

The WWD List

Spring Blooms

The top 10 Pantone colors chosen by New York designers for spring 2008.

The outlook is bright for spring — at least color-wise, according to Pantone Color Institute. But there also are touches of softer, more floral-like shades. “For us, this survey is always full of surprises, so once the colors are finalized, it’s interesting to me to see how many designers are going in the same direction for the season — and what colors are representing that direction,” said Leatrice Eiseman, executive director of Pantone. “You can have such fun with a palette like this,” she added. How does Pantone go about naming these colors? There is a team of experts who work with Eiseman in determining each name — as one can imagine, it’s quite a rigorous process, especially when there are roughly 2,000 colors in the system and each name needs to be unique and evocative of the shade it is describing. — Cecily Hall

1		<p>PANTONE 19-4049 SNORKEL BLUE Chosen by 16.2 percent of designers surveyed</p> <p>Topping designers’ palettes this spring is a deep, sophisticated version of the color blue. “I was surprised to find such a strong color leading the pack,” said Eiseman. “I knew there would be quite a variety, but I was surprised to see it up against the yellow — the top two colors really complement each other so well.” Snorkel Blue can be used classically; “but it can also be used in fun prints or patterns, but as a base color by itself, too. It’s dependable, but it allows for a lot of accessorizing.” Zac Posen, Tracy Reese and Wichy Hassan for Miss Sixty all worked with variations of Snorkel Blue for spring. Akiko Ogawa stated that a favorite color combination of hers was “snow white and brilliant blue, because the contract of fresh and clear white with blue makes me feel relaxed, elegant and graceful.”</p>
2		<p>PANTONE 14-0852 FREESIA 15.6 percent</p> <p>“Yellow is the color of optimism, and don’t we all need that for springtime?” asked Eiseman. She noted that combining Freesia with colors like Snorkel Blue is a great contrast for an outfit. “Yellow has been tricky over the years for hesitant consumers. But today, there’s more of an openness about the use of the color — especially with accessories like sandals, shoes or shorts.... It doesn’t need to be worn directly under the face.” Betsey Johnson, whose color palette is always a mix of the boldest of brights, used accents of Freesia, along with lime green and an assortment of hot pinks in her collection for spring. Charlotte Ronson indicated her signature colors for spring to be indigo denim blue and mustard yellow, her version of Freesia.</p>
3		<p>PANTONE 12-0435 DAIQUIRI GREEN 12.2 percent</p> <p>This color was a favorite among designers, such as Y & Kei, Elie Tahari and Yigal Azrouël. In fact, Azrouël, whose color philosophy is “spring is always about freshness and crispness,” worked with several shades of acidic and citrus colors like Daiquiri Green in his gowns for the season. “Green has gone beyond just a trend color — it represents eco-awareness,” said Eiseman. “This color was really on hiatus for a while but came back in the mid-Nineties, thanks to environmental issues, like rain forest preservation. Designers are affected by issues like this, too.” Earth-tone greens, she noted, have been popular each season as of late.</p>
4		<p>PANTONE 16-0924 CROISSANT 11 percent</p> <p>Who can resist a name like Croissant? “It’s a lovely, warm, neutral shade that’s not bland at all,” said Eiseman. She also pointed out Croissant is a great base color that can be used against other tones in the top 10, like Pink Mist, Spring Crocus and Cantaloupe. “And if you want to stay basic, put it with Snorkel Blue,” she added. “It’s colors like this that are staples to anyone’s wardrobe and can be worn anytime.” Tia Cibani (for Ports 1961) was inspired by a trip she took to Africa, and she indicated her big “must-have” fashion item for spring is “a deep-back, cropped jacket in safari color.”</p>
5		<p>PANTONE 18-1652 ROCOCO RED 9.8 percent</p> <p>Moving forward from fall’s number-one color, Chili Pepper, is this season’s answer to red, Rococco Red. “It’s a brighter version, perfect for springtime,” said Eiseman. “Red is going to continue onward into future seasons, too — the excitement level is always there, but it’s always a classic.” With the use of reds in cosmetics and handbags, the color will only help to accentuate accessories and complexions. Dennis Basso mixed hints of Rococco Red, along with black and white, into his gowns for spring, while Reem Acra worked her version of red, along with olive green and dahlia purple, into her playful day dresses.</p>
6		<p>PANTONE 14-0000 SILVER GRAY 9.7 percent</p> <p>“This particular gray is the spring surprise color,” said Eiseman. “Though it is a neutral color, we’re seeing lots of sheen, shimmer and glitz here.” She pointed out this particular gray complements metallics in bags, shoes and jewelry. “This is also an ideal, dependable color against the brighter colors in the palette.” Carmen Marc Valvo’s spring inspiration came from his vacation to the Maldives. He combined warm pastel shades with shots of metallic, such as Silver Gray. And Peter Som’s color philosophy for the season, “clean cool colors with hot accents,” worked ideally with variations of Silver Gray against tomato reds and lemon yellows, for example.</p>
7		<p>PANTONE 17-3020 SPRING CROCUS 8.5 percent</p> <p>Since the crocus is one of the first flowers of the season to bloom, it seemed only fitting to name this color Spring Crocus. Designers such as David Rodriguez and Nanette Lepore — whose signature colors include fuchsia and curry — worked this into their playful dresses and shorts sets for the season. Those seeking out spring after a long winter will love this color, Eiseman predicted. “Any person who’s discovered a color like this, just has to have some of it,” said Eiseman. “Whether a pattern or print, it’s a wonderful, wearable color.” Noting this is a variation of fuchsia with a strong undertone of pink, Eiseman pointed out that plenty of cosmetics will complement the shade, too.</p>
8		<p>PANTONE 15-1239 CANTALOUPE 7.3 percent</p> <p>This season’s answer to orange, Eiseman said, is a “nurturing, delicious color that does beautiful things next to the skin, especially with a summer tan.” Though brighter oranges have been problematic in the past, “This kind of an orange is soft and appealing, it reaches out to you.” She pointed out it can mix well with browns, like Croissant, or with brighter colors, such as Daiquiri Green. Lela Rose, who worked with variations of Cantaloupe in her spring skirts, said her color philosophy “is to mix bright colors in many ways but always to relate them back to a neutral. The neutral allows your eye to rest and the other colors to be even more vivid.”</p>
9		<p>PANTONE 13-2805 PINK MIST 6.1 percent</p> <p>Pink Mist really mixes nicely with other softer, more neutral tones in the Top 10, including Silver Gray, Daiquiri Green and Croissant, to show off classic, preppy combinations. “Put this color in a shirt with a pair of shorts in a Croissant color, and it’s just a knockout combination,” said Eiseman. “Pink Mist is just sort of the homage to pink in the springtime — it’s a softened, cooler shade, too. To not use pink in the springtime is almost sacrilegious.” Laura Proetzky for Abaeté, who was inspired by the colors of Miami Art Deco, worked with Pink Mist tones against blacks and sand-colored tones. And Johnson noted her fashion “must-have” item for spring would be “a pink sparkle tulle tutu dress.”</p>
10		<p>PANTONE 16-0639 GOLDEN OLIVE 3.6 percent</p> <p>“Here is another classic,” said Eiseman. “Though people may think autumn when they see this, I think its longevity spans all seasons — and I think designers would agree.” The color combines well with others in the Top 10, including Pink Mist and even Snorkel Blue — “What great bookends we have at either side of this palette,” she mused. James Coviello’s color philosophy for spring, “warm and earthy neutrals with bright contrast,” worked well when combining Golden Olive tones with brighter pinks in his collection.</p>