

WINNING IMPRESSIONS

Color By Design

Looking Fine in Spring/Summer 2009

We're ready to shed the remnants of winter and to lift our spirits. Put some pop into your wardrobe by finding something to renew, revive and energize what you already have in your closet. As you move forward into the season ahead, invest in a few smart and versatile pieces.

This Season: Revitalize Your Look

- COLOR** You'll see a full spectrum of happy colors that remind you of tropical punch and sunshine.
- Pinks, hot corals, red, yellow along with a balance of blues, greens and khaki shades tinged with olive and gold. Tea-stain and blush-tone beiges, white, black and grey are the neutrals.
- DESIGN** Graphic prints from small scale to large. Gingham checks, plaids, stripes, polka dots.
- Watercolor florals—some crisp, some blended **so pay attention to your harmony's look.**
- Botanical prints, ocean-life motifs, abstract mosaics with an impressionist feel.
- Wild animal prints such as leopard, cheetah, tiger or zebra. **Zebra is for Winters.**
- FABRIC** Texture plays an important role with fabrics being folded, draped and bunched to create dimension and interest. Folds replace pleats in many cases.
- Lace-trimmed cottons. Seersucker—usually in a blue or pink pinstripe.
- Gilded and shimmery fabrics. Transparent fabrics. These create a romantic mood. Metallics in colors beyond metals.
- Serpent skins for all types of garments, not just accessories. **Use just one piece per outfit so as not to over-do the idea.**
- STYLE** We're craving inspiration these days and fashion is reflecting that urge.
- Designers are focusing on subtle changes with clothes that highlight personality: quirky mixes of dressy yet relaxed, soft layering of pieces that are light and airy or exotic themes from faraway places like India and Morocco.
- You'll notice classics in high-impact colors and low maintenance fabrics.
- Tops** Simple cross-over wrap knit tops worn alone or over a camisole.
- Light, wispy, yet textured short or long tunic-style tops. See-through sleeves.
- Ruffled, tucked, and bejeweled embellishments on neckline and sleeve edges.
- Feminine flourishes of lace trims on your basic t-shirts.
- One-shoulder tops for an asymmetrical look. Best on Falls or Winters.

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Pants Short shorts, just below-the-knee pants **worn with a belted jacket or cardigan** for a sophisticated look, cropped pants from slim to slouchy and sequined to silky.

Gadsby-era classic baggy trousers. **You need to be tall and slim for this style.**

Jumpsuits—yes, they’re back—you’ll find them for day and evening and both long and short legged.

Some jumpsuits look like a two-piece vest-over-pant worn over a classic shirt.

Every twenty years or so there’s a new crop of “fashionistas” unaware of the pitfalls of a fashion trend from years past. The jumpsuit looks very pulled together and is an easy on-step way to dress but...

I remember the first time around with this garment and the difficulty of dealing with going to a public restroom, being in the stall with my entire outfit around my ankles, trying to keep it off the floor. And what do you do with that pesky belt? Stuff it in your purse? Give it to a friend to hold? I hung it around my neck.

Oh...if there’s a back zipper, you may need to ask a stranger—if there is one—to help you.

The jumpsuit does look good on most people, but in the end is problematic.

Skirts Mini, to-the-knee, just below the knee and below the widest part of your calf, but above the ankles a few inches—even more inches if you’re 5’4” or less.

Slightly flared, swishy, tiered or ruffled.

Dresses Feminine, flirty, ruffled, fringed, fun. Loose, billowy shapes or sophisticated 40’s styles worn with belt, bag and peep-toe heels.

Sporty, safari-style cotton dresses.

Dresses are seen in solid colors or in preppy stripes and checks, graphic-art geometrics, floral or exotic prints.

Some dresses have flounce at the back waist much like a bustle.

You’ll see simple, sleek sheaths and one-shoulder styling on dressier dresses.

Suits The newest have feminine styling details on sleeves, pockets and closure edges. Also, there’s a trend toward a textured or striped jacket worn with a solid skirt either neutral or picking up one of the jacket’s colors.

If the suit is solid and matched, the blouse is printed and very feminine. A belted jacket is an option.

A jacket over a sheath dress in a matching fabric will give a suit look, but with a lot more versatility.

Sharper shoulders on tailored suits are noticeable this season.

Jackets They’re all about the waist being defined. They are either nipped in to shape the body or belted. They are as long as a tailcoat or as short as a waistcoat; in brights or neutrals.

Cardigans are a jacket alternative, both long and short. **Roll or shove up the sleeves for a flattering ¾ length sleeve.** If there is a shirt underneath, roll its sleeve over the jacket’s sleeve—this adds a laid-back feeling when needed.

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ACCESSORIES Play up one signature accessory. Invest in a few versatile pieces worn regularly, rather than a drawer full of not-so-greats. **Clear out the clutter, now!**

Add a dash of sophistication to a casual outfit by combining and layering several chains, or add a bit of glamour with a single beautiful jeweled pin.

Gold and silver pieces with a variety of textures from shiny to filigree.

Vivid colors and oversize stones. Pay **attention to your harmony's scale.**

Super-luxe embellished handbags and clutches. **You crafty people could add brooches, ribbons, feathers and trinkets to a plain purse you already own.**

Reptilian and metallic fabrics are used on many accessories in colors and neutrals.

Shoes are becoming statement pieces—especially in red. Spectator oxfords and heels in both colors and neutrals.

Shiny shoes, gladiator flat sandals and heels. Day to night sandals with pearls, crystals and sequins.

Wedges in many fabrics and moods. **Multi-colored prints used on these could be worn with several solid colored outfits;** therefore, very cost effective as well as fun to wear.

American straw hats with grosgrain ribbon bands are a very Spring Harmony accessory.

Headbands galore. Sporty, sparkly and metallic. Plain, cute and glamorous.

The bottom line: if it doesn't look good on you, it's not in style.

Mindful Dressing and Shopping

The history of fashion in economic upturns and downturns has shown that one can move on in life, with style, using a combination of a dash of fresh ideas and ingenuity.

The trick is to "fill in". Try taking pants or a skirt from a quality suit you bought two seasons ago and wear them with a casual shirt and new short jacket from TJMax, Nordstrom Rack, Penny's or a gently worn vintage store.

When you shop, whatever you choose should fulfill two criteria: **it is absolutely perfect in every way—color, cut, proportion. And, you really have a need for it.**

Each new thing should earn its place. It completes an outfit, it changes an outfit's look/mood, or it's just the answer for an event in your life that usually comes up each year like a wedding, splashy party, or travel plans.

You might invest in two or three items you can wear multiple times a week. One good bag, one fine pair of shoes, a great necklace that upgrades what you already have.

This is the season to sharpen your personal style and adopt a versatile "uniform" of staples, not trendy one-season wonders.

The Fashion Type Class will definitely help you find your signature look. Take it if you haven't. Review it if necessary. It's fun and informative.

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The next newsletter will be in October.

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