

A New Direction...

SPRING 2007 FASHION TREND REPORT

by *Melody Lesser*

As the balmiest winter on record takes its final bows and exits before we've had a chance to fully appreciate our new woolens, cashmeres and shearlings, storeowners are busy stocking spring offerings. Colorful frocks, slim silhouettes and an emphasis on youth are harbingers of spring fashion 2007. This promises to be a season when the time and dedication you put into your workout really pay off. One of the many benefits of a fit body is being able to show it, and this season's clothes are tailor made for flaunting. So, get ready to bare some skin, show some leg and pare down. Spring is here.

SPORTSWEAR CHIC

From ballet to baseball, many designers took their inspiration from sports and athletics. To wit: anoraks at Moschino, leggings at Marni, hoodies at DKNY and ballet sweaters at Vera Wang. But don't think of this trend as a reason to go from workout to work without some tweaking. While the look is chic and made to show off a toned body, it's not simply thrown together. Leggings are layered with body-conscious tanks or tees and looser tunics, all of which are often held closely to the body with a waist-cinching belt. Chunky heels complete the look, which was shown for both day and evening. Loosely fitting track pants were paired with shimmering anoraks for a more relaxed take on this look, while Marc Jacobs' casual but chic tee shirt dresses are some of the season's most versatile. Donna Karan channeled the boys of summer and 20s-era tennis players with her logo-splashed baseball jacket and pleated miniskirts and boxy jackets, respectively. Miniskirts and short shorts are important. But the overall look, while decidedly young, can be adapted by almost anyone. If you're more conservative, forego the short shorts in favor of cropped leggings. The key piece that defines the look is the anorak. Top it over a long tee and skinny pants and you've mastered the trend.

PRETTY FLORALS

Spring is often a season when designers turn to nature for their inspiration, showing floral prints on everything from dresses to jackets to pants. This season brings a different twist, however, in that much of the use of florals is as three-dimensional ornamentation. Puffy rosettes adorn pumps by Manolo Blahnik and evening dresses by Marc Jacobs, Rodarte and Thakoon. Roses and peonies crafted of tulle, chiffon and silk, spill from hems of dresses, are draped down bodices or are crafted as sleeves. Flowing, airy fabrics make this one of the most romantic trends to come down the runway in some time, and the 3-D florals are a refreshing and glamorous departure from the usual evening fare of black, black and more black.



The look is ladylike and lovely, but fashionista, beware. If not done judiciously, you run the risk of looking like a runaway from the Red Queen's garden in Alice in Wonderland. Christian Dior and Chloe showed some of the prettiest monochromatic dresses with just a touch of floral embellishment. But these are not just evening primroses. For day, there are floral-printed blouses, dresses and sweaters that are reminiscent of an English garden. Unless you're head over heels for the look, opt for separates. For example, pair a floral blouse with a tailored black pant, and cut the sweetness by keeping accessories simple. Or, capture the look by pinning a bold rosette to the shoulder of a jacket or the waistband of a slouchy trouser if you're faint of heart but adore the flowers.

FUTURE PERFECT

Metallics, A-line silhouettes and high-tech fabrics abound this spring. Perhaps it's a backlash from fall's many pretty offerings, but designers looked towards a minimalist future this spring. The trend is all about women in power, if not about women as robots. Nicolas Ghesquiere for Balenciaga showed slim metallic pants with black

jackets with plastic shoulder insets. Also from Ghesquiere were gold metallic leggings and silver and gold tunics. The look is definitely space age, but not everyone wants to go around mimicking C3PO. Calvin Klein, Martin Margiela and Jill Sander showed some of the most wearable takes on the trend. Crisp black and white, sharp silhouettes and pale leggings under beautifully constructed jackets capture its essence without making one look like a Hollywood extra. If you like the look, opt for lean pants, tailored suits, menswear-influences a la Ralph Lauren, and a touch of metallic for a crisp, modern and more realistic take on the runway version.

TAKING SHAPE

Nothing says spring fashion like a perfect dress. It's easy to throw on in the morning and it can take you from the office to dinner with merely a freshening of your makeup. This season, dresses are ubiquitous, with designers channeling every decade from the 60s to the future. From baby dolls to grownup femme fatale to romantic heroine, designers sent their models tripping, vamping or gliding down the runways in some of the best dresses we've seen in years.

A departure from previous seasons is the trapeze dress. Whether it's sharply geometric like those from Marni or Fendi, or more loosely flowing like the incredibly beautiful evening minis at Ferragamo and Givenchy, the look is newsworthy and flattering on most women. Hemlines range from floor length to barely legal. When it is done in layers of flowing chiffon, the look is ephemeral, regardless of skirt length. However, if you feel you still have to work on those quads, but love the look of a mini trapeze dress, pair it with skinny pants or leggings. Or, opt for the trapeze shape in a jacket or coat. It's a new silhouette and one that can be adapted to a variety of looks.

KEEP UP THE REPS

Skin, skin and more skin were apparent on most of the runways. Flowing fabrics that hinted at the shape and tone of the body underneath had us wishing we'd been more diligent in the gym this winter. As hemlines on shorts, dresses and pants soared to new heights, it became apparent that the focus was definitely on legs. Sexy shoes, whether sharp-heeled or chunky, drew further attention to legs.

Spring is traditionally a season to come out from under wraps and, while this season only the boldest and most fit will strut in short shorts, most of us will live in tees, cropped pants and miniskirts.

If you've been remiss this winter, and missed a few too many workouts, it's not too late to redeem yourself and your quads. Hit the gym and start pumping. You'll be glad you did when you check out the spring 2007 fashion offerings.



MELODY LESSER has an extensive background in magazine writing and has contributed to nationally known publications including Glamour, Bride's, Harper's Bazaar and Women's Wear Daily. She has also written for newspapers and radio as well as several internet sites. She is best known for her work covering the fashion, jewelry, and health and fitness industries.

Philadelphia area readers may recognize her work from BUCKS, Philadelphia STYLE and TIMES Philadelphia Magazines. A native New Yorker who transplanted to the area a dozen years ago, Melody first worked with Jami as the senior editor and writer for PHILLY HEALTH & FITNESS Magazine and is thrilled to be working with her again. Melody resides in Montgomery County with her husband, Charles Riess, daughters Emily and Victoria and several furry and feathered friends.