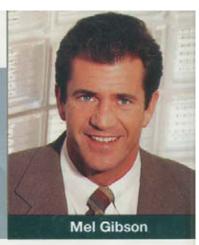
CELEBRATE! MEL GIBSON'S BIG NIGHT OUT

In Style



Who's Got the Look?

Meg Ryan

and...

Courteney Cox Patricia Arquette Cameron Diaz Liv Tyler Ashley Judd 50 Best Beauty Secrets of the Stars

At Home with:

ER's Gloria Reuben in Los Angeles Steve Winwood in the U.K.

Carefree Beauty!

the hair, the face, the news right now



wise buys



Why do we feel totally cool in a leather jacket? Maybe it's the soft yet tough touch. Maybe it's the look—sensual, but serious too. Maybe it's something more ephemeral—like the legend and lore that surround us the moment we slip one on. After all, its mystique dates back to *The Wild One*, in 1954, when Marlon Brando made the black leather motorcycle jacket so sexy and dangerous it was banned from high schools around the country.

Now the chance to run with the rebels is upon us again; leather is fall's hottest fashion item—from peacoats and wraps, like the ones here, to slim blazercut jackets, short trenches and slick, skintight skirts, dresses and suits. If you're going to make an investment, however, start with a classic jacket—blazer

The eternal appeal of a classic leather jacket: How to choose (and wear) one well

leather

or bomber, car coat or peacoat, wrap-up or zip-up; all are especially adaptable from day to night, season to season. So don't get left out in the cold; learn how to land the best leather out there. —Nancy Angiello >

low to high

The sensible splurge: A leather blazer is wonderfully wearable



Brown two-pocket blazer (also in camel and cinnamon), by Kenneth Cole, \$360; 800-536-2653 Black one-button blazer (also in bordeaux, brown and red), by S by Searle, \$475; 212-719-4610 Claret one-button blazer (also in black), by Ellen Tracy, \$695; call 888-639-9904 for stores

Hunter-green twobutton blazer, by Anna Sui, \$795; at Anna Sui boutiques, 212-941-8406 Black blazer with satin lapels, by Gianni Versace, \$2,930; at Versace stores, 212-317-0224

care & handling

If your jacket hasn't been pretreated—the label will say—protect it with water and stain repellents (the Leather Apparel Association suggests using 3M Scotchguard Protector for Leather). But should your leather get wet, air-dry away from direct heat.

Badly stained leather needs the care of professional leather (not dry) cleaners, who can also give new life to worn-out pieces. A few of the best (you can mail your leather to them): Arrow Leather Care (800-542-7769), Leathercraft Process (800-845-6155), Snow Cleaners (800-818-7669). The cost of cleaning a jacket runs from \$25 to \$45, and takes about one to two weeks. Call the Leather Apparel Association (212-924-8895) for a list of affiliated professionals near you.

what to look for

Langlitz motorcycle jackets, first made by Ross Langlitz in the forties, are turned out at the rate of only six a day (the tiny Portland, Oregon, shop has a 20-month waiting list).

Bruce Springsteen, Geena Davis and Bruce Willis own the jackets, which are prized for the thick cowhide—they weigh seven pounds and up—that helps prevent "road rash" (biker lingo for the injuries from a bad spill).

Even if you don't purchase a Langlitz, here are a few tips for buying a high-quality leather jacket:

- Columbia jacket by Langlitz, \$700; call 503-235-0959
- Touch it. A jacket should be soft and supple; cheaper leather is hard and stiff.
- The best? Each type of animal skin has a distinctive look and feel: Cowhide tends to be thicker; lambskin is the softest and most expensive, and Spanish, Italian and French skins are considered the best.
- Take a look. Leather panels should be evenly matched, though very slight imperfections are natural. Double-check stitching: It should be even and secure. A lining will up the price of a jacket but also make it more durable.

the look for less

It's plastic and it's proud. Suddenly, pleather's back (get it? p like plastic; leather as in, you know). Softer and less blatantly faux, the inimitable fake might actually fool you (XOXO fitted jacket, \$62; Benetton cream car coat, \$228).

Express stores

trend: shine on

This season, the newest look in leather is a high-glossy finish, created with wax, glaze or varnish (some manufacturers use the same stuff that's applied to wood). Kenneth Cole, J. Crew, Bruno Magli, Cynthia Rowley and Donna Karan, to name a few, all have superslick jackets. Any color comes on strong with these treatments, especially the new brights: Look for Vakko's glazed-leather in red, pumpkin and gold; North Beach's shiny vanilla jackets (so polished they look like patent leather); and Guess crinkle-glazed jackets in tobacco, brown or black.



what's in a label

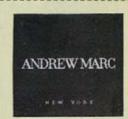
SHOPPER

COMPANY

STYLE

HISTORY

COST



A leather designer since 1981, Andrew Marc Schwartz's vision has never wavered: Look for basic, classic shapes and simple, no-fuss styling. worn by: Paul Beiser, George Clooney Belted leather peacoats, \$500; distressed brown bomber, \$400; 212-840-1800



Versace, famous for introducing street-smart leather to haute couture, is the source for outrageous designs ... and also for classics with a twist. worn by: Sylvester Stallone, Madonna

Slim, long black leather blazer, \$2,895; belted blazer, \$2,800; 212-317-0224



Since its inception in 1922, Gucci has been known for top-quality leather; now Tom Ford has given the house's designs a seriously sexy edge.

worn by: Uma Thurman

Gray doublebreasted blazer, \$2,350; zip-up jacket, \$1,925;

800-234-8224



The original: Schott invented the motorcycle jacket in 1928, the bomber in 1930. It's still the quintessential label for riders and rockers.

worn by: James Dean, Marlon Brando

Perfecto Jacket, \$350; creamcolored buttondown jacket, \$450; 800-257-2468



Designer Steve Searle Blatt is best known for classically tailored coats in shearling. The news for fall: fitted leather jackets in bright colors.

worn by: Carly Simon, Brooke Shields

S by Searle onebutton jacket, \$475; Collection blazer, \$1,200; 212-719-4610



North Beach rose to fame in the sixties mking hippie suede and leather. What's popular now? Body-hugging fit, soft leathers, cutting-edge color. worn by: Courteney Cox, Fran Drescher

Fitted jacket, \$650; glazedleather car coat in red, black, \$550; 212-967-7640