



(Left) Mink, wool and leather bomber jacket, in black only, £1,750. By Grosvenor Canada, at Harrods, Knightsbridge, SW1. Corduroy trousers, £55, from Aquascutum, 100 Regent Street, W1

Three-quarter-length coat in sheared nutria, trimmed with coyote, £1,345, by Maxwell Croft, 105/106 New Bond Street, W1. Wool skirt, £59, and silk shirt, £72, both from Aquascutum, 100 Regent Street, W1



CLOTH COATS WITH HAIR ON

By ANNE PRICE

DANISH furriers Birger Christensen have opened a retail fur shop at 170 New Bond Street, London. With a world-wide reputation for exciting furs of high quality, the firm is one of the oldest fur houses, dating back to 1869, and since that time has been handed down from father to son.

Today it is owned and personally managed by Finn Birger Christensen, who has introduced ready-to-wear techniques into the hitherto

laborious and complicated ritual of buying a fur coat.

I have long believed that the mystique and costs attached to fur garments are quite unnecessary and misguided in today's world. And I totally agree with Birger Christensen when he says he does not believe a fur to be an investment; he can think of other, better ways of getting a higher return for your money. He likes the words "status symbol" as little as

I do and prefers a down-to-earth approach towards fashion, so his designs are, in his words, "cloth coats with hair on". On this page we show you his newest duffle, a good example of this thinking.

The collection at 170 New Bond Street includes inexpensive jackets with fur, and rises to the finest mink, sable and chinchilla. All are of contemporary design and made for contemporary people with no thoughts about furs other

than to wear them for practical purposes. That they look good, too, is beside the point of this argument.

Although this is the firm's first retail shop outside Copenhagen, Birger Christensen sell furs to high-class stores throughout the world, including Bergdorf Goodman in New York, Neiman Marcus in Dallas, and Seibu Department Stores, Japan. Apart from their own collection, these remarkably successful furriers

produce furs for other designers, notably Claude Montana, Ralph Lauren and Kenzo, names associated with high fashion in fur.

It has become increasingly obvious in recent years that, if fur is to survive as a material for garments, it must have as much fashion appeal as its fabric competitors, and it must be available at reasonable, ready-to-wear prices. I have been looking around recently at the state of mind of our own fur trade in this respect, and

Duffle coat in American grey fox, £5,900, by Birger Christensen, 107 New Bond Street, W1. Black boots from Russell & Bromley



show here three good examples of top furriers getting to grips with fashion in fur and making, in fact, cloth coats with hair on.

Grosvenor Canada, exclusively at Harrods in London, have come forward with some excellent young styles in jackets and capes, and in the top price bracket have produced beautiful blousons in mink or fisher. These are perfectly in tune with today's fashion trends. They also have a stunning jacket in chinchilla, with a drawstring waist and big shoulders, that gives this silver fur sophistication to match its natural splendour.

The little bomber jacket from Grosvenor that we photographed comes from the opposite end of the price structure. An original mixture of wool, plucked mink and leather, it is young and sporty, and clearly demonstrates the rationale for fur being treated as high-class ready-to-wear.

Massin Furs follow this road, too, and their mink jacket with the amusing effect of a fringed shawl is more proof that fur has at last broken through the made-to-measure barrier and emerged as a serious challenger to the best of ready-to-wear being made in other materials.



Mink jacket, reversing to leather, with shawl effect of mink tails, £2,950, from Massin Furs, 50 Wigmore Street, W1. Wool trousers, £63, and long check scarf, £33, both from Aquascutum. Boots from Russell & Bromley. (Left) Two colours of mink are used to make the shawl effect on the back



The fling-on, edge-to-edge three-quarter coat by Maxwell Croft comes close to the popular little car coat that is around everywhere this season. Suitable for day or evening, work or play, this casual styling in fur, which converts a so-called luxury material into all-purpose use, shows the way ahead to the time when fur will become universally popular again simply by keeping up with fashion technology.

If you happen to go down Knightsbridge way on Saturday or any day after that, until November 5, you will find a fabulous display of Grosvenor Canada furs in the Central Hall of Harrods. Star billing on this occasion will be shared by Collingwood, the jewellers, who will be mounting a formidable display of gems. There will also be fashion shows three times a day.

Photographs by Desmond Waring.