

in many cities around the world, is not so much of a worry to designers — or people wearing fur coats — now as in years past, and much less so in Japan.

"Animal rights groups are not as militant now as they were a few years ago," New York fur designer Jerry Sorbara asserted, which perhaps accounts for the many fur coats seen on the streets around Fifth Avenue and Broadway at the time of this interview.

Japanese women, while apparently less inclined to wear furs, are in fact one of the biggest buyers; if you look around the hotels and department stores you'll find plenty of fur shops to supply the market.

But despite bad publicity and not-so-rosy economic times, the industry is surviving, 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'.

changed and with it the very market he was selling to. So Sorbara, astute as he is, changed with it.

He's slowly making inroads into the Japanese market again. Last year his son and daughter attended the international fur trade show in Ikebukuro, and in March Sorbara will be represented at the New York Furrier Exhibition here.

Although Sorbara is an established name in the U.S., it will be a long, hard road for him on this side of the Pacific.

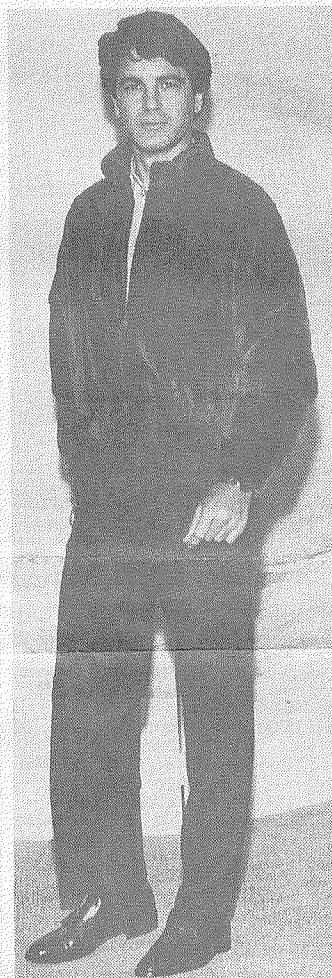
The value of Japan's retail market in furs between April 1991 and March 1992 is estimated at ¥180 billion. While Sorbara's business is literally only a drop in the ocean, the fact that the ocean is called Japan is significant for this one New York designer.

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,

A MAN'S THREE-QUARTER badger jacket by Jerry Sorbara.



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.

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.

