

Is there life after jeans?

He's a "young man" if he falls between the ages of 17 and 35. In summer he lives in a T-shirt, jeans and sneakers. When it gets cold, he just adds a sweatshirt.

Right? Not quite, says the men's fashion industry. In the very laid-back sixties and early seventies, many young men were content to keep their wardrobes pared down to bare basics.

Target customers for young men's fashions in the 1980's have grown up with more sophisticated lifestyles and distinct clothing preferences.

"Contemporary" is really the word to use in describing today's young male customer

who wants to dress in a way that reflects what's going on in fashion.

This consumer is earning his own income and buying his own clothes (as opposed to older, more traditional male consumers who permit women to make or influence approximately 60 percent of their clothing purchases.)

The contemporary customer is aware of his body and concerned with the fit of his clothes, a fact that is hardly surprising in light of the current national preoccupation with physical fitness.

Because he is very conscious of fashion and what his friends are wearing, he identifies strongly with status brands, designer names and labels.

"National brands will be leading the new fashion direction in JCPenney men's sportswear," says John Larranaga, buyer of men's label lines.

"When we're talking about contemporary young men's fashions, Sergio Valente, Jordache, Sasson, and Cotler are just a few of the most desirable labels appearing in a significant number of our stores."

Fashion-conscious, active men are attracted to the forward-looking color-coordinated groups presented as sportswear collections.

"Today's informal lifestyle requires a more casual wardrobe for the fashionable man," continues Larranaga. "He is shifting his preference away from body-hugging dark denim designer jeans toward easy-fitting casual slacks in natural fabrics and blends."



AN INTEREST IN COLOR and a willingness to dress up characterize many contemporary young men returning to classes this fall. Woven shirts whose plaids are a bit brighter than the more traditional muted patterns carry over this spring's emphasis on color in men's wear. Both spread and button-down collar styles are being worn, and classic crew-neck Shetland sweaters provide color accents and layering possibilities. The crisp-looking chino slacks to dressier than a denim jeans and just as comfortable. "What the men's wear industry labeled as 'preppy' last season has now emerged as a major fashion statement," says Jennifer Bates, fashion coordinator for men's wear at JCPenney. "It represents a flair for the traditional and allows the consumer a variety of ways to express his individuality." The Cotler chino slacks and 100 percent wool Shetland sweaters are available at selected larger stores, while assorted cotton-blend plaid shirts can be purchased at most JCPenney stores.



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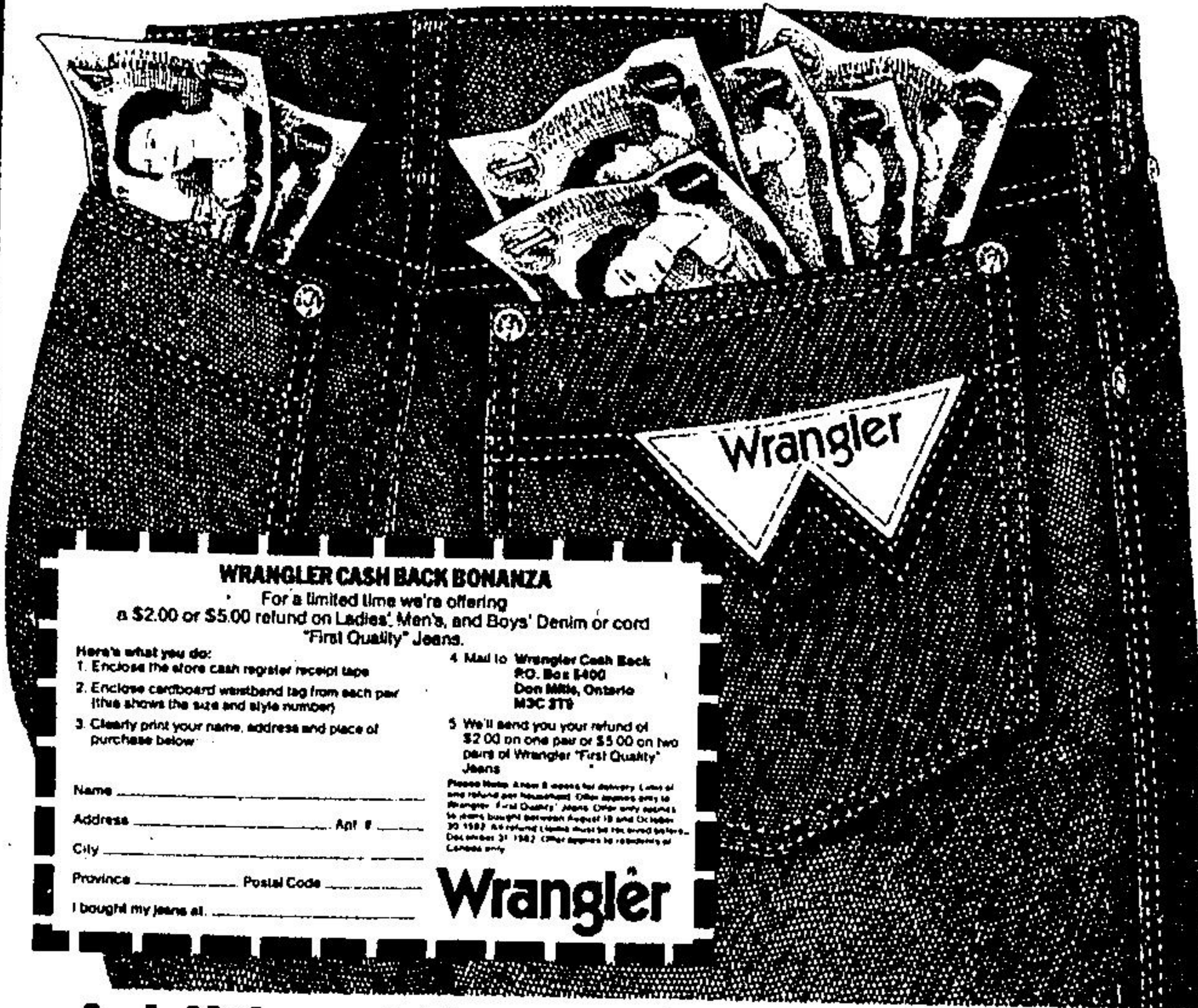
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