

Overpriced Clothing For The Rich And Skinny

As I pried 13 mail-order catalogs out of our mailbox one day last week, it occurred to me that a lot of advertisers must believe that LuAnn and I are wealthy shut-ins.

Even though we make the vast majority of our purchases from local retailers, we seem to be on everyone's mailing list. Especially for companies that evidently specialize in clothing designed for women who are shaped like pencils. That is, pencils with 36D erasers.

LuAnn was scooping a shovelful of these catalogs into our recycle bin when I grabbed a Boston Proper catalog off the top and said, "Let's save this one – it's got some pretty cute models."

LuAnn glanced at the cover and said, "They all look like hookers."

I was happy to take a closer look, and...by golly they all *do* look like hookers. Skimpy yet clingy clothes, wet hair, pouty lips and what used to be called a "come-hither" expression on their Barbie-doll faces.

Where do advertisers find these women? They are obviously are prettier than most to begin with, but nobody looks *this* good for much longer than a snippet of time that can be measured only by an atomic clock.

There can't be many of these models in circulation – I keep seeing the same faces (and other pleasant body parts) in various catalogs. For all I know, when the photo shoot is over they drop the hookers into huge containers of formaldehyde until it's time to prepare the next catalog.

As we all know, real women do not resemble these models in any significant manner. Yet somehow most women's clothing is sold based on how garments look on these perky scarecrows.

According to Natural Health magazine, the average height and weight for women age 18 to 74 years is 5'4" and 138 pounds. Prevention magazine

says that an average 5'9" model's weight is somewhere around 110-115 pounds, and a "healthy weight" for a woman who is that same height should be 129-169 pounds.

In addition, Natural Health reports that the average woman's dress size is 12, yet the average size of a mannequin is 6. What does this tell us? We all want to look like the mannequin.

I say "we" in the broad sense of the word, actually meaning you women. We men are less prone to being concerned about our weight. According to a survey by the Better Health Channel, among normal weight respondents 45% of the women perceived they were overweight compared to only 23% of the men.

On behalf of the males of our species, I'll accept part of the blame for women who have been brainwashed into believing that their appearance should be their foremost concern. At the same time, I don't feel that it's my fault - or a fatal character flaw - that I have a benign aesthetic appreciation for the female form.

LuAnn interprets this attribute of mine somewhat less charitably, referring to me as a "leering geezer."

Anyway, in my exhaustive research on the topic of fashion models - defined as ten minutes of Googling on the Internet - I found a web site that demonstrated the effects of airbrushing and digital photographic manipulation.

As it turns out, hardly any of the magazine photos you see have escaped enhancement. The before and after examples of photos that have been retouched are shocking. It turns out that Cindy Crawford could actually look like Jabba the Hutt in real life.

In protest of the exploitation and objectification of women by capitalistic mass-marketers, I'm recycling my entire stash of women's swimsuit catalogs featuring underfed waifs. And I don't care how attractive their erasers are.