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## The Pleather Was All Mine

Our fashionably fabulous, Loverboy-loving Christos Garkinos proudly recalls the fashion feats of his youth.



### STYLE HIGH CLUB

*Christos Garkinos*

**PICTURE IT:** Toronto, the 1980s. I was there for the annual Sons of Pericles/Maids of Athena convention. I was also obsessed with Canadian-based Loverboy and the cover of their album *Get Lucky*—you know, with the tight red-leather pants. Anyhow, the Saturday night dance was already in full swing and about 800 of the most godfearing, convention-going, blazer-wearing Sons and Maids were doing some whack version of “Kick Ball Change.”

I walked in wearing my pleather version of the Loverboy pant and, after adjusting myself gently, I drew a deep breath and—gulp—took my first fashion plunge. I exhaled, jumped in, and danced like a house on fire. A mental picture formed—the music slowing, Maids with their mouths agape, and Sons with their fists clenched: I was different, definitely not a tribe member. People gave me space because I was making waves in these uncomfortably tight and torturously hot pants.

Despite the snide looks that night, the next day at the How to Be a Better Young Greek Orthodox seminar I received bravery props for my outré decision.

I continued to carry the fashion torch as I began my first real job after college at the oh-so-conservative Clorox company as the brand manager of Kingsford Charcoal. It was 20-plus



Harvard MBAs and me. The first week of work I had what I refer to as my “Where’s Waldo/Christos” moment. We were asked to come dressed in business attire for our class picture. I walked into the room a bit late and was blinded by a cloud of gray suits with blue ties and black shoes. As I adjusted my gaze, I discovered that 24 pairs of eyes were trained on me. I glanced down to my light blue seersucker suit, yellow tie, and cream Hush Puppies, then strolled across the room, took my place among my peers, and smiled brightly.

Nowadays, as co-owner of the impossibly chic store Decadestwo, I try once a week to push the boundaries: copper-tinted shoes, mismatched ties and shirts, and yes, some real leather. In my mind, the world always needs a fashionable nudge, even if the water looks cold.