

Fashion TRENDS

Style's New Wave: Machine Washable Luxury Fabrics

(NAPSA)—Suede you can let get wet? Cashmere you can toss in the dryer?

Not long ago, dropping these kinds of upscale clothes in the wash would have meant a ruined wardrobe. Now, however, technologically-enhanced designs can turn previously high-maintenance apparel into machine-washable styles that are easier to wear—and to care for.

Fashion's washable revolution started when Bernardo, a New York-based fashion company, developed a proprietary tanning process in which suede is coated with an environmentally-friendly enzyme and prewashed. This process strengthens the material, so it can withstand machine-washing and tumble-drying—while maintaining the suede's naturally velvet-like feel. In fact, explains Stuart Pollack, CEO of the company that created this process, "the more it's washed, the softer it gets."

With dry-cleaning costs so high, the company's affordably priced designs—most retail for \$99-\$199—have rapidly become best-sellers.

There are easy-care designs for men and women in leather and faux shearling, suede and an exclusive wool/cashmere fabric created by one of Italy's finest mills.

All of these clothes can be machine-washed repeatedly without risk of shrinkage or color-fading, and nearly all are designed to be machine-dried (except for leather, which should be hand-dried). Since harsh detergents can damage these products, Bernardo recommends Woolite Fabric Wash.

According to fashion insiders, the easy-care revolution is here to stay. "Washability offers a real advantage that will only become more important in the coming seasons," notes Gary Fritsch, an executive at the Doneger Group which advises hundreds of top stores across the country. "It gives



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Fine clothes—such as this classic suede shirt-jac from Bernardo Fashions...



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...and this trim trapunto stitched suede pant suit—are now machine washable & machine dryable.

Americans a new freedom to wear 'luxury' materials like suede and cashmere as a practical part of their everyday wardrobes."

Learn more at www.bernardo-fashions.com.