

ing, both here and overseas. According to Sorbara, "The (U.S.) economy is down, and business is bad, right across the board. Fur, real estate, cars — you name it, it has been affected," he said.

When someone is paying between \$300 and \$400 for one mink skin, and it takes an average 65 or 70 to make a coat, then it soon becomes apparent that this is no game for those who like to skimp and save.

Despite the undulations of the industry one of the reasons Sorbara continues to be successful is his unique approach to fur.

"I dye it. I shear it. I play with mink and treat it as if it were a cloth. I have a lot of fun making and creating different shapes," he said.

"One of my better selling pieces was the fur-lined waterproof slicker. They're young-looking, exciting and colorful. They were successful because they were different, and you can also wear them in the rain or when it's snowing."

For a woman's mink coat, he usually uses female skins as they are softer and lighter in weight than those of males. "The skins are silkier and they're also smaller. The quality is better," Sorbara said.

Interestingly, he uses male skins for men's coats because the skins are slightly bigger — and cheaper — than females'.

But for the ultimate in quality, he uses wild-caught mink. These skins, though up to 30 percent smaller than rancher skins, are the best because of their low nap — the length of the hairs.

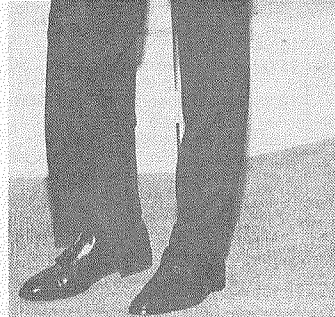
To quote Sorbara on prices, one of his mink coats, made from Black Willow skins, costs \$60,000. Full-length Russian sable coats are priced at around \$90,000 and a fisher coat is around \$30,000. Another of his coats, made from the belly fur of Russian lynx, sold for \$275,000 in Japan a couple of years ago.

"We want the cream, the best the market has to offer," Sorbara said, adding that to get this his son visits major markets in search of quality skins to buy.

Happenings

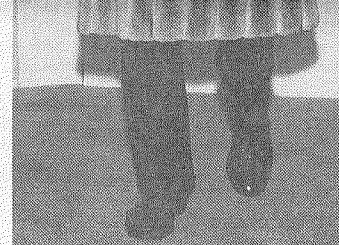
Christian Dior will have a pre-Valentine's Day gift set campaign featuring two fragrances — Eau Sauvage and Fahrenheit — and related toiletries like soap, shaving cream and talc. Price: ¥3,000; ¥5,000 and ¥7,000. At Dior counters in department stores nationwide between Jan. 23-Feb. 14.

Marui Men's store in Shinjuku has its annual "sparkling sale" until Jan. 26 with prices 30 percent to 50 percent off. Today the sale includes Mister Junko, Ficce Uomo, Domon and Nicole Club. From tomorrow until 26th,

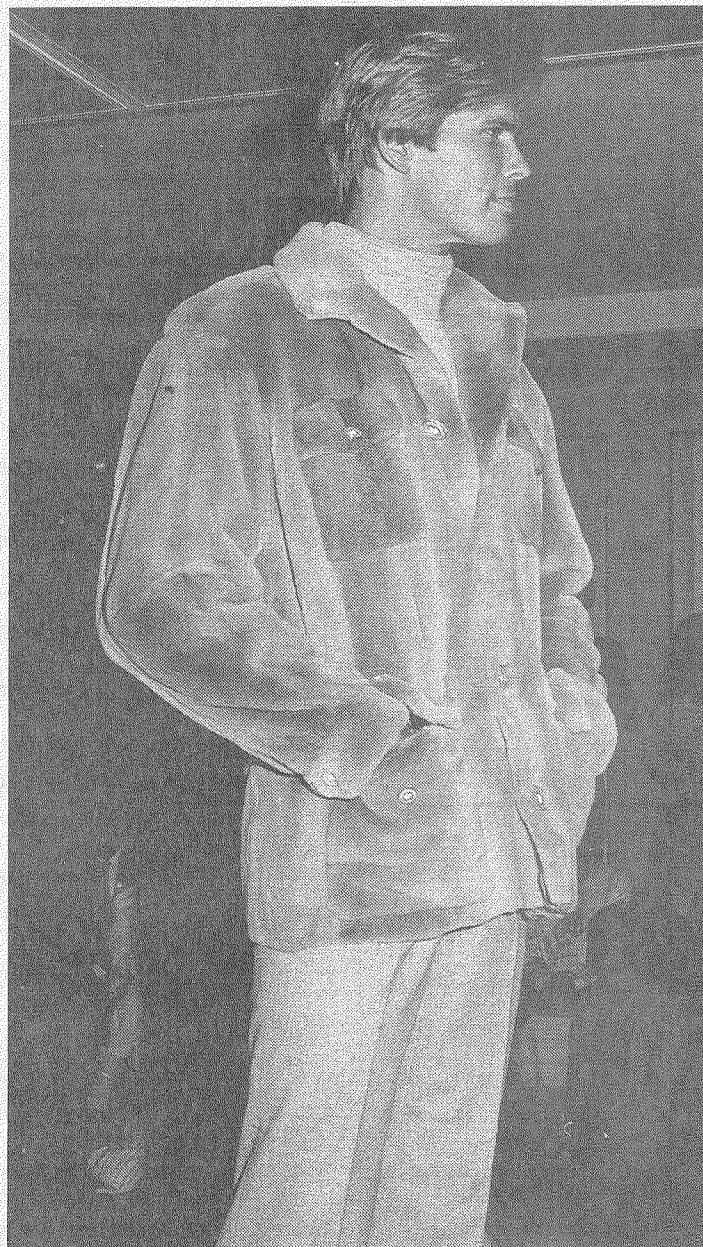


Jean Paul Gaultier. Call (03) 3354-0101 for information.

Mikimoto, the Ginza-based pearl salon, will celebrate its 100th anniversary on Jan. 25. The company was established in the 26th year of the reign of Emperor Meiji.



An American Ultra Black sheared mink jacket (left) is by Jerry Sorbara. Above, a full-length American Ultra Pastel sheared mink coat, also by Sorbara.



AMERICAN ULTRA PASTEL skins are used by Jerry Sorbara to make this man's sheared mink four-pocket jacket.