

Dates plan to wear his and hers outfits

Sedate colors in for Ring Dance tuxes

By Colette Hutchings

Battalion Staff

This is the weekend for seniors to be "puttin' on the ritz" at Texas A&M University.

With the Ring Dance on Saturday and various other year-end dress-up events scheduled for the next two weeks, area formal-

wear businesses have noticed a definite increase in the sales and rentals of a variety of styles.

Women are invading what was once strictly a man's domain: the fitting room of a tuxedo rental shop. And men, maybe in response to this invasion, have shown a preference

for traditional styles. Yellow is out, and calmer colors, like black and gray, are in.

"The month of May is kind of like Christmas for the formal wear people," Billy Swain, manager of Al's Formal Wear, said.

Eletha Swain, manager of Bride-n-Formal, said although

her store has only been open about a week, one-fourth of her sales have gone to Texas A&M students.

Jerry Creacy, salesperson for G.Q. Formals said, "It has definitely picked up this week — for this weekend alone we have ab-

out 90 rentals."

Creacy says black, grey and silver are the most popular colors for tuxedos this year, with short coats or tails and pants being the preferred styles. Creacy said this is a change from last year when the trend for men was flamboyant colors such as yellow, green and burgundy.

"This year it's more traditional, with the narrow bow ties for guys and white pleated shirts on girls," he said.

Swain said white coats and tails have also been a popular choice for tuxedos this year, although men have not been the only ones "tuxing out."

Jenny Watts, a senior education major, and her roommate, Donna Mamdola, a senior psychology major, have rented tuxedos to match those of their dates for the Ring Dance.

"Donna has been to the Ring Dance normal (in a formal) once, so she decided to go crazy the next time she went," roommate Watts said.

"I'm going with a friend who's kind of crazy anyway," she said, "so we *all* decided to go (to the dance) crazy.

"The first thing my date asked was, 'What do you want me to do, wear a dress?'" Watts said.

The group may even wear tennis shoes with their tuxes, she said.

Do they plan on receiving traditional corsages?

"I don't know, we never thought about that," Watts said. "If we do, they'll probably have to be smaller than usual. I don't know how a big one would look on a tux."

Salesman Creacy said he has rented a total of 20-25 tuxes to women this year.

"A lot of them have shorts or skirts they wear with them," he said, "but they're mostly rented for dance routines."

Bob Barker, owner and manager of Barkers' Bride and Formals, said the reason most stores don't rent dresses to women is because of the difficulty in hemming them.

"It's easy to take a tuck here and there in a man's suit, but in dresses it's just too difficult," Barker said.

Although dresses can't be rented (for girls or guys) from the formal-wear stores, area apparel merchants have noticed fashion buying trends of the women shopping for that "perfect" dress.

Cheri LaFayette, assistant manager of Bride-n-Formal, said the dresses this year are classic, flowing styles with full skirts and a lot of chiffon material.

"There is not as much slinky jersey as there was last year," she said.

"The most popular colors range from the pinks to mauve and rose colors."

The most popular dresses are hard to define, Patty Mancusa, owner and manager of The Bridal Boutique said. "Mainly it's whatever they see and like," she added.

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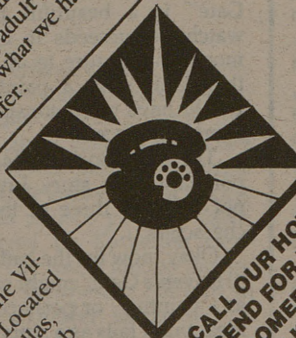
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