



No heels, no panty hose, no 'spiritwear.' Pure bliss!

Alpaca Fashion

By Marj Brady

I bet that caught your attention didn't it? I also bet you're thinking I'm going to tell you about the beautiful clothes that are being made from the glorious fibre that our critters produce – well I'm not.

I think my family and I are pretty typical 'city to country' transfers. I worked in the financial industry for roughly twenty-five years and most of that time my wardrobe consisted of suits, dresses, slacks, high heels and lots of pantyhose. I hate pantyhose. Occasionally, if we were good corporate minions the higher-ups would allow us a "casual day" where we were permitted to dress down if we paid a fee to charity. It was strongly suggested that we incorporate our 'spiritwear' into the day's attire. In my opinion, spiritwear is nothing more than clothing bearing the corporate logo that companies give their employees rather than raises, time off or respect.

Since leaving corporate life my style sense has adjusted to the far side of casual and has developed a definite tilt towards slovenly or should I steal a phrase and try "shabby chic"? Early in our country transition my daughter took me aside and requested that I not go into town in my working garb. She also asked that I not wave at the school bus and draw unnecessary attention to myself. I honoured that request and hid in the barn when the bus was expected. One rainy, muddy day I was dumping water buckets and didn't see/hear the bus until it was too late. I was trapped! In the middle of the

barnyard, in my plaid quilted jacket, rubber boots, coveralls and the green acrylic hat that metamorphosed everyday until it looked like a flower pot stuck on my head. I tried to run for the barn but the mud was deep and sticky and I'm not as fast as I once was. Thankfully I didn't fall and, surprisingly, she still speaks to me.

When we moved to the country I embraced the lifestyle and purchased rubber boots and coveralls from the local feed store. I now wear my old corporate spiritwear with pride; that denim shirt has attended a significant number of spit checks and shows the signs of many successful breedings. My purple ball cap is only purple if you turn it inside out. I'm on my fourth pair of wellies and I've lost count of the number of gloves that have gone missing or just worn out.

As I write this the temperature outside is -32C. I'm wearing long johns, wind pants, terry alpaca socks, a turtleneck and a fleece pullover. I am wearing other undergarments that you really don't need or want to know about. Before I go to the barn this morning I'll struggle into my grown-up snow pants, a down-filled parka, a ski cap and my official feed store, fleece lined rubber boots. I will be warm and my chores will be done but if I happen to fall down

I'm screwed. The snow is deep this winter and I may not be able to get back up.

I still have my three-inch heels but they don't match my pink long johns and oh, speaking of pink long johns, what ever happened to romantic gifts? In the city I was the frequent beneficiary of flowers; now my loving hubby bestows upon me thermal underwear and strangely shaped poop. The poop is a story for another day.

Garments and accessories made from Canadian alpaca are truly beautiful and comfortable and luxurious and soft and warm. Wear them and be proud but also be proud of your rubber boots, your stinky plaid quilted jacket and the coveralls you got at the feed store. They protect you and keep you warm and dry and let you care for your fibre crop in comfort even if you are no longer a fashionista!

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About the Author

After twenty-five years in the Toronto mortgage industry Marj abandoned the city and moved with her family to a small farm north of Stirling, Ontario, Canada in 2004. Marj raises entertaining alpacas, shovels beans and talks to herself and is quite content that her pantyhose days are behind her. She can be reached at amazinggraze@sympatico.ca or visit her website at www.amazinggrazealpacas.ca



Marj and Steve in the latest winter farm fashion