

ACCESSORIES

Newness in Accessories Coming From Young Designers, Buyers Say

- In reviewing the fall season, buyers noted that innovation – particularly in handbags – is coming from brands establishing themselves.

BY MISTY WHITE SIDELL

Accessories for fall continue many of the same trends as the past few seasons, while displaying the category's pricing evolution, buyers said.

Shoes exhibited similar commercial trends to those introduced for spring, including boots and party shoes, while handbags displayed the most innovation within the strengthening midtier market – where new brands offer high-quality, fashion-forward designs at retail prices averaging \$300 to \$900.

"We definitely saw that the trends weren't as call-out as they have been in previous seasons," said Cassie Smart, Matchesfashion.com's buying manager for shoes and handbags, of the fall season. "They've become quite diluted and transitional from spring 2018. So we are still seeing the return to the boot and emotional glamour shoes."

Boots, according to Moda Operandi's vice president for nonapparel, Jodi Kaplan, "remain a year-round staple for us and are really driving our footwear business."

Saks Fifth Avenue's senior vice president and fashion director Roopal Patel, among others, felt that the season's trend for



western boots could prove a big hit. "The big western influence in shoes is great – we saw it at Calvin Klein, at Fendi, at Isabel Marant. It's a great statement accessory," she said.

Kaplan noted that sneakers continue to be strong sellers, while Smart and Net-a-porter's global buying director Elizabeth von der Goltz said party shoes are also proving popular. Such designs

– embellished with feathers, crystals or metallic finishes – were seen at Attico, Balmain and Gianvito Rossi.

"Shoes right now are emotional," Smart said. "They're either very glamorous or very daytime, there is not so much in-between. I think consumers are investing in quite strong fashion point-of-view shoes – shoes are almost being looked at in the same way that ready-to-wear is looked at."

English designer Alessandra Rich launched shoes at her fall presentation, a debut that was lauded by multiple buyers.

Additional callouts included Loewe's new rendition of its Gate bag and Givenchy's slouch boots and GV3 handbag design, both created under Clare Waight Keller's new creative tenure at the house.

Prada's fluorescent-tinged accessories for fall also received high marks from buyers. "I really think they are striking an emotional chord for something that's a bit retrospective and forward-looking at the same time. It's fun, great for our trunk-show client," said Kaplan.

Auxiliary accessory categories like hats, gloves, belts and scarves have begun to thrive as well. Von der Goltz noted that sunglasses, particularly those with small-scale frames, continue to do well, as well as costume statement jewelry.

Kaplan has made a point to invest in belts. "I really believe in belts as a business and it's something we always invest in – I think it's a point of differentiation."

Patel observed: "A lot of designers were

having scarves tied around models' heads like at Balenciaga and Valentino. It starts an important talking point about diversity on the runway and the need to address different cultures and ethnicities."

In the bag category, midtier labels like Staud, Wandler and Carolina Santo Domingo continue to do well. "I think right now we are seeing such an exciting moment where there is an important focus on individuality. We are starting to see women personalize with some more of these under-the-radar handbag brands that are really fantastic," said Patel.

Added Von der Goltz: "I think a lot of new independent handbag designers are coming out with really great quality designs – they are different from the contemporary designers of the past. Our customers love this newness." She particularly enjoyed new bag designs by Nanushka and Trademark.

Smart said: "In bags – there weren't that many bags on the runway, but we did see some pioneering bag and shapes. We are seeing more engagement outside the bigger brands."

She noted that Marine Serre's accessories – both shoes and bags – are performing well at retail. "We picked her up for spring 2018 and in the first week, have seen such a strong customer response. When you have someone predominantly known as a ready-to-wear designer performing across different categories, it's really interesting," Smart said.

That said, Von der Goltz noted: I still think [big] brands are important to people, they love a designer brand. When you touch a Loewe leather bag, it just feels incredible. One of my favorites this current season was made from woven leather and we had to reorder it because the look and feel were worth it to people."

BUSINESS

Shiseido Invests in Violet Grey

- For Shiseido, the deal is an e-commerce play.

BY ALLISON COLLINS

Shiseido has made an investment in luxury beauty retailer Violet Grey.

"We have to gain our own capabilities, we have to study more, and that's exactly why we have decided to look into an e-commerce company Violet Grey," Shiseido president and chief executive officer Masahiko Uotani said in a presentation about

Shiseido's three-year corporate strategy in early March. "We decided to take a minority stake in this e-commerce company Violet Grey so we would be able to gain these e-commerce capabilities on our own."

A spokesman for Shiseido Americas issued a follow-up statement to WWD: "Shiseido Americas has taken a limited, minority interest in Violet Grey Inc., an online luxury beauty retailer with whom several of our brands do business. Violet Grey's unique approach to prestige beauty is well-aligned with Shiseido's e-commerce

strategy. This investment offers us the opportunity to grow our existing presence on VG's online platform, and to gain from Violet Grey's unique insights into the luxury beauty market."

Terms of the deal were not disclosed, but industry sources indicated the investment was between \$5 million and \$10 million, and that Violet Grey does around \$5 million in sales.

Violet Grey, which was founded by Cassandra Grey, sells an edited assortment of products from brands including Ill Skin, Aquis, Byredo, Foreo, Hourglass, La Prairie, Tom Ford and others. The brands are sold online and through Violet Grey's storefront in Los Angeles. Grey did not immediately

respond to a request for comment about the Shiseido investment.

Industry sources indicated in 2017 that Violet Grey was looking for additional funding. That news came around the same time as the business was said to have inked a deal to sell beauty products on Amazon for a commission of between 20 and 30 percent.

Violet Grey is just one of many deals Shiseido has done recently. The business has made a handful of technology acquisitions, including MatchCo and Giaran, as well as a second-skin technology from Olivo Laboratories. Shiseido has also divested operations – including ReVive, which it sold to Tengram Capital, and Zotos, which it sold to Henkel.

BEAUTY

Kilian Hennessy Partners With Urban Dove for Fragrance Workshop

- The brand founder is inviting 12 girls to his New York flagship from the nonprofit organization to experience the world of fragrance.

BY LAYLA ILCHI

Kilian Hennessy is sharing his love of fragrance with Urban Dove, a nonprofit organization that provides young kids with the skills needed to become successful adults.

Teaming with model Constance Jablonski, Hennessy is inviting 12 girls between

the ages of 10 and 12 from Urban Dove to his New York flagship Kilian store Saturday. The girls will receive an introduction to the world of fragrance as they explore Hennessy's store.

"When [Jablonski] approached my wife to see if I would donate my time to Urban Dove to help open the girls' horizons to a different world, I agreed immediately," Hennessy said. "I thought it would be fun for the girls to come to my downtown store and discover Kilian fragrances. I do hope that one of them will fall in love with this world like I did 24 years ago."



The girls will be invited to participate in a series of workshops, like an introduction to the world of fragrance, the business of beauty and a raw ingredient testing. Hennessy is providing samples of his favorite essential oils from raw materials to teach the girls about olfactory families and the ingredients that make up a fragrance.

Jablonski, who has helped Urban Dove organize these kinds of events for three years, wanted to find an activity that would be interesting to young girls.

"It's not easy to always find new activities that can interest the girls; activities that are inspiring, fun, challenging and worth their down time on a Saturday," she said. "I would like them to leave the class having the feeling they really learned something and that they are happy to have come out of their comfort zone to succeed."

Jablonski had previously organized more sports-related events for the organization, like horseback riding, sailing and boxing classes, but wanted to now host an event that introduced the girls to her world of fashion and beauty.

"I want the girls to feel inspired, to see how big the world is and how many opportunities there are for them," she continued. "I love when they leave our events having found a new hobby or wanting to pursue a new dream."