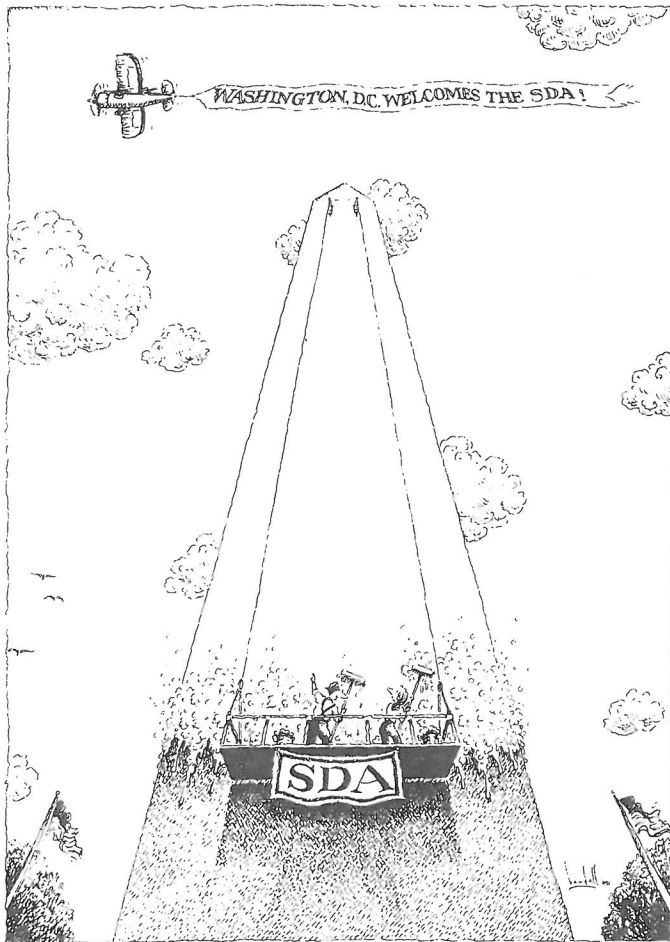


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WOMEN'S FASHIONS

The Lush Life Lives

This fall, the fashion curve and the economic curve go hand-in-hand and dollar-for-dollar with a blitz of Ritz looks everywhere one turns.

For the '00s the socialite look is in, albeit in a millennium mood. The Duchess of Windsor would be right at home in suits that are softly shaped with jackets that end at the hipbone. Matching pairs – jackets and skirts, or jackets and pants – replace the mixed doubles look of recent seasons. Even the matching three-piece ensemble in the signature Chanel tweed is back. And the divas from “Dynasty” would welcome the influx of diamonds, pearls, leathers, furs and ostrich feathers. This is no fashion season for shrinking violets, reports The Soap and Detergent Association.

Leather and crocodile (real and mock croc) are big, in both garments and accessories, in real or faux interpretations. The leather comes in more colors than nature ever dreamed. Red leather has a high fashion profile, as do hand painted leathers.

Humble fabrics like corduroy, once the cloth of Kings, are getting the royal treatment. Some are calling it the new denim. Interpretations, including feather trims and bias cuts with chiffon overlays, win kudos for inventiveness.

Fur is everywhere, in outerwear, daywear and eveningwear. Shearling abounds in everything, including coats, dresses, jackets, boots and gloves. The fur neck warmer, sometimes tied With a grosgrain ribbon, was a favored accompaniment on many fashion runways. The silver standard has been abandoned in favor of a gold rush. Gold jewelry, gold leather, gold sequins, gold satin boots and gold metallic laces with matching stockings are fashion highlights.

Legs are luxe, too. Black opaque pantyhose are joined by colored opaque and ombre opaques. Sheer black hose look snappy with red shoes; and black lace stockings match black lace slip dresses.

The polished, well-groomed look extends to hair and makeup with the trendier set smudging eyeliner and shadow above and below the lids. Hair is long and lifted for volume or pulled back into a low ponytail or a side-swept version.■

THE FASHIONABLE HOME

From Tabletops to Desktops

When it comes to accessories for the home, the looks range from the forward to the familiar. The Soap and Detergent presents an overview of the trends that will be gracing America's dinner tables and dressing up its surroundings.

When it comes to tableware, retro looks are hot. They range from Americana themes, such as farmhouses, barns and roosters, to floral patterns in the soft green and rose combos that great grandma loved. Much inspiration was derived from the collectors market, which accounts for the resurgent interest in Fiesta ware. Its simple lines and vibrant colors will translate well over the Internet, making it a particularly attractive category to e-tailers and Web shoppers. To compliment this dinnerware, look for collectible-inspired glassware in pressed, milky, hobnailed and ridged treatments.

On the contemporary side, new textures and glazes have been influenced by textile and apparel trends. Woven textures, burlap looks, raised finishes, and iridescent and opalescent treatments transform everyday dinnerware into something special. Sophisticated ethnic looks, particularly those influenced by Asian and African American cultures, continue to be strong.

Translucent colors, in iMAC-inspired tones, are invading the small accessory and small electronics markets. Look for pepper grinders, microwave ovens, hand vacs, shavers, steam irons, water filtration units and desktop lamps with space age styling in computer colors.

Novelty lighting continues to be strong. Bubble lamps, motion lamps, psychedelic fiber-optic lamps, lava lamps, Tiffany-style miniature lamps and amber glass miniature lamps in small critter shapes are the looks that shine.

In the textile arena, the news is in the Sari and the Safari. Indian and African influences abound in everything from towels and window treatments to kitchen textiles and bedding.■

ON THE HORIZON FOR HOUSEWARES

Computer Technology Leads the Way

The newest developments in small appliances seem to be centered on more and better use of technology, observes The Soap and Detergent Association. But what meets the eye is exciting, too: eye-catching designs, soothing pastel colors, translucent plastics and curvy lines.

In the near future, small appliances with Home Linking Technology (HLT) will be able to interact with each other. As an illustration of how this works, consider this scenario. The alarm clock contains a modem that allows it to call the Internet during the night. When the morning alarm goes off, the day's weather forecast will appear on the face of the clock, while the alarm signals the electric blanket to shut itself off. But before that alarm rings, the clock sends a message to the coffeemaker to begin its task. And, because HLT will be licensed to several manufacturers, consumers needn't be loyal to one brand to enjoy these advantages. Smoke detectors, bathroom scales, stand mixers and blood pressure monitors are among the other appliances that will feature this technology.

Cutting-edge developments for microwave ovens include the ability to transfer recipes from the Web into a cooking data box that transfers the data to the oven for easy, automatic food preparation. On the horizon is technology that derives data for cooking by scanning a packaged food's bar code. Another soon-on-the-market microwave is designed to access food-related information, such as nutrition, product recall, allergenic ingredients, meal preparation, information, and discount coupons from the Web.

The success of the colorful, translucent computer has influenced the looks of at least one manufacturer's mini microwave. Available in translucent blue, amber, black and white, the 13-inch cube with rounded edges is designed to appeal to youthful consumers. Electric kettles are going color-conscious, too. Heat-resistant, see-through polypropylene versions come in aquamarine, pineapple, blue and lilac. ■

MISCELLANY

Keeping Swimwear Swimmable

Spandex, the fiber that provides the stretch and recovery consumers crave in swimsuits, has good resistance to damage from sunlight, mold, and mildew. However, it can be damaged by the chemicals found in swimming pools, spas and hot tubs. To minimize fiber damage and color loss from pool chemicals, The Soap and Detergent Association offers some tips.

If possible, avoid sitting around in a pool-damp swimsuit. If there is an outdoor shower nearby, get in the habit of a quick rinse upon exiting the pool. When it's time to change, hand wash the suit, using cool water and detergent. Line dry it, or lay it flat to dry. Avoid machine drying, as it may damage the swimwear.

Be aware that other textile items, including clothing, upholstery, bedding and carpets, can experience color loss from contact with unrinsed swimwear and pool-water damp towels.

Animal Prints Are Big for Kids

Phony pony, leopard, cow and giraffe ... these are just a few of the animal prints that are galloping ahead in the children's wear market for fall. In outerwear styles, they are appearing as all-over designs and trim details. In feel-real textures, they give parkas and swing coats a fresh look. For girls, a matching animal print skirt adds a haute couture touch.

Quilted looks and puffy accents enhance slimmed down jackets and vests. Colors play out in vivid brights, including orange, magenta and fuschia, along with gray, navy and black. The millennium palette-white, silver and ice blue-is still going strong. Capes and ponchos, favorites for mild weather days, are popping up in everything from fuschia faux fur to space age silver knit. Hoods, industrial zippers and faux-are oft-repeated details, observes The Soap and Detergent Association.





Flowers Forever

Permanent florals are an easy way to create an inviting environment and add color to your décor. If you want to “better” the look of a room, follow the lead of some of the best display designers who often utilize upscale floral arrangements to make furniture look more expensive than it is.

In addition to the expected displays on end tables, dining tables and coffee tables, florals can enhance other parts of the home. Consider floral swags on walls and window treatments, floral toppers on armoires and wall sconces, hanging baskets, and willows and reeds in oversize planters.

While florals can add pizzazz to the décor, they can also be dust catchers, cautions The Soap and Detergent Association. When purchasing, always find out how to keep the arrangement clean and be sure to save these instructions. Simply dusting is probably the most common care method. To avoid circulating the dust in the house, take the arrangement outside and gently shake or carefully dust it.

Fan Fair

While function is still the driving reason behind most fan purchases, for today’s consumers fashion is becoming an important consideration. They want a fan that fits in with the room’s décor. Manufacturers are answering that demand with neutral designs that fade into the background, retro designs for offices, pastel-and bright-colored fans for children’s rooms, translucent colors, metallic finishes and European styling.

The Soap and Detergent Association reminds consumers that the same fan that circulates air for cooling can also spread dust and allergens throughout the room. To help prevent this, the fan should be dusted and cleaned frequently. Check the instructions for ease of cleaning before buying a fan. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for cleaning the blades. Always make sure the fan is disconnected from its electrical source before cleaning or dusting.

Irons Are a Hot Category

Retailers are reporting that sales of irons have been increasing steadily in the past several years. The Soap and Detergent Association suggests several possible factors for this growth.

One factor is the rise in more relaxed business attire, which has resulted in more at-home wardrobe maintenance. More consumers are purchasing garments that can be laundered rather than dry cleaned. Additionally, the use of in-home dry cleaning products has increased. These products clean but do not create crisp results. Ironing is often required.

Another factor is the booming economy. This means that products, such as irons, are replaced earlier in their life cycle. And new housing starts are up, which means people want new appliances for their new living quarters.

There is also interest in doing traditional things the “right” way. However, since consumers are also time-pressed, the demand is heavy for features, such as intense steam power, coated sole plates, swivel cords, see-through water tanks and removable tanks for easy access in hard-to-iron areas, such as sleeves and cuffs.

Dress Casual Is Tops for Men

The growth of office casual and a telecommuting work force, combined with the emergence of techno fabrics in dressy casual knits and wovens, are the driving forces of change in the menswear market.

The Soap and Detergent Association reports that the men’s fashion forecast for Fall 2000 calls for a boom in knit tops. The move is away from heavy thermals and thick cotton fleeces to a variety of knits that can be layered. Favored ways to do this include crew neck jerseys under polyester fleece tops, fine-gauge knit shirts that work with or without a jacket and microfiber sport shirts over knit T’s. Flannel plaids will continue, but they will be in smaller scales and brighter colors. The Cargo pant is the favored bottom for all of these tops.

Several fashion experts are also predicting the return of the sweater, particularly in ski looks and placed stripes, often with cargo shirt embellishments.

Safe Summer Food

Warmer weather means more picnics and barbecues. But it also means more opportunities for bacteria and other pathogens in food to multiply rapidly, thus increasing the chances of foodborne illness. To reduce this risk, The Soap and Detergent Association has some easy-to-follow suggestions. Always wash your hands with hot, soapy water before and after handling food. Marinate foods in the refrigerator, not at room temperature. Never use sauce left over from marinating raw meat or poultry on cooked food. Boil this used marinade before applying it to cooked food.

Before grilling, preheat the coals for 20 to 30 minutes, or until they are lightly coated with ash. Use a meat thermometer to be sure food reaches a safe internal temperature. This means 160°F for hamburgers, 145°F to 165°F for medium rare to medium roasts and steaks, 165°F for ground poultry, and 170°F for poultry parts.

Fish should be opaque and flake easily. When food is removed from the grill, put it on a clean plate, not on one that previously held raw food.

Proper refrigeration is as important as proper cooking. A full cooler will remain cold longer than one that is partially filled. To keep it full, pack plenty of extra ice or freezer packs. This will ensure a constant cold temperature. ■

Q & A

SDA Answers Your Questions

Q: I'm confused about which dryer settings to use so I just dry all my clothes on "Regular." Am I making a mistake?

A: Different fabrics and garments have different drying needs. If you use the correct setting for specific fabrics, you will get the best results and may even save yourself some ironing time. The first step, of course, is to read the care label instructions. Then, use the appropriate cycle for the garment.

- Use the "Regular" setting to dry non-permanent press loads, such as towels, underwear or jeans.
- Use the "Easy Care," "Permanent Press," or "Wrinkle Free" cycle for permanent press items and no-iron fabrics, such as nylon, acrylic, polyester or fabric blends. This cycle has a longer cool-down period to give the most wrinkle-free results.
- Use the "Air Fluff" cycle for items that can't tolerate heat. You can also use it to freshen pillows, draperies and bedspreads.

To help reduce wrinkling, use a fabric softener, either in the rinse water or in the dryer, and remove items from the dryer as soon as possible after the cycle is completed.

Q: My children play outside everyday and I insist they use sunscreen. How can I prevent the sunscreen from staining their clothes?

A: Sunscreens and suntan lotions contain oils to make them moisture resistant. If they get onto clothing, the oil can be difficult to remove. Even stains that are not immediately apparent can become more visible as they age.

Follow any directions provided by the lotion manufacturer. Let the product dry before you put on your clothes, and wash your hands thoroughly after you have applied the lotion and before you touch any garments. If you do get lotion on a garment, pretreat the stain as quickly as possible and launder the garment. Careful handling can help prevent staining. However, it's important to know that some residue can still transfer to clothing through perspiration. ■





“KEEP IT CLEAN” BRIEFS

To save storage space and help minimize wrinkling, store linens by folding them over large hangers and hanging in a closet. Or, roll them up instead of folding them before placing in a drawer.

Use a small foam paintbrush to clean tight spaces between cabinets or under appliances.

Dirty make-up brushes and sponges can harbor bacteria that can cause skin breakouts. Clean them monthly using hand dishwashing detergent or shampoo and water. Rinse them thoroughly. Remove excess water by blotting with a clean, dry towel and lay flat to dry.

To help prevent underarm stains, always let your antiperspirant or deodorant dry completely before you get dressed.

When traveling, pack a few plastic bags in your suitcase to hold soiled laundry and keep it separate from clean clothing. Pack one bag for whites, one for light colors and one for dark colors. Also take along a prewash stain removal stick or gel and pretreat any stains when you remove your clothing, so you don't have to remember to pretreat them later. When you return home, just empty the plastic bags right into your washer.

Load the dryer loosely – don't overload. Clothes need room to tumble freely in order to dry fast and wrinkle-free.

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