

FASHION FOCUS



Femininity Key To Season's Best Looks

(NAPSA)—Today's clothes and accessories are feminine and fresh without being frivolous. Consumers should look for soft, sheer and flowing fashions in floral prints, colorful stripes, fringe, toile, ruffles and—the season's biggest trend—lace.

"The wide variety of options is really what makes this season so exciting," says T.J. Maxx fashion consultant Laura McDowell. "The clothes are overwhelmingly romantic, stylish yet extremely wearable. Adding one or two key pieces is an easy way to create a thoroughly modern wardrobe."

Color is the easiest way to update your look. All white is refreshingly simple, a look that captures the sheer essence of spring. Black-and-white is classic, and still one of the best ways to add sophistication. Once again, color is appropriate in vibrant greens, pinks and reds. Pair solids with gorgeous florals or bold graphics.

Lace is easily the fabric of choice. White lace, in particular, is delicate and ultra-feminine. It's everywhere—dresses, blouses, jeans—alone or used as a trim.

Separate but Equal

Mix-and-match separates play a critical role this fashion season. Blouses are big; flowing sleeves and sheer ruffles dominate the soft peasant styles. Pants are wide-legged, often cropped; stripes and prints update the look. A good rule to follow: mix big, oversized pieces with body-hugging counterparts. For example, pair a form-fitting sweater with loose, printed capris for a funky weekend outfit that can go just about anywhere.

The safari look is versatile and fun to wear, especially tropical "palm tree" prints; combine a ruffled print blouse with a sheer, flouncy skirt for the ultimate in feminine chic. Best of all, these pieces mix beautifully with basic wardrobe staples—such as a simple white shirt or tailored khaki pants.

Accessorizing 2002

Today's accessories are more sophisticated and feminine than in previous years. Indulge in "arts



Lace, denim and toile play important roles in this year's fashion scene.

and crafts" detailing such as leather trim, ribbons, flowers, bows, netting and beading.

"The importance of accessories cannot be overstated," says McDowell. "It's the intricate little details that really make a difference. Invest in pieces that emphasize your own particular style—a romantic toile bag or a wide, studded belt. These accessories complement spring's low-key styles and, quite often, are the key to making an outfit work."

Five Must-Haves for Spring

1. Something white, such as a beautiful lace dress; sleek, contoured coat; or soft peasant blouse.
2. Wide-leg pants, such as printed capris or embellished denim jeans.
3. Ruffled blouse, especially in a safari or floral print.
4. Anything toile...handbags, pants, even hats.
5. Open-toe, lace-up or lucite-heeled sandals.

T.J. Maxx is an off-price retailer with more than 700 stores throughout the country. The chain sells brand-name, designer merchandise and accessories at prices up to 60 percent less than department and specialty stores. To find the nearest location, call 1-800-2-TJ-MAXX or visit www.tjmaxx.com.