

Looking fab in the freeze isn't easy



**JEANNE
UNBOTTLED**

Now that the mercury has dropped, with no looking back for months, it's time to ponder that age-old issue of form over function. I crave warmth, but one of the realities of my gig is that I've often got to look — or at least try to look — a certain way: pulled-together, svelte and stylish.

My solution? All-Canadian shearling from Toronto design master Dominic Bellissimo, cashmere sweaters and a nice long scarf around my neck.

Hat-wise, I know how fabulous those furry trapper hats are, but my profound paranoia of hat head prevents me from considering

such a beastly bonnet. I'm not sure what to do, other than resort to some kind of basic ski headband, perhaps in black.

As for feet, I've already bought three pairs of flat-ish boots, ranging in height from ankle-top to almost over-the-knee, but they're fashion boots. Translation: Cold feet. So I broke down and bought another pair of Pajar mukluks the other day at The Foot Shoppe in Toronto — the dog ate the ones I bought last year.

These sheepskin-lined numbers are right out of the ice age: mini woolly mammoths, in a rich shade of chestnut. Granted, they're ultra-trendy, but the truth is, they're warm and cozy, and as long as I only wear them with tight jeans or leggings, I'll be fine. (Do not, I repeat, do not, even think of wearing mukluks with a skirt. It's only gorgeous 16-year-old types like my daughter Joey who can get away with this kind of look.)

So there I was, out prepping my winter wardrobe, when my other daughter, Bekky, called from free-

zing Montreal, asking for coat advice. "Mum, I'm standing in the middle of some men's store, and I've got this humongous coat on — it's a men's medium — but really warm and cozy. Problem is, the sales guy and my friend Val both say it's too big on me and looks ridiculous. What should I do?"

"They don't have it in a smaller size?" I asked. "No. This is it!" she snapped. "And I don't care that it's too big, 'cause I'm totally freezing and just need a coat right away!"

I suggested she try another store, but was shut down immediately. Evidently, she was too cold or lazy or both to search for something more appropriate. "Well, if you think it looks good. . ." I said.

"Argh! I don't especially think it looks good, but I don't care any more!"

"Well, my love, since you're telling me the coat's too big, and Val agrees, I really think you should wait and try to find something more appropriate."

"Fine!" she barked.

I flashed back to when Bekky

was 5, and the arguments we used to have over her wearing pants under her skirt. It was darned cold out, and I didn't want her bare little legs to freeze. "Yuck!" she would cry, mortified that the look was fashionably incorrect. "Oh it doesn't matter what it looks like," I remember saying. "This will keep you nice and warm."

Wow! How things change. I suddenly felt ashamed about my complete about-face.

I got home, turned on the computer, and there was an e-mail message from Bekky — and miraculously, a shot of her in the coat.

There she was, my gorgeous girl, in a hulking brown men's coat, several sizes too large. Actually, she looked adorable. I immediately phoned her, and told her to get the coat. "Yeesh mum!" she moaned. "I'm not going back there. I'll just have to find another coat somewhere else."

The business of fashion is filled with contradictions. I'll be the first to admit that, despite my best intentions, I sometimes do appear to

be hypocritical, even to myself. So apologies to my ever-hip and practical daughter, from her mukluk-ed and inconsistent mum: Sorry for trying to impose my fickle fashion sense on you, sweetie. And thanks for reminding me that fretting too much over cold-weather dressing ultimately isn't very cool at all.

Dear Jeanne: You wrote some time ago about spray-on tans. Do you still think they're a good idea? Where would you go? Diane

Dear Diane: While the novelty of getting regular "fake" tans has worn off for me, and I've just been too busy lately to pop by the sprays, I still think these temporary, artificial tans are a great idea — just don't wear a white bathing suit or use white towels after swimming, since these "tans" tend to rub off.

I've been going to a tanning salon called Glow that offers a system called Mystic Tan. But I also understand that there are high-end salons out there that offer manual spray tanning — obviously more

expensive, but the results are supposedly quite good.

Dear Jeanne: I dread trying to figure out what to wear to upcoming holiday parties. I've been accumulating some interesting pieces, but want one fabulous party dress. Recommendations? Party Girl

Dear Party Girl: If you already have some fun pieces in your wardrobe — like a beaded little cardigan, a colourful wrap, a great fitted jacket and some interesting and lively accessories, from jewelry and belts to shoes and evening bags — I would highly recommend a swank little black dress to help see you through the holiday party circuit. You'll never regret it, and undoubtedly get tons of use out of it. Changing your accessories, rather than changing your actual dress, is the easiest, and most economical, way to go.

Send questions to jbeker@globeandmail.ca.

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