

Globe Style

Spotlights 'Roots Camp'

Sweat equity

Goodbye Lululemon, hello baggy pants

BY LEANNE DELAP

As you linger over your newspaper this morning, supervising the installation of the dock and admiring the glitter cast by Lake Joseph, take a look down at your legs and see if you fit into the scenery. Behold the new leisurewear maxim: The nicer the cottage, the dumpier the sweats.

The Lululemon era is officially kaput, at least when you're not pretzelled into a lotus. No one wants to look like a Kennedy at Hyannisport either. Clam diggers and polos are too formal: It's back to camp.

That's camp circa 1979: Think Meatballs, that era when sweats had no pretensions. And it's go big or go home: The look is baggy enough, says Tim Gallant of the Toronto public-relations agency Empire PR, "to fit a whole pile of cottagers under your hoodie."

The old-school look is part of the retro tidal wave that has hit all things stylish. In décor, the lodge look is it, from woodsy log and birchbark finishes, to teepee and canoe motifs.

The big winner in this sweat-equity trend, once again, is good old Canadian Roots. The new Roots Campline is right on the money, especially in old-school forest green. It's schlump chic: oversized zip-ups and baggy track pants with elastic at the bottom for men, women and kids. They've even revived the beaver logo, though now it's fuzzy. Aritzia, the Vancouver-based chain, has jumbo hoodies in its TNA label, too. And American Apparel, previously positioned as the gay men and teenaged girl skimpy cotton provisioner, also has

long, loose hoodies on offer. 'All I want to look like right now is an 11-year old girl going off to camp'

This laissez-faire look is a dramatic turnabout for followers of fashion, who would scream, like a shrill Seinfeld character, "What, have you given up on yourself?" to people who wore sweats, even in the privacy of their own homes. To them, sweats were considered the only 100-per-cent effective birth-control method.

Then yoga gear came along, and young and old were duded up in cutesy Lululemon. Yes, it was more form-fitting, and appropriate for decent company. But things went too far; like flip-flops, it lowered the tone in offices everywhere.

Now, with the inevitable swerve of the fashion cycle, tight is out. "I can't wait to get home every night and tear off my work clothes," says Susie Sheffman, the fashion director at Fashion magazine in Toronto. "I pull on my tattered, shredded old Roots pants. And the Aritzia hoodie. All I want to look like right now is an 11-year old girl going off to camp."

Gallant's business partner, Laura Simpson, is another dumpy-sweat devotee.

"But do not wear the same colour top as bottom," she warns. "Or you look like you are wearing a onesie!"

The big thrill for boys, Gallant says, is letting it all hang out. "Hey, they've been cooped up all day, on the weekends, all week! A little dangle is good for you."

In another turnabout, the youth



Roots's newly released vintage-camp style sweats: pants, \$49.95; sweatshirt, \$58, www.roots.com

market, which used to go Eminem big, has gone with a slightly trimmer silhouette; now, it's just grown-ups doing supersize, says Bryan Gerber, who runs Camp Connection in Toronto's Lawrence Plaza.

Other trends to trickle up: university sweatshirts, especially from big Ivy League names, and sweats with writing on the bum. "The label you want for old-school baggy sweats is GymMaster," says Gerber. "The girls like grey and black and white, along with baby pink and blue."

As for the cute names on the bums, it's a girl thing. "Let's see," he says, going through a stack of custom orders. "Cutey, Cupcake, Pumpkin, Skier. Hmm. Munky Biz, that's a good one!"

Well, what looks cute on an 11-year old doesn't usually look good on grown-ups of either sex. In any case, we are in for a comfortable summer. And if enough of us join the baggy bandwagon, maybe it will start to look okay, after all.

How to sweat it

Don't wear sweats to work, unless you work for a fashion magazine, and have added a fuchsia belt, with aplomb.

Don't wear the same colour top and bottom, unless you are wearing vintage Adidas polyester suits. Even then, it is best to wear a green with yellow stripe bottom with a yellow with green striped top.

Do brush your hair, and put it in a neat ponytail. Also wear some lipgloss at least. If your clothes are good, you can get away with no makeup; in sweats you need to add a little polish.

Do show your feet. Crocks and flip-flops come second to bare feet with your sweatpants. The more skin you can manage to show, the better. Also, sleek retro sneakers are better than big trainers, which add clomp to the dumpy look.