

Outlook on Lifestyle

What's in a name?

Decoding the latest fashion terms

FASHION



Joan Lebow

Descriptions of new designs are blurred across the columns of glossy magazines and listed in newspaper accounts of fashion sensations. Yet, despite its breezy tone, the latest fashion lingo isn't so easy to decode.

We know, for example, that the newest clothes are "unabashedly sexy." Some say that means they're going to be "feminine" and "girlish," although one should not assume these are synonymous labels.

What's more, a "rich-looking" outfit

usually means it's expensive to begin with. And "innovative" or "adventurous" can be tip-offs that the item will look just plain stupid in a few months.

Like the clothes, our current fashion buzzwords have a life cycle of their own. These up-to-the-minute phrases and nicknames can say a lot about the styles they describe.

Consider "the pouf." It's the hottest silhouette in evening clothes, a billowing, puffy skirt that shows where all the hoo-ha over froufrou is leading. The word "pouf," according to Fairchild's Dictionary of Fashion, refers to a hair style, a sister coil to the bouffant.

How long can the pouf dress stay atop the world of fashion? The New York Times, known as "the newspaper of record," has offered advice on how to hang the thing (on two hangers, with half the dress upside down to form a U-shape), but in so doing likened the pouf to a soufflé. The name itself has got to be a giveaway, be-

cause pretty soon ... "pouf" ... it will have vanished into thin air. Can the "bubble skirt," a similar, less gathered and more rounded style, expect to escape the same destiny?

Four-letter words seem especially popular with fashion pundits these days. Two of these are "faux" and "luxe" (both with x's to suggest the exotic). Luxe, which crept onto the December 1987 cover of Gentlemen's Quarterly, seems a chatty abbreviation of "luxurious" or "deluxe," but appears in the dictionary. It is therefore not as "ridic" as it sounds.

The prevailing, but tinny-sounding phrase "costume jewelry" just won't do anymore either. Now gold- and silver-colored jewelry with glass "stones" can cost hundreds of dollars. A classier name than "costume" was called for, suggesting something imported — but not from Korea (where much of the jewelry probably comes from). Hence, the French-inspired term "faux jewels" — and the more



short skirts — or leave them. But the choice these days is between "short" or "long." The term miniskirt applies only to the skimpiest lengths. But "long" is called just that, and never "maxi," the '70s word that described the same look — and bombed.

For the teensy tiniest of skirts, the term "micromini" is rarely heard this go-round. It sounds too dated, an ironic twist considering that the leggy look is a throwback to the hippie heyday.

Unlike the maxi, there are terms the fashion industry avoids because they have been too successful. Remember "investment dressing," popular in the early '80s? Women got the message. They bought clothes made to last and then changed only their accessories. Accessories manufacturers are still enjoying the boom, but retailers, as well as suit and sportswear makers, now much prefer to say "career clothes." As in, "If you're doing really well down at the office, honey, you can afford to buy a lot of new career clothes — every season."

Some designers have even gathered their own catch-all labels that stick to them like golden-retriever hair on a black cashmere sweater.

For example, Ralph Lauren's designs are typically described as "thoroughbred classics." Shoppers on a budget who want to look like the members of the horsey set in Lauren's advertisements should pay attention to fashion copy that mentions those telltale buzzwords, a tip-off to a Lauren-inspired look from somebody else.

absurd label "faux real," for the fake but expensive-looking stuff — are gaining ground.

Sometimes new fashions that have been around before primp up for the modern era with a name change. Take

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A wonderful new year is upon us; another chapter has been closed in our lives and we start fresh and clean for 1988. I know that there are lots of us that are already resolving to lose that five or 10 pounds that crept on during the holiday season and perhaps there are a few that have resolved to "go on the wagon"! What would a new year be if we didn't have some goals to make for ourselves?

Is this the year to sell the house, and move on to a new lifestyle? If so, now is the time to think in terms of readying your home for the early Spring market. Check for walls that are badly in need of a coat of paint, floors that need refinishing, window ledges that are showing moisture stains, and bathrooms that need recaulking. If you are lucky enough to have a little spare time left over this holiday weekend, perhaps you can start tackling a small job and work yourself up to the larger ones.

It all takes time and the sooner that you can get on with it, the sooner you can get your house on the market with less competition. I know it sounds great in theory - it's just getting it done - isn't it. New Year's resolutions are always tough to do, and I guess that's why we make them, hoping that some inner strength will overcome us and it will all get done.

Even though we are not planning on moving this year, we do have a lot of home improvements that we hope to make also. If misery loves company, you have a sympathizer here that really understands the time factor, the money factor, and the energy factor too. Does it ever end? I doubt it, but don't ever lose sight of the investment that you live in. Your reward will be in the end selling price.

May 1988 be full of love and laughter for all of you - with 366 days to fulfill your goals.

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Homes Sold Creatively THIS WEEK'S MORTGAGE RATES AS OF DECEMBER 30th, 1987

	1 YEAR	2 YEAR	3 YEAR	4 YEAR	5 YEAR	6 YEAR	7 YEAR	10 YEAR
Bank of Nova Scotia	9%	9%	9%	10%	10%	11%	11%	11%
Bank of Montreal	9%	9%	9%	10%	10%	11%	11%	12%
Canada Trust	9%	9%	9%	10%	10%	11%	11%	12%
C.I.B.C.	9%	9%	9%	10%	10%	11%	11%	11%
Halton Comm. Cr. Union	10%	10%	10%	11%	11%	11%	11%	11%
T.D. Bank	9%	9%	9%	10%	10%	11%	11%	11%
Royal Bank	9%	9%	9%	10%	10%	11%	11%	11%

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