

# ARTS & LIFE

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## STYLE

LET'S GO

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Old Navy's red snap-front French terry hoodie, \$24.50.



Gentle Fawn toggle-button Dublin, \$100 (Off the Wall).



Lucky brand women's camouflage tiger print hoodie, \$90 (online).



TNA Houndstooth all-over print hoodie, \$75 (Aritzia).



This retro hoodie from Karma Athletics will be available next month for \$80.



TNA Long Hoodie, \$75 (Aritzia) comes in a variety of styles and colours.

# Happiness is a hoodie

**COMFORT CHIC** | They've oozed well-toned appeal ever since Rocky Balboa first trained in one

BY CHANTAL EUSTACE  
VANCOUVER SUN

Comfortable and irreverent with a jaunty little lid, the hooded sweatshirt is one of the most enduring and intriguing garments ever created.

Like any true bombshell, the hoodie is controversial, layered and profoundly good-looking. It is indisputably sexy. Complicated. It combines bad boy elements of gangsta stylings with hip-hop's street cred all packed into a snugly couch potato package that exudes warmth.

It's only natural that people can't get enough of them. And

it is no surprise that in their latest incarnation, hoodies are becoming flashier and pricier than ever.

Ever since Stallone's knucklehead, Rocky Balboa, trained in one back in the '70s, they've oozed well-toned appeal. In the early '90s hip-hop artists brought them to the street while grunge tore off their sleeves and cut up their hemlines. Since then, their appeal has expanded — without pilling.

Over the past few years they've hit the catwalk thanks to brands like Miu Miu, Comme des Garçons, Juicy Couture and Gwen Stefani's

L.A.M.B. showing off interesting cuts and fabrics with serious stretch appeal.

While almost everyone owns at least one hoodie, these versatile sweatshirts have a mixed rap. Police often report that fleeing criminals were wearing a hooded sweatshirt. Some malls in England even went so far as to ban them in 2005, sparking a "save the hoodie campaign" in the U.K. (In defense poppy rapper Lady Sovereign 2006's song, *Hoodie*, called on the masses to: "fling on an Adidas hoodie and just boogie woogie with me...")

The hoodie goes by multiple

aliases too, depending on where you live or how long you've walked the earth. Some people know the front-pocketed sweatshirt by the names "kangaroo" or "jumper." Others call them "pullovers," while prairie folk refer to them by the unusual term "bunny hug."

They're also tough to define especially now that designers are pushing limits with fabrics, cuts and designs. Some types of hoodies don't even have hoods — though purists wouldn't include them in the category.

See **HOODIE MADNESS** C5



This colourful Kanga hoodie will be available at Karma in March (\$100).



Gentle Fawn's wood-button hoodie is available at Off The Wall (\$100).



This anchor-print hoodie by Talula is available at Aritzia (\$75).



There's no hood on this Talula shawl-collar hoodie, available at Aritzia (\$75).

# Hoodie madness at unprecedented high

**From CI**

Others, like L.A.-based Anzevino and Florence, make hoodies that wrap around the neck or torso without bodies or sleeves.

Nowadays, anything goes.

And hoodie madness has reached an unprecedented high as people want unique looks that come at a premium. For example, hip-hop's Pharrell Williams's high-voltage label, Billionaire Boys Club, creates \$400 creations that stand out thanks to bright colours, all-over prints, chaotic patterns and a hefty price point.

"It's about quality. They're hand-inspected in Japan," says Cyrus Thiedeke, manager of Livestock in Gastown, the only local store to carry the label. "And it's about exclusivity. It's about how everyone else won't have them."

Hoodies are great because everyone can wear them, says Erin Wahl, product manager for Aritzia's leisure brand, T n' A. If you don't have one? She says to go out and get one.

"They're an essential item for everyone in the westcoast," Wahl says.

"They're comfortable, functional and they ooze cool."

As hoodies grow in popularity, people are trying harder and harder to stand out with more intricate detailing, interesting patterns and cuts, she observes.

"A hoodie represents 'hey, I'm

This \$400 hoodie by Pharrell Williams's label, Billionaire Boys Club, is available at Livestock in Gastown.



here. I want to look good. I'm stylish," she says.

With new looks, there's also expanded opportunities to put on a hoodie. They've moved well beyond work-out attire and into everyday attire, says Wahl.

"You should wear a hoodie when you're walking the dog. You should wear a hoodie when you're shopping or going to the movie or even out to dinner,"

Wahl says.

Expanding hoodie-appropriate lifestyles was what Danny Hogg, co-owner of Gentle Fawn, had in mind when he began designing hoodies back in 2002.

"When we started the brand, one of our ideas pertain specifically the the hoodie — we attempted to take fleece, a staple, and kind of take it and evolve it into something a little more fashion-

able," Hogg says.

Since then they've created blazer-fitted, fleece creations with hoods lined in satin. They've replaced zip-pulls with wooden toggle buttons and mixed around with pocket placement.

One hoodie even came with its own crystal brooch.

"I'd like to see them get even more dressy and contemporary,"

says Hogg. "Not just limited to fleeces."

Even retail chains are pushing the limits of hoodie-mania. As part of The Gap's Product Red line the mega-brand launched a grey, cashmere hoodie for women with half the profits going to charity. And luxury department store, Holt Renfrew, also carries cashmere hoodies in a variety of hues from green to grey.

"The mixture of wearing something casual and luxurious against your skin is great," says Holt Renfrew spokeswoman Carla Stef. "I think it's all about the way things feel against your skin."

Heather Martin's plain and sparse designs for her label, Mono, focuses on well-fitted hoodies and fine craftsmanship.

"You can wear them with anything," says Martin, 28. "Pull up the hood and you can kind of hide away."

Not only does the seemingly benign snuggler warm up the torso and coat the physiological think tank with its hood, it looks cool too.

It's about simplicity, says Pablo Zamudio.

"I think they're really easy to wear, very convenient and casual," Zamudio, co-owner of El Kartel on Robson Street, says of the hoodie's widespread and growing appeal.

"It's a trend."