Leisure Suit Encyclopedia Article

Leisure Suit

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Leisure Suit

Like bell bottoms, platform shoes, and mood rings, the leisure suit came to symbolize the swinging mid-1970s and its pervasive disco culture. The matching polyester jacket and pants often came in tacky colors such as powder blue or burnt orange and could sport either wide collars and lapels or none at all, instead coming adorned with a belt to be worn tunic-style. Originally designed after World War II as resort wear for the wealthy, the early leisure suits were priced handsomely and constructed out of wool gabardine. Though they enjoyed a brief heyday in the 1970s, leisure suits were soon acknowledged as tacky. Beginning in 1989, however, a 1970s nostalgia revival led to an annual leisure suit convention in Des Moines, Iowa. In the 1990s, a series of computer games featuring a sleazy character named Leisure Suit Larry epitomized the garment as the unofficial uniform of the déclassé.

Further Reading:

Adato, Allison, and David Burnett. "A Leisure Suit Convention."*Life.* February 1996, 18.

A man modeling a polyester leisure suit.

Stern, Jane, and Michael Stern. *The Encyclopedia of Bad Taste.* New York, Harper Collins, 1990.