

# Fashion TRENDS

## Fresh Trends In Fur Design Increase Demand

(NAPSA)—Fur sales for the upcoming season are expected to surpass last year's \$1.7 billion record volume in the U.S. by at least 10 to 20 percent. The principal reason for this trend: innovation.

"The past few seasons have been rich with unique and wearable furs that are totally in step with fashion," says Steve Gold, North American director, Saga Furs of Scandinavia. "This has inspired consumers to keep their fur wardrobe up-to-date and as a result, we expect to see a continued increase in sales."

Evidence of fur's ever escalating popularity with consumers is also reflected in the fact that more fashion heavyweights than ever before have entered the fur arena. Names like Giorgio Armani, Versace, Jean Paul Gaultier, Michael Kors and Donna Karan are all featuring full furs and fur trims in their fall/winter collections.

Some examples of this year's winners include Nicole Miller's black satin bomber with SAGA White Fox® trim and Cynthia Steffe's SAGA Silver Fox® caplet. Ribbed SAGA Silver Fox® trims by designers Peter Som and David Rodriguez add luxury and new interest to knits, leather, cashmere and other fabrics while mink and fox embroidered with threads and other embellishments has been embraced by several designers including Jerry Sorbara, Vera Wang, Oscar de la Renta and Badgley Mischka.

Interestingly, new markets have arisen in response to the stylish use of various new techniques. The edgy looks of designers like Sean John, Carrie Granston Bullard, Jeremy Scott and others are appealing to a younger urban market while the designs of Michael Kors and Donna Karan inspire young working professionals who a few years ago would never express an interest in furs.



**More and more designers are incorporating fur into their fall and winter lines.**

According to Gold, mink is the most popular of all the fur types and has been for almost a century, accounting for 64 percent of today's total fur sales. "It's all about its versatility," he says. "Mink can be sheared, grooved, dyed, and it's so lightweight it can accommodate any pattern. One of the more popular new working techniques for mink is called mink shearling. We're going to see more and more of this luxe new way of wearing mink in seasons to come."

Mink shearling is extremely lightweight because the fur reverses to its own leather—there's never a lining to weigh down the garment. Great examples of reversible mink shearling include Michael Kors' Brown Nappa SAGA Mink® long coat and Louis Dell'Olio's Frosted Almond SAGA Mink® barn jacket.

Fur's continued love affair with both designers and consumers is evident on runways, in store windows and, most of all, on the sidewalks of American cities.