fashion

grand funk

By Jay Ross
Photographs by Dave Sands

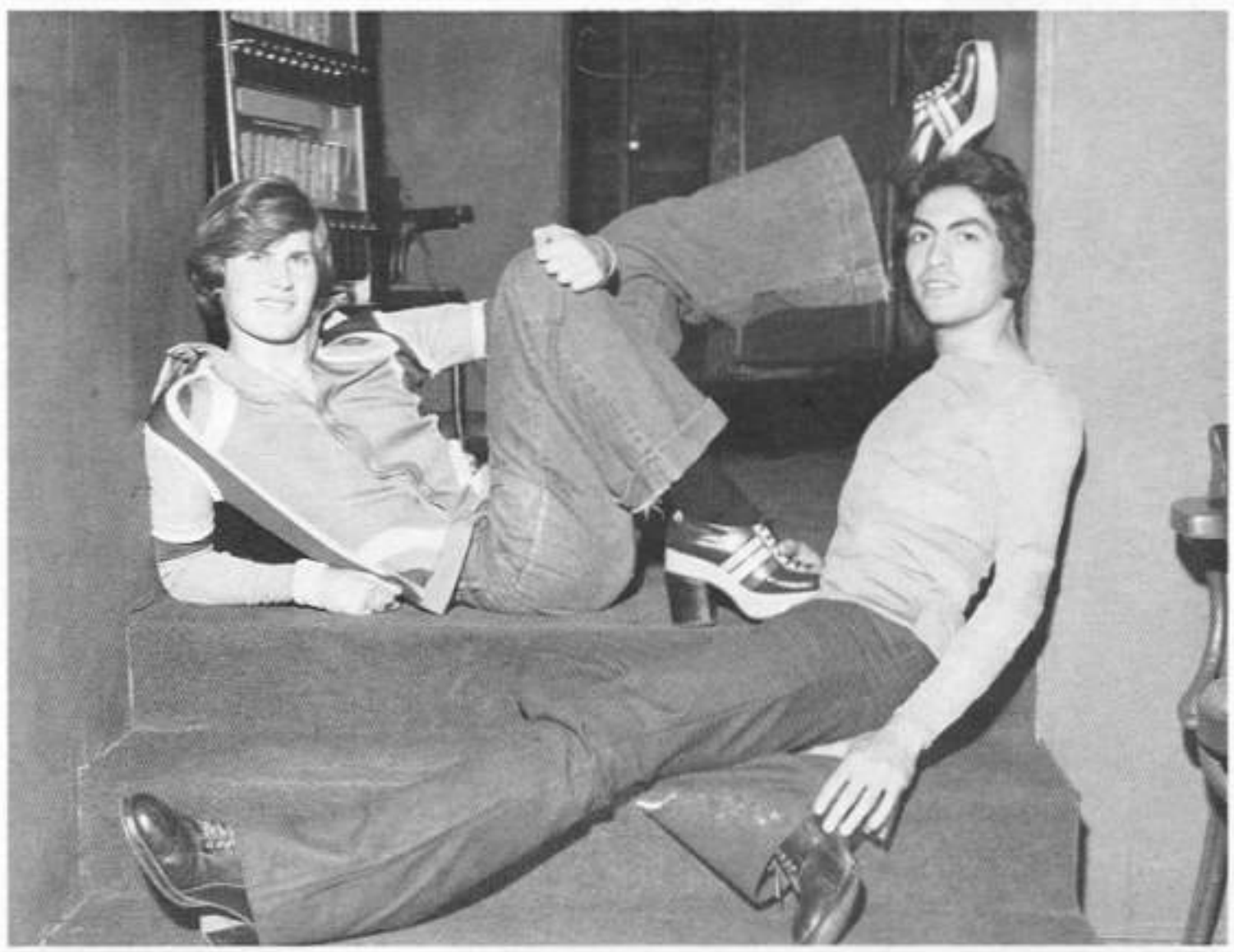
At night, **After Dark** is L.A.'s most popular dance club. The movements of the hordes filtering through the packed rooms seems choreographed and their sounds seem orchestrated into a complex arrangement with the musicians.

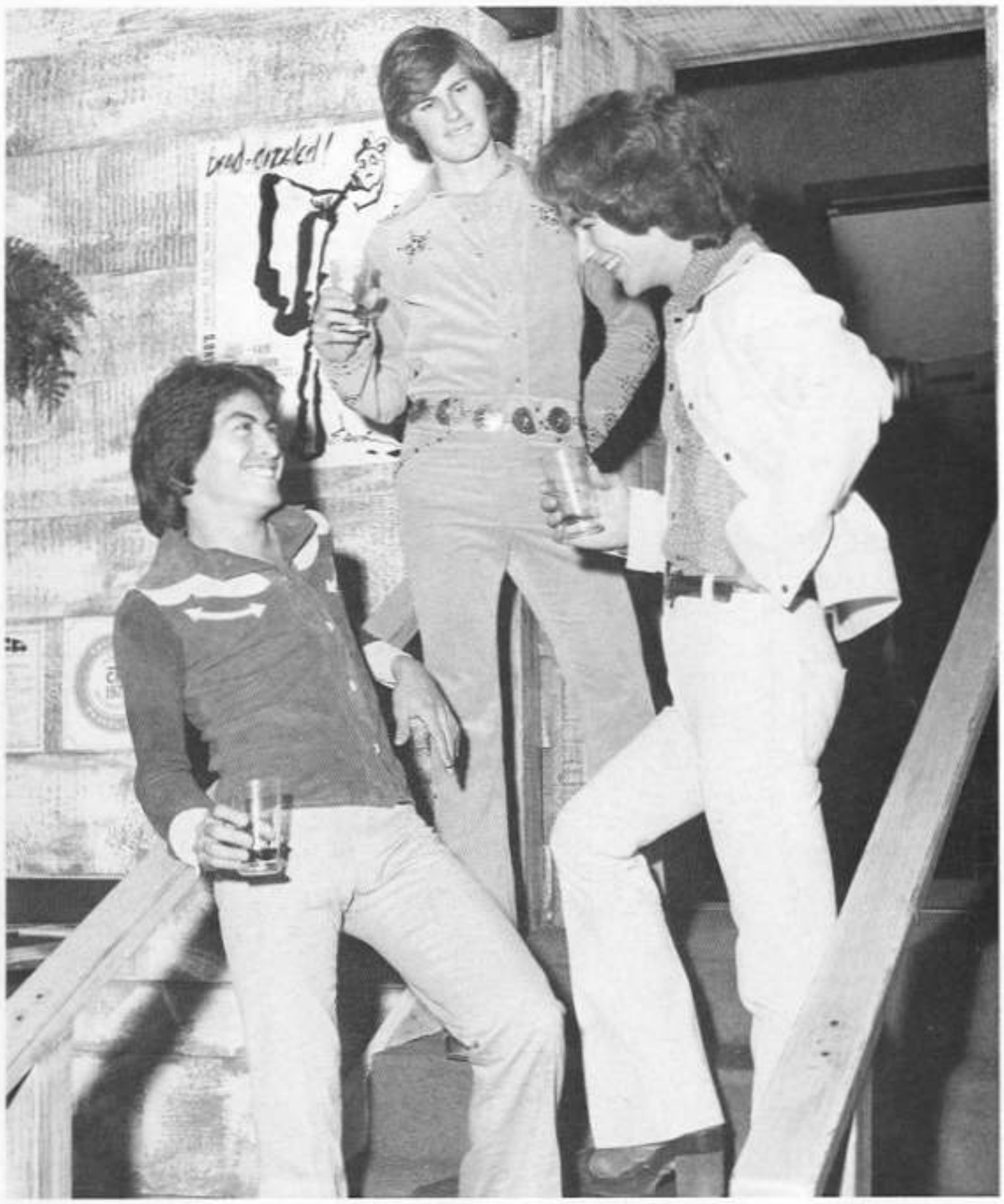
During the day, a staff and crew of more than a dozen generate enough activity to keep the large building from feeling deserted. As we set up for the first shots, entertainer Michael Owen was rehearsing a new number. His plaintive voice hypnotized the models. They followed direction so languidly the photographer didn't need to stop them to freeze the action. When Michael finished, the sound men took over. They checked out the sound system at full volume from the D.J.'s podium, and it was all-systems-go for the models. All three are professional dancers and it was a shame to have to stop them intermittently to get on with our work.

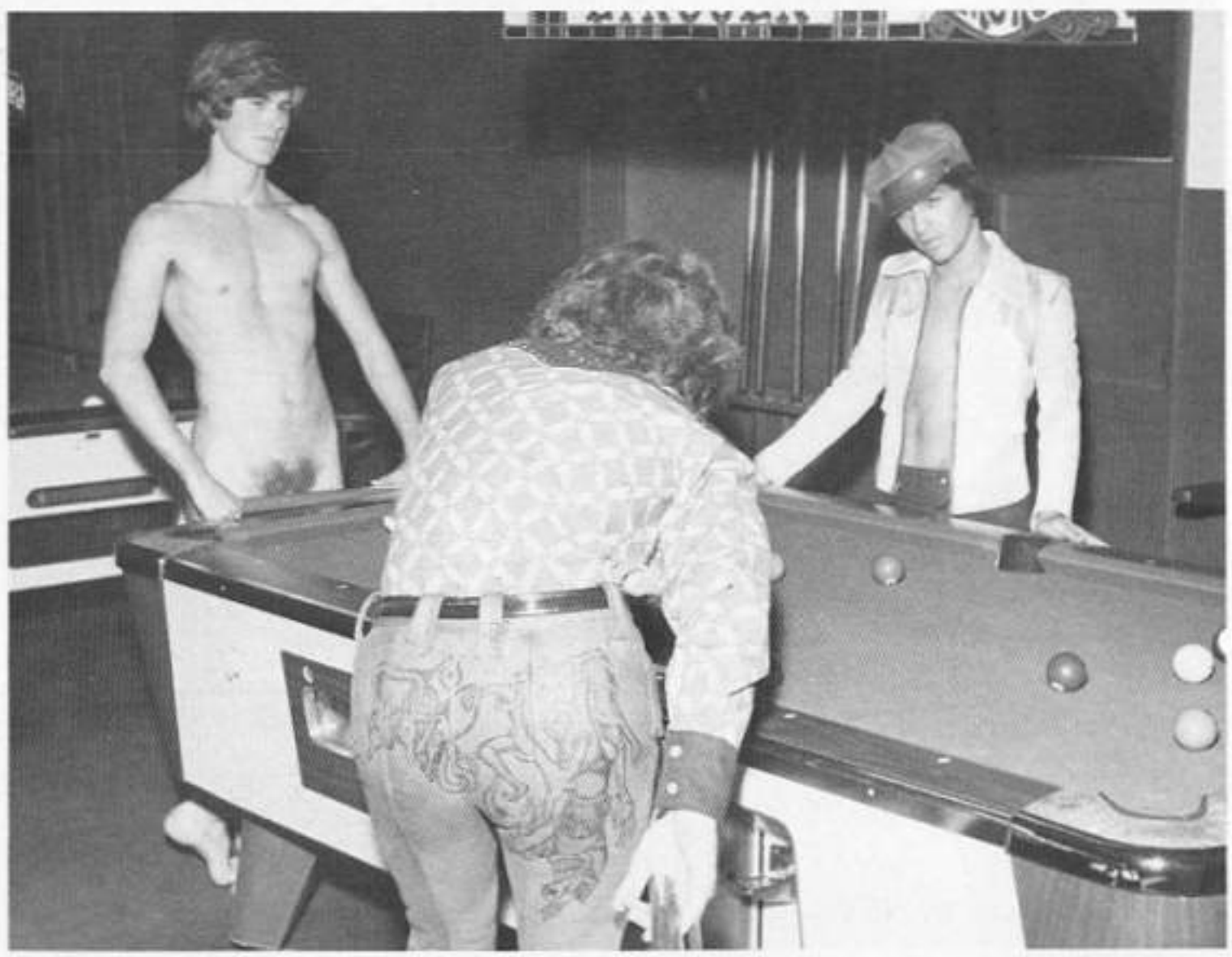
But it wasn't the music alone that freaked out our models. As in the fable of the Red Shoes, the high funk gear they donned made them want to dance till they dropped. Responsibility for the perpetrators of these enchanted duds is hereinafter affixed:

Bobby Grills opened his shop, **Grills and Yang,** 538½ N. La Cienega Blvd., West Hollywood, less than a year ago and already word-of-mouth has it that it's one of *the* places to go for original, far out fashion for men and women; much of it designed for both. Some of the early discoverers of this tiny store are Elton John, Diana Ross, Ringo Starr, Billy Dee Williams, Faye Dunaway, Buddy Miles and members of the rock group Chicago.

Bobby was a partner in a custom leather business in New York. There, he found many talented people who make small quantities of their own original styles. Their work forms the nucleus of his new







shop. He rounds out his stock from other sources, from L.A. to London, always favoring small manufacturers over big. Only a few of his items are one of a kind, but the chances are great that the garment you select will have no more than four others like it in the entire world.

Ecology is practiced with the use of recycled denim, silk scarves made into shirts and a wide variety of plain, figured and metallic-patterned fabrics used in unusual combinations for kimono-shirts.

Peter Monsanto is the creator of a fascinating variety of shirts for **Grills and Yang.** White jersey with pockets and insets is outlined with bright-colored overlock stitching. Abstract designs are evolved, through the use of insets and piping in a variety of colors, into long-sleeved shirts and tank tops.

M. Bassel is represented with a series of long-sleeved jersey T-shirts inset with blocks or stripes of contrast colors. Three colors of jersey are mixed in a collared T-shirt.

Cowboy/Indian motifs are prevalent in shirts which range from sheer voiles, through metallics, to chamois, from simple styling to appliqués, insets and piping. Body-contoured wide-legged pants come in a wide selection of high-fashion colors in both satins and velvets.

Bobby's jackets are, literally, works of art. Jon Tate models silver leather with Hawaiian scenes, handpainted in Maui, set in oval frames, surrounded by suede appliqués. A football jacket is covered in sequins in your "school" colors.

John Davis is up to his neck in silver leather with a diagonal zipper opening inspired by the motorcycle genre, and exposed to the world in a brief bolero of silver and black lamé in a diagonal-striped Art Deco pattern.

Spiderman Orando Rey wears black pigskin trapped in a silver

web. Yellow figured satin is surrounded by gold velvet and brown ribbing in a football jacket that will never see a playing field. Superfly sports freeform appliqués in pastel shades on a beige leather zippered jacket.

Brando's hat in *The Wild Ones* was the inspiration for the caps in solid leather or in contrasting combinations of leather and suede.

Ellene Halprin is the designer-owner of **Just Afternoon,** 9056 Santa Monica Blvd., West Hollywood. Ellene springs from three generations of seamstresses. She made her first garment at age seven.

Her boutique displays macramé hangings by Ken Robinson and fantastic erotic paintings on wood, which incorporate the grain into the design, by Derrick John Taylor.

Just Afternoon features a line of recycled denims which Ellene manufactures and one-of-a-kind fashions for men and women who don't want to see themselves coming and going. Numbered among these individualists are Mick Jagger, Pearl Bailey, Buddy Miles and his band, Sly and the Family Stone, Judy Pace, Lori Lieberman, restaurateur Poppy, and the producers of that classic-of-a-kind *Deep Throat,* Ray Marsh and Don Ritchey.

Some of the costumes pictured have been custom-made for clients, but they illustrate the range of designing available. If you fail to find the right item on display, Ellene will design it specifically for you.

The green velvet jacket with matching lamé lapels and trim was designed for Pink Floyd. Worn with it are black jersey wide-legged pants with sequin waistband.

The white jersey outfit trimmed with red, blue, yellow and green rhinestones and studs is made for

the spotlight, onstage or off.

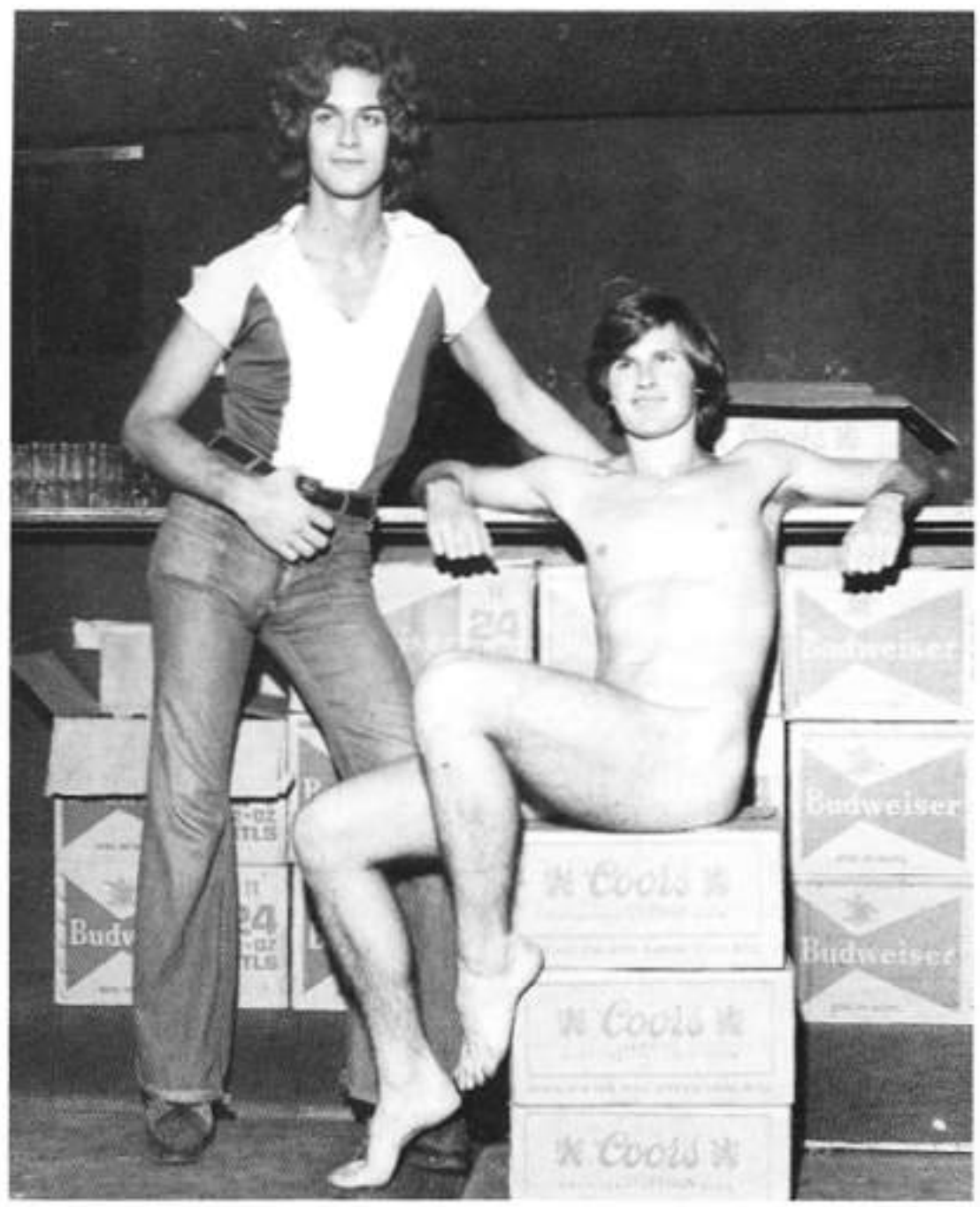
Casual elegance is the best description for the cream chamois two-piece outfit criss-crossed with rust leather thongs.

A go-anywhere suit in white denim is outlined with red zigzag topstitching and appliquéd with multicolored calico patches which match the shirt.

Your own personal rainbows, butterflies, Pegasus, or you name it, can be embroidered to order in rhinestones on the recycled denim long-sleeved T-shirt and space-helmet. It gives the impression that your flying saucer is double-parked at the curb.

Hard-working Hollywood cowboys can proclaim their status in the turquoise velvet, silver-studded, two-piece suit embellished with a silver concho belt, or in the studded black and tan Western shirt worn with rust leather bell-bottoms decorated with hand-painted ink drawings, burned in for permanency.

Carry your own art masterpieces around with you; in fact, wrap yourself up in them. Multicolor patches of chamois are appliquéd into pastoral landscapes on jackets and full-length coats. I don't believe it's considered chauvinistic to want to become an art



object.

And for a little touch that can transform even basic jeans into an individualistic outfit, **Just Afternoon** has an assortment of neckpieces of leather and feathers.

* * * *

Driving through West Hollywood has become hazardous in the last year, since **Fred Slatten** opened his shoe salon at 8803 Santa Monica Blvd. Brakes screech and bumpers crash as motorists catch a first glimpse of his show windows. Art nouveau-etched glass frames display areas which included spotlighted mirrored balls. But this brilliance is overshadowed by the merchandise itself—shoes and boots of silver and gold, emblazoned with rhinestones.

Fred had been a freelance designer of women's shoes for twelve years and he even took to the road to place his most far-out styles. But frustrated by buyers who were afraid of anything really different, he decided to open his own shop. The response was immediate. Barbra Streisand, Liza Minnelli, Goldie Hawn, Diana Ross, Mick Jagger's wife Bianca, Vicki Carr, Carol Burnett, Cher, Mitzi Gaynor, Brenda Vaccaro, Joni Mitchell and Bette Midler descended on him for footwear for both their personal wardrobes and for their shows. *Playboy*, *Playgirl* and *Viva* magazines spiced up their fashion or nude displays with Slatten creations.

It wasn't long before males demanded equal rights. Edgar Winter, Liberace, Sweet Louie of the Checkmates, and Paul Revere and the Raiders started Fred on a line for men.

At present, only one knee-high zippered boot is carried in stock in men's sizes, but you can bring in any shoe and it will be customized to your specifications. Platforms and heels of any size and style, any color or combination of colors, even metallics, rhinestones or snakeskin, airbrushing, sandblasting or hand-painting are just some of the services available on request. And if your feet are small enough to fit into women's sizes, there is an amazing assortment of readymades to choose from. A size 7 man's foot would fit a woman's size 9. I've been contemplating cutting off a few toes to be able to get into that five-color casual job John is wearing.

As mentioned above, this month's models are all professional dancers. Orlando Rey is with a well-known modern dance group and is also currently appearing in an L.A. nightclub. John Davis is studying with the New York City Ballet under a scholarship from the Ford Foundation. Singer-dancer-actor Jon Tate is a graduate of Temple University and has won the Philadelphia Drama Critics Award for Best Actor for his role of Og in *Finian's Rainbow*. He has starred in the film, *Young Graduates*, and has completed *Flowers in a Crannied Wall* for Tony Benedict Productions, soon to be released.