

HOW TO BUY AND CARE FOR VINTAGE GARMENTS (40)

Vintage garments are fashionable and big business. I have dealt with many people who buy, restore and sell older garments. My most recent project was the restoration of Colonel Sanders (KFC) white suits that he wore while cooking his famous chicken. After restoration one of the suits was auctioned off for \$82,000. As a garment analyst for 37 years I have tested many of the original fabrics which are now termed vintage. The next time you are looking at older garments at a flea market, garage sale or Good Will the following information should be helpful.

CLEANING VINTAGE FABRICS

Rayon-used years ago was never a washable fabric. The rayon used was termed viscose rayon which would shrink excessively when put into water. This rayon should only be drycleaned.

Crepe-this is a fabric with a rough finish created by tightly twisted yarns. Crepe fabrics should never be washed or put into water because excessive shrinkage is likely to occur. This fabric should only be drycleaned.

Moire-this was a fabric with a water grain or wood grain pattern put on to a fabric by manufacturers who use heat, pressure and engraved rollers. Moire fabrics were made of rayon, acetate, polyester and nylon. Only polyester and nylon moiré fabrics can be washed.

Imitation leather, suede and wet look fabrics-this was popular in the 1970's and 1980's. Manufacturers used vinyl and polyurethane plastic. This fabric should only be washed. It should not be drycleaned.

Gortex-I originally tested Gortex when it first came out. Most Gortex used for outerwear is washable. To maintain the water repellent properties it requires thorough rinsing. Some vintage Gortex made was only drycleanable due to fabric construction. When in doubt consult your professional drycleaner.

Velvet-the early velvet used was mainly rayon and acetate. This should only be drycleaned.

Gold and silver coated fabrics-this was popular in the 1980's. When the coating is only on one side it should be hand washed. When the coating appears through and through on the fabric, it should be drycleaned.

Rayon matte jersey-an expensive knitted fabric popular in the 1980's. This can only be drycleaned.

Imitation Persian Lamb-manufacturers glued on fibers to a fabric and made it look like fur. This should only be sent to a professional furrier for cleaning.

Ultra Suede-this expensive imitation suede fabric can be washed or drycleaned depending upon the fabric construction. (e.g.-linings, trimmings, etc.)

Pouf or Pouffe is a French word to describe a vintage styling accentuated by a double layered fabric, flounces, gathers, ruffles giving a balloon or puffed effect. This fabric should only be drycleaned.

Flocked print-popular older fabric used was imitation velvet print created by gluing fibers on the surface of the fabric. This fabric was often unserviceable to drycleaning and sometimes to washing.

Hologran-older styling by American designers such as Daang Goodman and Tommy Hilfiger. They used prints and fabrics that created kaleidoscopic and a three dimensional look. These fabrics should be hand washed.