

Fashion Forecast

by Sandra Keiser and Brenda Schweder

Art & craft

Bleached and neutral colors are the story this season, but innovation in both fabric and cut adds vitality to spring fashions.



CENTER STAGE

- ▶ Cropped pants are the main attraction as skirts play a secondary role.
- ▶ Slim shorts end at the knee. Wear them with a blouse and jacket to match their dressier style.
- ▶ Jackets are either fitted and shrunken or loose and billowy. The newest fit has elbow-length sleeves. Complete the look with a belt.
- ▶ Dress silhouettes are deceptively simple: shirtdress, shift, trapeze, babydoll, and empire styles reemerge with artfully crafted darts and seams.

NEUTRAL TERRITORY

The color palette is neutral, often a blur of nude and white or a contrast of black against white.

You'll be safe in a range of hues: ivory, cement, coffee, oyster, khaki, sand, champagne, brown sugar, and sage. Look for soft, pale shades in evening wear as well.



CHUNKY ACCESSORIES

Ground romantic fashion themes with heftier accessories. A wedge or platform shoe keeps a frothy silhouette from floating away. Tone down a frilly look with a big bag, or wear a wide leather belt with a lacy dress. Large cuffs and bangle bracelets are still popular.



JEWELRY FROM NATURE



Look for handcrafted jewelry in quiet colors to parallel clothing's subtle shades. Wood is the main staple, along with shell, pearl, horn, and bone. Other naturals to try: bamboo (also a popular motif), coconut, seeds, kukui nut, rattan, and white coral. Strung on linen, suede, and leather, the look is organic.

PATTERN BEHAVIOR

Thanks to improved technology, try new fabrics such as bamboo and raffia knits; washed silk, cotton, and denim; and fibers that inhibit odors or wrinkling. Piqué, point d'esprit (dotted net lace), crinkled, and pleated fabrics add texture to a simple piece.

Patterns get expressive with screenprinted poetry and photographs. Pay homage to nature with graphic botanicals and handpainted landscapes. Huge roses are printed on dresses, skirts, jeans, tank tops, belts, and shoes. Pick up paisley and polka dots (both classic and free-form splatters) to round out your closet.



CRAFT FARE

Accessories are whimsical, reminiscent of the five-and-dime:

- **YARN** Crochet appears in large beads and corsages or as trim on garments or sandals. Add yarn with pom-poms, tassels, fruit, flowers, and geometric shapes in crayon-box colors. Felted balls carry the polka-dot theme.

- **APPLIQUÉ** Incorporate bow or flower motifs. Or, go cutesy with lambs, chicks, or ducks.

- **WOOD BEADS** Painted or natural beads look fresh, especially in cutouts such as stars and hearts.

- **BEADED BEADS** The sugary sparkle of seed beads embellishes everything from napkin rings to cell-phone charms. Some are elegant, some kitschy.

- **PLASTIC** Big beads are hot. Lucite, Bakelite, and even cheap plastic versions are great options.

- **RIBBON** Tie these concoctions with grosgrain, lace, or silk. String snippets of ribbon as paper-thin spacers, or drape longer pieces free-form or in loops to add extra dimension to necklaces.



DO IT YOURSELF

- ▶ Simple cluster earrings (p. 87) pair well with spring's neutral colors.

- ▶ Scout your local home-improvement store for crafty components such as rubber O-rings or window film (p. 56).

- ▼ For a yarn bracelet, wrap nylon cord around a bangle (p. 60).



JEWELRY LINKS



To see more of the latest jewelry styles, check out:

charmingsam.com

fredflare.com

gslillian.com

patriciacandido.com

shoptwigs.com

vivandingrid.com

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