

The WWD List

Fall's Mixed Palette

Top 10 Pantone colors chosen by designers for fall 2007.

The palette for designer collections for fall might look like a clash of colors, but the Pantone Color Institute believes the results will be harmonious. "When you see the colors in front of you, you realize that, yes, there is some complexity," said Leatrice Eiseman, executive director of Pantone, which has provided its ranking of designers' top 10 color choices for the season. "The complexity is what makes things far more interesting, because designers are mixing different looks — the variety is giving designers the opportunity to be more creative." Eiseman noted that mixing vibrant colors together with more traditional tones gives an energy to fall collections, but keeps things soft and mysterious as well. "Mixing colors will also let consumers blend tradition with the unexpected." — Cecily Hall

1		<p>PANTONE 19-1557 CHILI PEPPER Chosen by 16.7 percent of designers</p> <p>"We all know red is out there," said Eiseman of Pantone. The momentum really began last year, thanks in part to celebrities and organizations utilizing it as a primary color in its marketing campaigns (think iPod, Motorola and the Gap (Product)Red campaign — a percentage of sales go directly to the Global Fund, to help eliminate AIDS in Africa). "It's a symbolic color, one of power," Eiseman said. She noted another importance to the number-one color: the introduction of food and spice into fashion. "If designers are going for a Latin or Thai approach, this color is perfect, as it represents fall's spicy side." And, of course, gender-wise, it appeals to men and women. Gustavo Arango opted for a bold red in his collection, saying, "The intensity of the season inspired me — as the temperatures cool and the nights get longer, deeper, richer tones lend a sense of warmth."</p>
2		<p>PANTONE 19-4316 STARGAZER 13.6 percent</p> <p>Designers who have worked versions of Stargazer into their fall collections include Yigal Azrouël, Laura Poretzky for Abaeté and Jeff Mahshie for Chalken who was inspired by "the evolution of the dark palette of last fall, combined with the bold brights from spring." Stargazer is fall's answer to navy. Eiseman noted the shade carried a teal quality to it, giving it a quieter take on the color. Because of the teal, "This could also be considered fall's homage to turquoise, but it goes into a much deeper direction," she said.</p>
3		<p>PANTONE 17-0636 GREEN MOSS 12.2 percent</p> <p>This is yet another color that represents a social awareness — it's reflective of the environment, Eiseman pointed out. "People understand green much more these days. This is a sophisticated version of the color, and it has a subtle, earthy tone." It's also another color that mixes well with others: Eiseman matched it against Cashmere Rose, Dusk and Chili Pepper, as examples. Kai Milla's ideal mix for fall included neutrals accented by Green Moss, and Carmen Marc Valvo's prominent colors included warm neutrals mixed with purple and Green Moss, as well.</p>
4		<p>PANTONE 18-2929 PURPLE WINE 11.7 percent</p> <p>"Purple Wine is one of my personal favorites," said Eiseman. "Purple really is the most creative color. Not too long ago, people were iffy about the color, but today, even purple suits are fun to wear." This particular version is a marriage between purple and merlot — hence, the name. Designers are offering plenty of variations on purple, such as Tracy Reese, whose color philosophy is to "use black as an accessory and layer rich and vibrant color around it." She has opted for versions of Purple Wine, which include magenta and orchid. And Zac Posen's signature "deep plum tones" mirror that of Purple Wine, as well. Posen's philosophy for fall: "clean, charming and strong femininity."</p>
5		<p>PANTONE 16-2215 CASHMERE ROSE 10.6 percent</p> <p>This version of pink for fall is more of the unexpected, particularly because people may not think of using it in a season like fall. "The name comes from that gorgeous cashmere sweater you love to wear in the fall," said Eiseman. "There isn't a color in this ranking that it doesn't work with — it's that sweater you can wear with everything." Catherine Malandrino's theme, "Schiaparelli's Shocking Pink meets carefree Zizi Jeanmaire," incorporates colors such as Cashmere Rose, violet and glossy white.</p>
6		<p>PANTONE 17-3812 DUSK 9.9 percent</p> <p>The color gray has made a strong statement the past few seasons, especially for 2006, when it was considered a neutral color. "This version is more complex," said Eiseman. "These interesting undertones of violet make it richer — it's not your same old gray." Inspired by "references from the Renaissance," Douglas Hannant has worked with a rich, sophisticated and quiet palette of colors, which included toned-down berry colors, such as blueberry and raspberry — his take on the Dusk Pantone favorite for fall.</p>
7		<p>PANTONE 18-1354 BURNT OCHRE 8.2 percent</p> <p>This is fall's answer to orange, which is a color that has also gained a wider acceptance in recent seasons. "Orange really is a classic for fall, but the difference here is that people can use it with different kinds of color combinations, like with Stargazer or Shale Green," said Eiseman. Nanette Lepore is mixing this color with plum and charcoal, noting that her inspiration was her own home: "I've been decorating and was inspired by rich and warm tones."</p>
8		<p>PANTONE 16-6116 SHALE GREEN 6.0 percent</p> <p>"The homage to environmentalism continues," Eiseman pointed out. "And this version of green is more mysterious — it's a perfect time of year to show off its darker, murkier side. The shade is ideal for someone who really prefers having a blue or grey tone quality to their green." Reem Acra stated a color favorite for fall is green: "It can complement so many skin tones," she said. And Cynthia Rowley, whose inspiration was the aurora borealis, has thrown streaks of the color into her collection, as well.</p>
9		<p>PANTONE 15-0751 LEMON CURRY 5.6 percent</p> <p>This is yet another example of spice being mixed into the color themes for fall. "Curry is a very strong spice, and the color is a very strong influence," noted Eiseman. She also noted a strong combination: Stargazer mixed with Lemon Curry. "It gives off an exotic feeling." This is a prominent color for Michael Vollbracht for Bill Blass this season — his other favorites include dull maroon, parrot green and mints mixed with gray and brown.</p>
10		<p>PANTONE 19-1116 CARAFE 5.5 percent</p> <p>Brown has been a color that took awhile to be accepted, but people continue to experiment with versions of it — "people have invested in brown, so it makes sense to see it so popular. It's a great background color," said Eiseman. She pointed out that the tone adds a rich contrast against a lighter, airier color, such as Cashmere Rose. Designers such as Ralph Lauren, Michael Kors and Badgley Mischka have all incorporated brown into their fall collections. And one of Kai Milla's aforementioned "neutrals" includes espresso brown — her version of Pantone's Carafe.</p>