

Malls & Mainstreets

The Farmington Observer

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Sunday, March 5, 2000

Handbags are all the rage for spring and summer

Well girls, if there's one place to put your money this season, it's in the bag.

Specifically, a new handbag. Purse are all the rage this season. And, rather than there being a must-have element or design trend, there's something for everyone.

While Kate Spade has created preppy colors, like baby blue and pastel pink, chic again in her purses, Donna Karan has reinvented the lady-like clutch in faux crocodile and snake skin.

Although a variety of elements are making this season's purses interesting and exciting, texture is probably the most important.

Beading, one texture alternative, adds romance to daytime dressing.

Animal print on backpacks, on the other hand, brings new spirit to college campuses. One designer that went strong with animal print was Nine West. Their square totes in leopard, pony and cow prints have a fresh look for day or evening dressing.

Other texture trends to look out for include floral embellishments, sequins, embroidery and straw.

While straw bags have been around for ages, designers are making them interesting for today's woman. One example can be seen at Tender, a women's clothing boutique in downtown Birmingham. The store's straw bags by Lulu Guinness scream unique.

"This season is about adding interest via accessories," says Tender's co-owner Cheryl Dusak of the trend. "When wearing a pair of black cropped pants and a colorful cashmere sweater, pair it together with a patterned purse. This season is not about black," says Dusak.

Color is a huge consideration this season.

Just in time for spring, designers are unleashing a variety of bags in a rainbow of colors, as well as patterns and shapes, which are spectacular enough to make anyone's arm ache for a new clutch.

When it comes to making a statement with a bag, how better to do it than with color? Bright red, citrus orange and sunshine yellow are hot picks, if you are looking to introduce color into your wardrobe.

Choose one that is strong enough to make an entrance, but not bold as to overwhelm your outfit. Such vibrancy works well with slinky bags that easily drip over the shoulders.

Size and function also have arose as important handbag elements.

After a season of small styling, totes have appeared again, taking on the size of any load, even a trip to the beach.

Emphasizing fashion and function, Lord & Taylor's own label has a few semi-structured, mid-size handbags designed to take you just about anywhere.

Especially notable are the retailer's Bohemian-striped canvas bag and pastel cotton tote with just the perfect amount of burling.

Need a look that's practical, hip and 21st century all at the same time?

For the die-hard user of technology, there are a slew of bags with cell phone compartments.

And, if embellishment isn't your style, and the new twist on purses doesn't feel right, there's still lots of micro-fiber bags out there.

Across the board, the variations are endless. So for a quick update to your wardrobe, consider one of the new handbags of the season. The bottom line: from soccer mom to young professional, every woman can find a place for a new purse in her wardrobe.

Please send your style and shopping questions to Cari at OERealDeal@aol.com



Elements: Christian Dior's Malice handbag in golden yellow crocodile brings together texture and color.

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Anticipating spring: Saks Fifth Avenue's runway show of the St. John spring collection, the first fashion show of the season, drew an excited crowd. Holding their front row seats are, left to right, Janne Schlitter of Bloomfield Hills, Dotti Howe of Birmingham, Kelly Gustafsson of Birmingham, and Margaret Gressle of Troy. Many of the show's attendees donned pink and other spring colors, showing they're more than ready for the new season. A benefit for The Community House in Birmingham, the St. John show presented classic looks in vibrant colors.

STAFF PHOTOS BY ELIZABETH CARDELLA

Itching for spring

First local fashion show of the season packs in pastels and tropical hues

By NICOLE STAFFORD
SPECIAL EDITOR
nstafford@ocm.homecomm.net

as long," said Dotti Howe, of Birmingham. "We need cheering up."

Color aside, St. John's spring line, like other designer collections, showed classic feminine details. Among them bows at the cuff and on colorful shoes, three-quarter-length sleeves reminiscent of Jackie Onassis, scalloped edges and loads of sequins, beads and pearls on both day and evening wear.

"Very feminine without being frou-frou, without being girlish," Turner said of the collection. "And lady-like, even when casual."

The word casual did seem to enter St. John's vocabulary in a way it hasn't before. St. John is best known for making quality knit suiting, but denim jackets and jeans in pink and black and blueberry and ivory with backpacks, mesh pockets and silver clasps made an appearance midway through the show.

Turner said St. John is probably making casual sportswear because we're headed towards refining our casual Friday attire. "It's that dress-up casual look," said Turner. That's the next word we're going to get sick of."

Likewise, St. John's evening wear

will include a few sportswear pieces, sexy halter tops and halter-top dresses that revealed the back. Several other evening garments showed skin through sheer black fabric at the bodice, shoulders and side hem lines.

"Everyone loves the way St. John clothes fit, but for years people have thought of the clothes as mature," said Cheryl Hall-Lindsay, special events director for Saks Fifth Avenue and the show's host. "I think that's going to change after tonight. (The collection) is lady-like and sophisticated, but fun with a twist. It's young. It's sexy."

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The audience seemed to embrace the flood of spring and summer shades, and even those dressed in darker colors said they planned to wear bright colors this season. "Everything's been gray, blue and black for a long time," said Hall-Lindsay.

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Upcoming fashion shows

Jacobsen's debuts Celine by Michael Kors

When: noon (luncheon), 12:45 p.m. (show), Tuesday, March 14
Where: Townsend Hotel in downtown Birmingham
Seating: Limited, call (248) 644-6900, ext. 585

Saks Fifth Avenue shows
Anne Klein 2000 for benefit

When: 11 a.m. (brunch), 11:30 a.m. (show), Thursday, March 16
Where: Saks Fifth Avenue, the Somerset Collection in Troy, Anne Klein Boutique, second floor

Tickets: \$25-35 to benefit Child Abuse and Neglect Council of Oakland County, call (248) 332-7173

St. Patrick's Day spring fashion show for benefit

When: Strolling buffet and auction begin at 7 p.m., fashion show follows, Friday, March 17

Where: Somerset Collection in Troy, South, main entrance

Tickets: \$85 to benefit On My Own of Michigan, call (248) 649-3739

Somerset Collection shows
spring collections

When: 1 p.m. Saturday, March 18
Where: Somerset Collection in Troy, South, South Rotunda
Seating: Limited, but open to the public



Citrus hues: A classic St. John suit looks fresh and vibrant in a tropical lime shade.

JEWELRY DESIGNER VISITS

Jewelry designer Laura Gibson brings her collection to Jacobson's stores: March 9 at Rochester Hills store and March 10 at downtown Birmingham store, 11 a.m.-6 p.m., Fine Jewelry.

ESCADE STOCK SHOW

View Escade's spring and summer collection at Neiman Marcus, the Somerset Collection in Troy, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Designer Sportswear, third floor.

SATURDAY, MARCH 11

MOTHER-OF-THE-BRIDE SHOW

Jacobson's at Laurel Park Place in Livonia holds two fashion shows highlighting the latest looks for the mother-of-the-bride, 10:30 a.m. and 2 p.m. Fashion also may be seen in a trunk show, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.

TANHARI TRUNK SHOW

View Tanhari's spring collection of suiting at Neiman Marcus, the Somerset Collection in Troy, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Galleria, third floor.

SUNDAY, MARCH 12

PUNCH AND JUDY SHOW

Livonia Mall, 7 Mile and Middlebelt roads, hosts a puppet performance of Punch and Judy for children and families, 1 p.m., Value City court.

ADDED ATTRACTIONS

on March 7, call (248) 614-3347; Escade on March 8, call (248) 614-3366; TSE Surface on March 9, call (248) 643-9000, ext. 247; Tahari, on March 9 and 10, call (248) 643-9000, ext. 401; Jennifer Roberts, on March 10 and 11, call (248) 614-3323; and Michael Kors on March 11, call (248) 614-3347.

THURSDAY, MARCH 9

JONES NEW YORK SHOW

Hudson's, the Somerset Collection in Troy, presents a runway show of spring fashion by Jones New York, 7 p.m., Second Floor.

JEWELRY TRUNK SHOW

Roz & Shern, 6536 Telegraph Road in Bloomfield Township, presents a trunk show of M. & J. Sevitt jewelry through March 11, 10 a.m.-8 p.m. on Thursday and 10 a.m.-4 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. For details, call (248) 855-8956.

THURSDAY, MARCH 9-10

TRANSFORMATIONS - A Holistic Spa, 83060 Northwest Highway in West Bloomfield, holds free, introductory lectures about Buteyko breathing and their workshops, 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. For more information, call (248) 638-3700.

TUESDAY, MARCH 7

WARDROBE WORKSHOP

Saks Fifth Avenue, the Somerset Collection in Troy, hosts several wardrobe planning events with designer representatives through March 11. For times, personal appointments and locations for: Lafayette 148

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8

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