

Fashion Outlook

Jeans and teens

Baffling advertisements boost sales

By Mary Martin Niepold

"The world is really screwed up," says teenage Lisa. "You can't breathe the air, you can't drink the water."

Her male friend pinches her backside, and, with an implied reference to AIDS, replies, "There's a lot of things you can't do anymore."

"That's all you guys think about," retorts Lisa. "Don't you care?"

"Why care," her friend responds, "if you can't fix it?"

You shift in front of the TV and scratch your head. Just what is this commercial all about?

In another TV ad, a mother and father argue passionately, while a group of teenagers just hang out on the street. Yet another shows flashback film footage of the protest days of the 1960s.

And in all of them, the closing line is "Jordache Basics. Because life... is not."

Whatever these vignettes may be saying about the state of the world or relationships between parents and kids, their primary intention is to sell Jordache jeans.

In the two months since these three commercials — called, respectively, "Generation," "Family" and "Protest" — first aired, Jordache sales have tripled over the same period one year ago.

Jerry Taylor, Jordache's in-house director of advertising and one of the ads' creators, was a bit surprised at the proven strength of the sales pitch.

"Part of the magic of the campaign," says Taylor, "is that it really doesn't say, 'Buy me.' The common complaint from our clients is, 'What do these commercials have to do with dungarees?' I answer, 'Nothing.' It's a 30-second drama, and obviously viewers are remembering the name Jordache — and remembering it at the cash register."

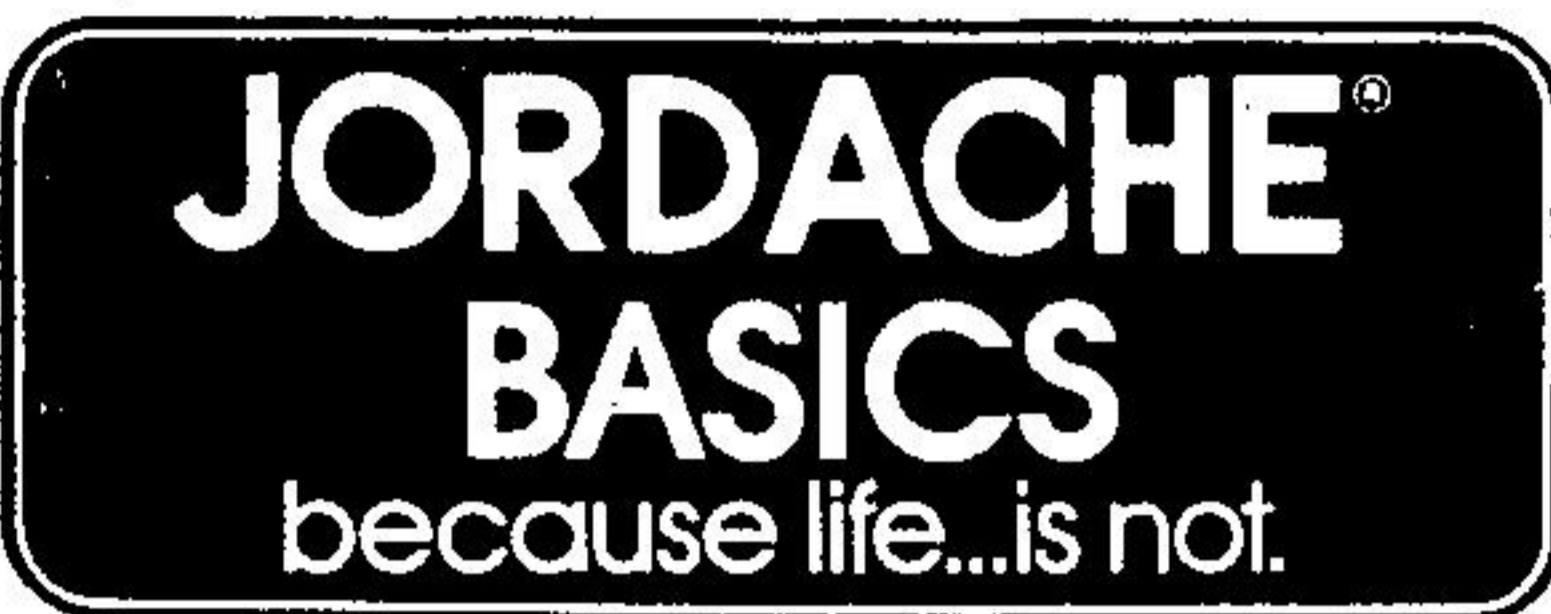
A recent focus group of 20 students from New York's Fashion Institute of Technology reflected the confusion over what these commercials are

really trying to say. But, more importantly, they remembered that it was Jordache who was saying it.

"Some of those commercials are really stupid," said one student.

"You're kidding," said several students when Taylor's statement was read to them. "I didn't get that. The kids in those spots just look bored."

The F.I.T. students examined sev-



JORDACHE'S print ads have invaded major teen and fashion magazines, and are as ambiguous — and risqué — as their television counterparts.

"The kids always look so bored and bland, like, 'What are we really here for?'" opined another.

All of the F.I.T. students had seen the commercials on TV, and all are in their late teens and early 20s — in the 13-to-25 age group that Taylor says is Jordache's target market.

But the F.I.T. students' reactions were for the most part negative. "It seems they're portraying the American teenager as someone who has nothing to do except hang out," suggested one student. "They don't show them saying or doing anything constructive."

Taylor says that there is, in fact, a message in these commercials — besides buying Jordache jeans.

"There's always been the term 'generation gap,'" Taylor explains.

"We're e...posing it commercially, giving it the air time it deserves. I think with any problem, the solution is understanding both sides of the question. If the children and adults have an open line of communication and respect for each other, that generation gap won't exist."

eral Jordache print advertisements, one of which had a young man describing his girlfriend Maggie: "Her lips are making me crazy.... She has this way of moving them across my face... then down my arm to my fingertips." Most of the students — particularly women — found that ad, and several others, "disgusting" and "sexist."

"It insinuates it's OK to sleep with him," complained one student.

Regardless of whether they hated the commercials, loved them or were just plain confused, 90 percent of the focus group remembered at least the brand name Jordache.

Taylor insists that the slogan "Jordache Basics. Because life... is not" is intended to be ambiguous.

"We want people to interpret it in their own way," Taylor stresses. "But the message we want kids to get is that all the clutter and confusion, the good and the bad around them, is still only controllable by them."

The students' reaction to that slogan?

"Life is confusing enough. Why go out and buy a confusing look?"

Gold is in fashion

When dressing up for the festive season, gold is the perfect complement for the new evening attitude of redefined femininity. Whether you choose a bubble dress in silk tulle or a rumba skirt and halter top in panne velvet, there is real gold jewellery available for every style, personality and pocketbook.

With a neoteric emphasis on standaway collars, Merry Widow bustiers, strapless gowns and empire waists, the fashion focus for Holiday '87 moves upwards. And with hair pulled back into a chignon or top knot, ears are definitely in the spotlight.

To enhance these shoulder-baring looks, a pair of karat gold drop earrings provides the ideal finishing touch. One of the season's newest designs is the waterfall or chime style — a cluster of tear drop shapes that dangle from the earlobe and move as you do. They work best when bold in scale but dainty in design. Equally striking are the close-to-the-body designs in softened geometrics, some punctuated with coloured gemstones, all with unlimited fashion mileage.

In a notable return to traditional elegance, menswear looks are also popular evening attire. Smoking jackets in lux-

urious fabrics teamed with body hugging trumpet skirts, if not outright sexy, feminize the manish suit. Classic button or fluted earrings in pink, white or yellow gold add polish and pizzazz to these subtly tailored fashions.

As wider, shapely lapels appear on jackets of all descriptions, gold pins become a staple fashion item this season. A single signature pin reflects a woman's personal fashion flair and can readily become an individual trademark. The season's most interesting pin is designed with a special opening to hold a fresh flower, a colourful feather or whatever. Other popular motifs include bows, tubular geometrics and free form squiggles.

For men, the look for Holiday '87 is refined. Expertly tailored tuxedos and dinner jackets demand distinctive gold accessories. Cufflinks, buttonholers and tie studs in polished yellow gold feature clean, simple lines. Contemporary styling updates these ever popular karat gold classics.

As men and women dress up for festive occasions this season, real gold jewellery underscores their fashion look... a look that raises sophistication to new heights.

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