

CELEBRATE! MEL GIBSON'S BIG NIGHT OUT

InStyle

Celebrity + Lifestyle + Beauty



Mel Gibson

**Who's Got
the Look?**

Meg Ryan

and...

Courtney 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

OCTOBER 1997



0 70989 10645 1
\$2.95 U.S.

wise**buys**

Two timeless styles, the peacoat and the wrap, in drop-dead chic camel and black leather. BCBG wrap, \$376; at BCBG stores, or call 888-636-2222. Giorgio Armani peacoat, \$3,500; at Giorgio Armani boutiques.



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 blazer-cut 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

forever
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 two-button 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:

- **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.



Columbia jacket by Langlitz, \$700; call 503-235-0959



Single-breasted black pleather blazer, \$50; at Express stores

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).

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.

Guess glazed cowhide zip-up jacket, \$230; at Guess stores



what's in a label

COMPANY	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 Reiser, George Clooney	Belted leather peacoats, \$500; distressed brown bomber, \$400; 212-840-1800
	Versace, famous for introducing street-smart leather to haute couture, is <i>the</i> 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 double-breasted 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; cream-colored button-down 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 one-button 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; glazed-leather car coat in red, black, \$550; 212-967-7640