

Russian Dressing

Fall Into the Season With Reminders of Russia, Basic Black and Comfortable, Laid-Back Looks

By Angela Ambrosini

After a summer of audacious color, embellished sequined tops and a safari of wild accents, the fashion palette is being wiped clean this season. Designers have left behind a mist of Bohemian-inspired themes as they rethink and recreate the flawless, black silhouette.

With an emphasis on the color black, swaying overcoats and layers of tantalizing color, this season is being defined as the Russian era. Outlined with emperor jackets and high-collared shirts emulating Victorian and Imperialistic styles, this trend is a fitting foreword to the imminent days of winter. Faux fur, lace and ribbons add a delicate touch.

"This season, you will notice more of an avant-garde look [than you saw in summer styles] — a style that is more



Kathy Willens/AP

Inflated Look: 'Balloon' pants make a statement

covered up and sophisticated, all without looking like you tried so hard," says Amanda Doll, a personal shopper and stylist for Girlshop. "Less is definitely more this season."

As the runways flaunt long, balloon-like black attire, the focal point remains the worn-out and recycled look. Laid-back clothes with unfinished hems, wrinkled fabrics and a striking vintage appeal are still mainstays.

For women, ethnic styles are residually strong, with natural fabrics and colors that include plenty of metallic, which is seen often in belts — a retro 1980s look that Madonna fans will enjoy. To please those more in tune with 1970s style, some traces of flower power still exist.

For the fall, Paul Hamill, a designer and owner of Nigel Hamill New York City, says he's creating big, cozy, belted cardigans in Mongolian cashmere that are two-toned reversible, with a drop-shoulder and a dolman sleeve — kind of like a bathrobe. He's also introducing a Peruvian alpaca — a chunky number with a generous '70s collar (think "Starsky and Hutch").

"I'm continuing our wrap-and-tie sweater, which can be worn seven, eight, nine ways and counting, in the cashmere, the alpaca and an Italian

merino. These have evolved with little details and textures to set them apart," Hamill says.

Unleashing the curvy black dress with a velvet blazer can easily set the mood. Mix-and-matched pinstripes and subdued floral prints are an easy way to convey the "unexpected" look of the season. Short, knitted sweaters; high- and lace-collared Victorian shirts; and gypsy-like chiffon dresses are more items to add to your shopping list. Knee-high boots, in suede and/or with fur, are an elegant detail to make your wardrobe all the more complete. Another important element this season is extravagant accessories that add a refined, ornate look to new pieces or those you already own.

For men, the approach into autumn is all about comfort and relaxation. Sporting vintage, wide-legged trousers, carpenter pants and a traditional button-down shirt, men can look ready for the season. This fall, there is also an emphasis on polished and distinct styles, without having to recreate your entire wardrobe. Double-breasted suits varied with clever vintage finds can convey a more mature attitude that's still sleek.

"We have a dusty color palette, allowing the style to be much more refined," says DKNY men's designer Ana Montan. "We are becoming more sophisticated and fabric conscious. Men as well as women like that soft feel against their body. Therefore, the vintage look will be over the top this season — worn, embellished and comfortable."

The season's pop colors, which are used smartly to create a layered effect, are purple and orange, according to



Jennifer Graylock/AP

Vintage Touch: Completes the look

Montan. They are deep shades that signify seamlessly rich styles without any effort.

The peacoat is also making its way back this season, along with timeless tees. Slouchy, untucked shirts are the most stylish way for men to make a "GQ" statement. ■

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