

Today's Woman

Denim has maintained popularity

Everyone is talking about denim these days. Its exciting new overdyed colors, stonewashed finish, savvy stripes and prints and stylish silhouettes are attracting a lot of attention.

But people are also talking about pure cotton denim's remarkable staying power as North America's all-time favorite fabric. It gets the same star billing in European boutiques and Hong Kong flea markets as it does at home.

Overdyeing is the biggest news for the season. A two-stage process is involved: first the indigo dye is applied and then a second color added. Overdyes range from bold brights to more subtle darks that include forest green, brown and berry. Jet-black overdyes, which were first introduced last summer by designers like Calvin Klein and Gloria Vanderbilt, are already bestsellers in classic five-pocket jean styles.

Other colorful corners for next season — and beyond — are solid brights and pastels that boast a quick color wash-down for the fashionable faded look. And for purists devoted to classic indigo, there are the new dark blues built to stay that way, wash after wash.

Stonewashing is an age-old process that is as fashionable today as it was necessary in more primitive times. It is done by using pumice stones on new denim to give it a "distressed," lived-in look. Not only does it make the fabric softer and lighter, it also gives an interesting variation of color tones that home laundering cannot duplicate.

Everyone has climbed aboard the stonewashed bandwagon, from top European designers like Fiorucci, Daniel Hechter and Bis to our leading Canadian jean manufacturers, who still feature their brand names on the front or derriere of the jeans. Many of these houses feature a whole range of co-ordinated, all-cotton casual fashions. They're not using them simply for jean-wear but for dresses, skirts, coats — a whole range of casual fashions.

Another new look for denim is the appearance of stripes and small prints on indigo and medium-blue backgrounds. Sleek pinstripes are being shown in both men's wear and women's wear, while checks and florals are turning up in a wide range of clothes for children.

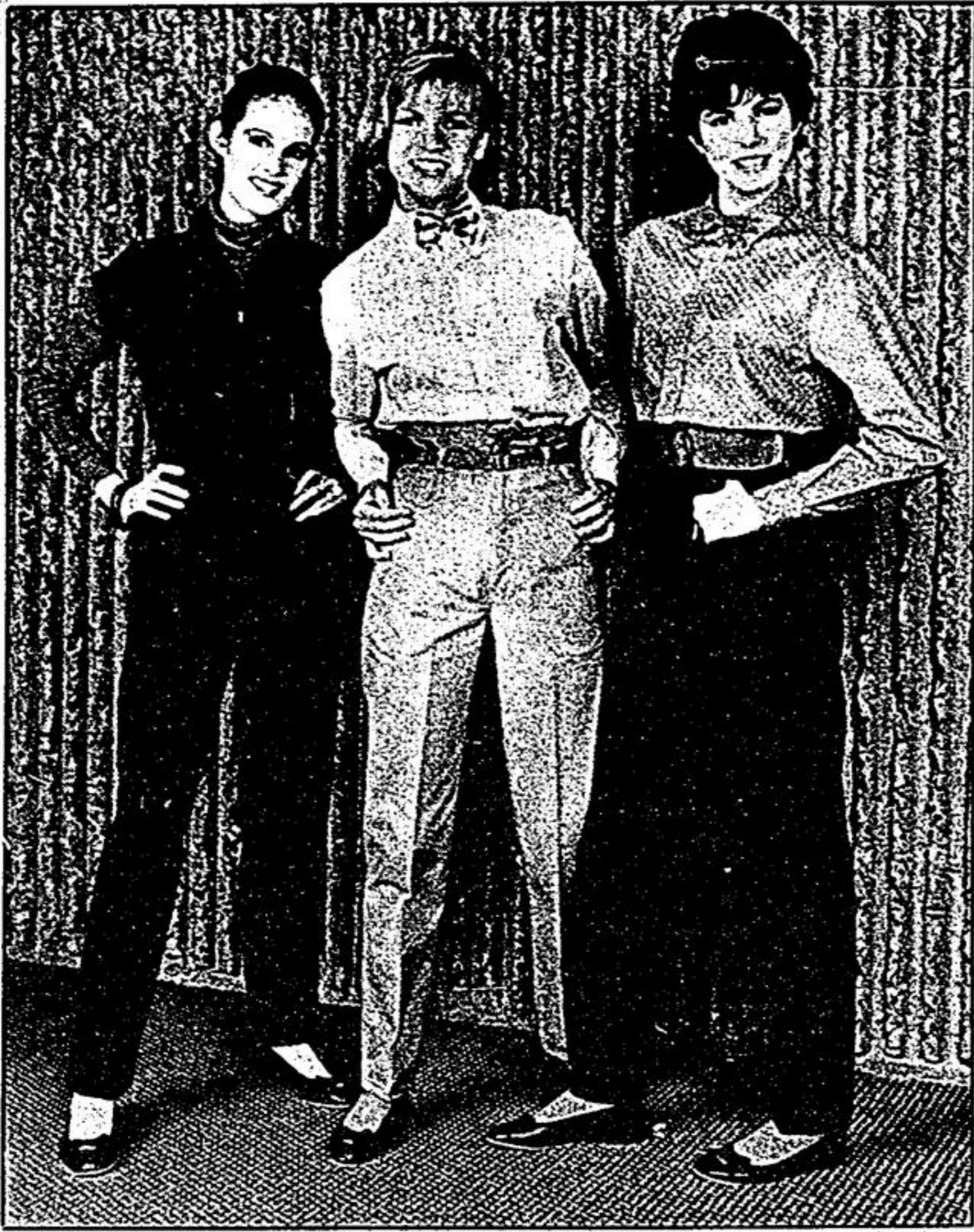
Although nothing will replace the classic five-pocket jean, the newest trend in denim is toward more relaxed styling. For men, this means trousers and casual slacks with pleated fronts, and jackets with diagonal zipper closures, wide yokes and an easy fit.

For women, the gamut runs from a new inverted silhouette for pants — more fullness around the waist and narrower bottoms — to slim overalls and jumpsuits.

Another style to watch is the form-fitting "Marilyn Monroe" cropped pant with zippers along its extra-narrow legs. Skirts have easy pleats at the waist and oversized dresses and coats are stylishly slouchy.

A brand new area for denim is activewear. A direct steal from styles usually seen in fleece, warm-up pants and jogging shorts with the typical elasticized waist and slim legs appear in light weight denims.

With all these exciting new developments on the horizon, the future of denim couldn't look brighter. This versatile fabric is branching out to encompass every facet of casual dressing and doing it in style.



The classic look is exemplified by this trim striped blue denim jumpsuit with a zip front and elasticized waist (left). French blue slim pants, pocketed and belted for fashion and function (centre) and neatly striped blue denim jeans with a good fit and red pocket and leg piping are also favorites on the fall fashion scene this year.



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