

# RTW COLLECTIONS

SPRING / SUMMER 2011

## TREND OVERVIEW BY MARYLOU LUTHER

NEW YORK • LONDON • MILAN • PARIS

If color can make you happy, as color psychologists claim, spring 2011 will send you right over the rainbow in smiles and positivity. That's what retailers are betting their greenbacks on.

Tough-times-denying brights, plus the acid, neon, Day-Glo, fluorescent shocks of the same shades make the upcoming spring season the most colorful in recent memory. Maybe even the most colorful ever.

Leading fashion's new rainbow coalition is Raf Simons of Jil Sander, who electrified his audience with a dazzling array of fluorescents and just plain brights, as in a red T-shirt with a sweeping green mid-calf-length skirt over purple palazzos. Frida Giannini's pulsating colors for Gucci included a memorable merge of an orange leather jacket, purple top and narrow green pants. Saturated brights also registered strongly at Akris, Calvin Klein, Max Mara, Prada and Aquilano Rimondi.

On both sides of the Atlantic, the color story began with white, the non-color that opened many shows. White clothes with white accessories looked especially new. White segued into pales on several runways, with Laura Biagiotti's latte and Lanvin's cappuccino securing the *café au lait* tints as emerging neutrals.

**ALL ABOUT YVES.** The safari. Peasant blouses and skirts. Mondrian color-blocking. Caftans. Fringe. Tuxedos. Tunics. They're all part of the Yves Saint Laurent tributes in New York and Europe. And they're widely attributed to the recent '70s-resplendent YSL retrospective in Paris—one obviously attended by many designers.

**THE '70s.** There are hints of that decade in Paris, especially with hotpants and jumpsuits, but the safari jackets and *le smokings* pioneered by Saint Laurent are few and far between, even at YSL, where Stefano Pilati paid respects to the jumpsuit and peasant blouse, but left the more literal translations of that period to others.

Punks returned at Balenciaga with spiky-haired models, biker jackets and rubber-looking pants, and most notably at the rock-and-rolling house of Balmain, where Christophe Decarnin sent out holey T-shirts, safety-pinned leather motorcycle jackets, fringed everything, torn jeans



JIL SANDER



PRABAL GURUNG



DRIES VAN NOTEN



ROCHAS



MARC JACOBS



PUCCI

and a chiffon top printed with a veiled American flag. Despite their trappings, the Balmain punks wore jackets and pants made of the finest leathers and decorated to the hilt as in sequined pants and blazers. The original punks from the London street movement would probably never recognize their latter-day transfigurations at Balmain. They definitely could not afford the four-and-five figure punk progeny there or at Balenciaga and Chanel, where distressed tweeds, jackets with Euro-sized holes, and denim jeans with fastidiously-embroidered cutouts had all the hallmarks of haute.

As one retailer who requested anonymity put it: "Punk happened in Paris, but we don't want to move in that direction. It would be cool if it had been real street fare, interpreted by someone like H&M for the young."

In addition to punk, the disco '70s are *Stayin' Alive*, exceptionally at Marc Jacobs, Gianfranco Ferré and Dior. The rock'n' roll, head-scarfed '70s are also replayed, again and again at Balmain. Goth, too, is part of the decade *du jour*, notably at Ricardo Tisci for Givenchy, Gareth Pugh and the man who started the current revivals, Rick Owens. The American-in-Paris designer scored brilliantly by taking the Goth-black Vampiras he brought to fashion's cutting edge into the light and lightness of tonal grays and white. His exquisitely-sculpted leather jackets with arching fronts flowed seamlessly over draped jersey skirts worthy of a Greek goddess. Make that a Greek Gothess.

**THE NEXT BIG THING...**is Big. Oversized. Voluminous. Roomy. The new expansionist movement stars white evening dresses that create a cocoon of softness, as at Derek Lam and Owens. Their simple, flowing white dresses were the most modern looking of the season. Fashion's new inflationary spiral also includes Dries Van Noten's jacket enlargements, the expansive dresses by Albert Kriemler for Akris and Francisco Costa for Calvin Klein, and the up-sized coats at Celine and Lanvin.

**LONG FOR DAY.** As was true in 1969, when the "longuette" first came on the scene, mid-calf hemlines are not the only lengths shown on runways, but they got the most attention from the press and retail fashion directors, and they make minis look endangered. Longer-for-day means anywhere from knee-covering and just below, to mid-calf and somewhere above the ankles. Even shoe-topping longs were shown for day in some quarters.

Many American retailers—again requesting anonymity—say that while they will promote longer hemlines in ads and windows, they will ask designers to deliver the longer lengths shown on the runways to end just below the knees. Specialty shop owners say they will offer the longer styles exactly as shown on the runway and/or offered in the showroom.

**THE SHIRT TALE.** From Van Noten's classic white men's shirtings tucked halfway into the waist of flower-splashed satin pants to Kriemler's shirt-cum-roomy-shift for Akris, the spring shirt tale is at once an expression of utilitarian minimalism, the move away from girly to womanly and a new brand of softened androgyny. Viktor & Rolf's ode to the shirt included French cuffs



CALVIN KLEIN



STELLA MCCARTNEY



MICHAEL KORS



FERRAGAMO



CHANEL



SONIA RYKIEL

that appeared on sleeves as well as the cuffs of ankle-length pants. One amazing evening dress featured enormous blow-up sleeves that ended in four cuffs that descended in size to rest just below the elbows. At Balenciaga, Ghesquière collared the shirt trend in armor-like dress shirts over chiffon shirts and in men's shirts translated into lace and worn tucked in at one side, as at Van Noten. (It's a trend!)

The T-shirt is also part of this homage to the shirt, with Phoebe Philo of Celine showing examples from basic black to white banded in electric blue, green and orange worn with easy white trousers side-banded in the same colors.

For women with a closetful of minis, the update idea of the season comes from Giorgio Armani, whose Emporio Armani collection features short dresses posed over slender, semi-sheer stretch tulle skirts that end about 2 in. below the knees. They looked believable, wearable and modern.

**STRIPE UP THE BAND.** When someone talks about clothes of a different stripe this season, they're talking about the impressive numbers of stripes in everything from the sailor stripes at Betsey Johnson and Dior to the seersucker stripes at Yeohlee and Rachel Roy to the marvel-worthy mashups at Sonia Rykiel and the inventive juxtapositions at Prada.

**THE PANT, EXTANT.** Colored pants are hue-mongous. Every width goes. Pantsuits are back and shortsuits look fresh teamed with sleeveless jackets, double-breasted jackets, oversized jackets and bombers. Jumpsuits are one up, especially the spatial, unisex numbers pioneered by Pierre Cardin. The pantcoat scores, particularly the trench and the wrap.

**EVENING IN PARIS...AND LONDON AND MILAN AND NEW YORK.** Metallics glisten, transparency offers sights heretofore unseen, gowns inflate and hotpants create pantie-monium at Chanel. Credit Don O'Neill of Theia with the first gown to be topped with its own built-in transparent necklace.

**FABRICS.** Cotton poplins, crochets, macramés, knits, neoprene, silk and lace are the stars of the season. Kudos to Jacobs, whose laces for Louis Vuitton create new web sights—their patterns replicating the iconic LV logo.

**ACCESSORIES.** The shoulderbag, including crossbody versions, the clutch and the satchel are in the bag for spring. Shoes are either high—some sky-high with platforms—or low—some flat-to-the-floor ballerinas. The wedge has an edge, and the classic black pump looks like a winner.

**HAIR & MAKEUP.** As in apparel, color sets the tone in makeup. Lips shout out in shades of red, shocking pink and a new orchid-pink mouth created by James Kaliardos for M.A.C. by dusting the lips with fluoro-pink powder over a base of magenta lip pencil. Eye makeup is either colorful, as in the many reds, blues, teals and greens, or white, as at Prabal Gurung. From '30s jazz and Josephine Baker at Prada to '60s beehives and Audrey Hepburn at Vera



BOTTEGA VENETA



CHLOE



BALMAIN



DEREK LAM



CELINE



YEOHLEE

Wang, the yin and yang of spring hair is decade-ent. Many stylists side with side-parted hair. Some, like Sam McKnight and Odile Gilbert, accented the part with black or eye-popping eye shadow.

As Gordon Espinet of M.A.C. said of the season, "Whether the overall look was focused on colors that ranged from pastel to neon, or whether it was all about skin and the structure of the face, there was always a point of impact that was never subtle."

**QUESTIONS REMAIN.** Will the shows go small and intimate as at Tom Ford, where one of the 100 guests, former Ford boss Dawn Mello, pronounced his show as "the best I have ever seen in my entire life." Or will they go grandiose, as at the Grand Palais in Paris, where Lagerfeld recreated the gardens in the 1961 film, "Last Year at Marienbad" (Coco designed the costumes), hired a 90-piece orchestra, erected three 20-foot-high fountains and invited 3,000 guests. Stay tuned.

#### **BEST BETS:**

Color • Long for Day • The Shirt • The Shirdress • YSLisms • The '70s  
The Next Big Thing • The Sleeveless Jacket • The Trench • The Pantsuit • The Shortsuit  
Stripes • The Shoulder Bag • The Flat • The Heel  
Evening on the Loose and Betsey Johnson cartwheeling

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**ECCO DOMANI.**  
WINES OF ITALY

**M·A·C**

*Fekkai*

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