



AMERICA'S  
BEST  
CLEANERS

# Couture

THE FINEST IN FASHION FABRIC CARE

## Care

ISSUE NUMBER III - FALL 2005

## Fascinating Fabric Facts

BY DAN EISEN

In my thirty-three years of working for the National Cleaning Association (NCA), I held the job of garment analyst and assistant school director. One of my functions was researching and testing new fabrics. I tested many new fabrics in their early development, including Ultrasuede®, amara, GORTEX®, Micromattique™, spandex, and polyurethane, etc. I taught fabrics to drycleaners, museum curators, and students at the Fashion Institute of Technology and Marymount College. One of the things my students enjoyed learning most was the origin and history of many common fabric names, and the fabric-related origins of many common modern phrases. Fabric knowledge and the ability to communicate with the customer is one of the most important aspects of building customer confidence—that is why so many choose America's Best Cleaners™ to handle their fine fabrics.

Here are some of the more interesting word origins and phrases I have shared with my students:

**Denim.** The word "denim" comes from the French phrase *serge de Nîmes*, or *serge* from *Nîmes*, a fabric produced in a town in southern France. Gradually, the latter part of the phrase became corrupted into the modern word, denim.

**Jeans.** Similarly, the word "jeans" also comes from a place

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## Fall Fashion 2005

JHANE BARNES MENSWEAR

For Fall 2005, Jhane Barnes sportswear collection focuses on the design elements for which Jhane Barnes is best known—vibrant colors, interesting stripes, and a playfulness with texture—while at the same time adopting a modern edge to create a collection that is fresh, innovative, and notable. When sourcing any new collection, we use only the highest quality fabrics and dyes. Because of the varied technical processes used to create these garments, many view them as collectible art. Only an expert dry cleaner should ever service these pieces.

### Some of Jhane's Favorites for Fall 2005...

#### Serpent & Psychedelic

A digital printer that uses heat transfer to print only on the synthetic fabrics creates patterns for the Serpent and Psychedelic shirts. The use of yarn-dyed cotton with polyester woven on top (the Psychedelic uses chenille yarn) thus allows for a dramatic design in which there is no repeat of pattern across the shirt. The extra yarns woven into the shirt are then clipped away, giving it the "edge" effect and lightening the fabric.

#### Pulsate

Based on Jhane's MOMA book design ([www.moma.org](http://www.moma.org)), the Pulsate shirt is created through a digital printing process. A machine prints back and forth—just like a home printer—and takes an entire day to print just one bolt of fabric. "This kind of printing has no ink run off. Since none of the hazardous ink goes down the drain, it's far healthier for the environment," notes the designer.

#### Kink

The Kink shirt is a good example of why it is important to have good communication with your dry cleaner. In Kink, a synthetic fiber is woven into the fabric, and then, during the finishing process, little pleats are stamped into the fabric with a heated press and a special plate creating its kinky texture. Kink was designed to match Jhane's popular "12-inch Repeat" suit. "If you have this shirt drycleaned, your cleaner should not press it. If they do, they will iron the pleats right out," explains Barnes.

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(photo courtesy of Jhane Barnes)



Left: The fantastic colors of the Jhane Barnes Pulsate shirt are achieved through a digital printing process.

## Fascinating Fabric Facts (continued from p. 1)

name, this time from Italy. Genoa in particular. It comes from the French phrase *jean fustian*, meaning a type of twilled, cotton cloth. *Jean* in this phrase is a more modern spelling of Jannes, the Old French word for Genoa. *Fustian* is from the Medieval Latin *fustaneum*, literally cotton cloth. So *jean fustian* is cotton cloth from Genoa. The Oxford English Dictionary's earliest citation of the word *jean* is from 1495. The modern spelling has existed since at least 1622.

**Nylon.** According to *Context*, a Du Pont company publication (vol. 7, no. 2, 1978), when nylon material was first developed, it was called "polyhexamethylenedipamide". Realizing the stuff needed a catchier name than that, the company thought of "duprooh", an acronym for "Du Pont pulls rabbit out of hat", but instead settled on "no-run" until it was pointed out that stockings made of the material were not really run-proof. So the spelling of the word was reversed to "nuron" which was then modified to "nilon" to make it sound less like a nerve tonic. Then, to prevent a pronunciation like "nillon", the company changed "i" to "y", producing "nylon". Thus beneath that apparently quite arbitrary word lurks the English expression "no-run".

**Cashmere.** Cashmere is the old spelling of Kashmir, the Himalayan kingdom where wool was obtained from long-haired goats. As a name for this kind of woolen fabric, favored for shawls, etc., or for the shawls themselves, the word cashmere dates from 1822.

**Gabardine.** The pilgrims in the Middle Ages who traveled to shrines throughout Europe and the Holy Land wore characteristic garb. This particular fabric worn by the pilgrims gradually became associated with the journey they took. A will filed in

1520 included this bequest: "Unto litit Thomas Beke my garbardyne to make him a gowne." Slight variations in spelling produced the word "gabardine", a kind of cloth that passed from the religious Pilgrims' vocabulary into general use. It is also interesting to note that the twill weave gabardine fabric worn was sturdier than other weaves produced. Shine was not one of the problems that the Pilgrims faced with their gabardine fabric, but it is a problem some drycleaners are facing with gabardine now. America's Best Cleaners have the skills to avoid this problem.

**Angora.** The naming of angora fabric can be traced to Angora, a city in central Turkey (ancient Ancyra, modern Ankara), which gave its name to the goat, and to its silk-like wool, and to a cat whose fur resembles it. The city name is from the Greek word for "anchor, bend."

In addition to enjoying the interesting origins of various fabric names, my students also enjoyed learning about the fabric-related origins of many common expressions:

**Threadbare.** Artisans of medieval Europe developed great skill in manufacturing textiles. They were able to use short fibers that produced a soft nap on many fabrics. Long silk-like fibers called filament yarns produced a smooth fabric. When a person wore a garment for a long period of time, the nap wore off and the fabric weave was visible. People were looked down upon when this occurred. The old textile term "threadbare" applies to wearing shabby or worn out clothing.

**Too Many Irons in the Fire.** Many cleaners collect samples of the old irons used years ago. These irons were heated by putting them on the embers of a fire or a

wood burning stove. The irons stayed hot for a short period of time, so it was customary to use one iron while several were heating. Sometimes, the irons heated too long, causing the user to burn fabrics. This term, "too many irons in the fire", thus became associated with being involved in too many activities.

**Dyed in the Wool.** In the Middle Ages, dyeing had not yet reached an art form and drab colors were common. Dyes were of vegetable origin and they rarely held their colors after washing. Some artisans made the discovery that they could get a better penetration of dye by dyeing the wool fibers rather than the entire fabric. Colors were more permanent and more uniform. The term "dyed in the wool" thus became associated with higher quality in general.

**Mad as a Hatter.** A popular fabric for hats is felt, which is wool and animal fibers matted together. Before the invention of felt making machines in 1846, hat makers used the chemical, mercuric nitrate, to make felt. Long-time exposure to the chemical caused hat makers to have twitching muscles, slurred speech and dizziness. Not recognizing that they had been chemically poisoned, in those days, people considered the hat makers to be insane or mad, thus the phrase "Mad as a Hatter" became part of the English language. ✱

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Dan Eisen has over thirty-five years experience in the garment cleaning industry. He founded the East Coast School of Drycleaning, was Chief Garment Analyst at the largest garment lab in New York City, and has lectured on textile care at the Fashion Institute of Technology. Dan has trained museum curators in the art of cleaning and removing stains from antique textiles. He holds two patents on stain identification methodology and has cleaned garments for the rich and famous, including Princess Di.



Fashion Designer Jhane Barnes.

## Fall Fashion 2005 (continued from p. 1)

Fall 2005 promises to be a fabulous time of year to go shopping. Take care of your beautiful clothes with the proper knowledge and the right service. Be sure to consult your local America's Best Cleaners affiliate when purchasing this season's fashion as

they know how to properly care for them. They understand couture care; they have the expert knowledge such clothing requires and offer the stellar service you deserve. To view Jhane's Fall 2005 collection visit her website, [www.JhaneBarnes.com](http://www.JhaneBarnes.com). ✱

# Designers, Chemists, Cleaners

## Uniting to Improve the Art, Science, and Business of Couture Care

### Hugo Boss

Representatives of America's Best Cleaners (ABC) were invited to Germany by Kreussler Chemical, a world leader in drycleaning and laundry products, to visit Hugo Boss for a tour of Hugo Boss's manufacturing facility. The purpose of the visit was to better learn the construction of Hugo Boss garments, and to learn more about Hugo Boss's finishing certification program and the quality controls they incorporate into their accreditation process.

Creating strategic alliances with design houses like Hugo Boss and garment analyses labs like Kreussler Chemical is one way America's Best Cleaners assists its affiliates in developing the best possible business practices for handling their clients' high-end couture garments.

Ed D'Elcio (Founder and Executive Director of America's Best Cleaners), and Angel Suarez (ABC Board of Advisors member and owner of Rey's Cleaners in Miami) were guided through the Hugo Boss facility by Phillip Ludorf, Team Supervisor Industrial Engineering and Eva Schmitzer the Marketing Director of Hugo Boss. ✱



The Hohenstein Castle and Laboratory.



A Hohenstein Institute Chemist.



Inside Hugo Boss.



ABC affiliate Angel Suarez of Rey's Cleaners examines Hugo Boss garments.

### Hohenstein Institute

The Hohenstein Institute is one of the most respected garment research facilities in the world. It is also the world's foremost garment testing lab for designer clothing. Representatives of America's Best Cleaners visited the Hohenstein Institute last month. Hohenstein works closely with DBT, the manufacturing consortium, which includes fashion houses like Escada, Hugo Boss, Willy Bogner and others. They test fabrics, garment construction, dyes, and trims for Versace, Chanel, and many other leading designers and manufacturers.

The visit included a one-day series of meetings with Dr. Dirk Hofer and Markus Beeh of the Hohenstein Institute, along with executives of Kreussler Chemical, manufacturers of what are reputedly the finest laundry and drycleaning soaps in the world. The meetings focused on the rigorous drycleaning standards of the German drycleaning industry, which is considered to be one of the world's leaders in quality and technology.

As a result of the visit, America's Best Cleaners now has an exclusive arrangement with the Hohenstein Institute for certifying drycleaners here in the United States. ABC also learned how to undergo the process of the Hohenstein's strict regimen of testing, monitoring and teaching ABC's affiliates. This program will further insure the reliability of the accreditation program for each and every ABC affiliate. ✱



Hugo Boss Factory - Metzingen, Germany.

(photo courtesy  
of Jhane Barnes)

# Who are America's Best Cleaners?

America's Best Cleaners™ is a national organization that strives to locate and recognize the best drycleaning establishments in major metropolitan areas throughout the United States. Drycleaners selected by America's Best Cleaners are subjected to a rigorous screening process during which they must distinguish themselves in every facet of the drycleaning business. In addition to having all the essential attributes of excellent quality and service, to be selected as one of America's Best Cleaners, a drycleaner must be recommended by a majority of fashion designers and retailers in its market.

New York  
Madame Paulette  
212-838-6827

Boston  
Holly Cleaners  
617-527-3770

Hartford, CT  
French Cleaners  
860-523-5211

Memphis, TN  
Ritzy Rags Cleaners  
901-754-7740

Omaha, NE  
Fashion Cleaners  
402-556-1522

Los Angeles  
Brentwood Royal  
Cleaners  
310-451-3663

Miami  
Rey's Cleaners  
305-443-0839

Kansas City  
Swyden Cleaners  
816-444-7774

Oklahoma City, OK  
Parkway Cleaners  
405-341-3211

Albuquerque  
The Cleanery  
505-298-2629

Washington, DC  
Parkway Custom  
Drycleaning  
301-652-3377

Phoenix  
Z Cleaners  
480-348-2858

Sacramento, CA  
Rytina Fine Cleaners  
& Launderers  
916-485-4700

Westchester Co., NY  
Embassy Cleaners  
914-834-5955

Knoxville  
Prestige Cleaners  
865-938-7701

Atlanta  
Presstine Cleaners  
404-255-4312

Cleveland, OH  
London Cleaners  
216-731-3344

Columbus, OH  
Clothing Care Fine  
Dry Cleaners  
614-478-4696

Fairfield County, CT  
Fabricare Cleaners  
203-656-CARE

Naples, FL  
Platinum Drycleaners  
239-775-7232

Dallas  
Bibbentuckers  
214-267-1700

Denver  
La Nouvelle  
303-691-0123

Raleigh, NC  
Medlin-Davis  
Cleaners  
919-828-0578

Fresno, CA  
Jones Cleaning  
Centers  
559-447-5416

Destin, FL  
Bangkok Cleaners  
850-243-4556

International  
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Textilreinigung Stark  
+ 49 89 390 014

Auckland,  
New Zealand  
Regal Drycleaners  
+64 1 523 4854

Aalborg SØ, Denmark  
Kymi Rens  
+45 981 464 66



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11655-A Ficus Street  
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410

www.americasbestcleaners.com