



Diane von Furstenberg
This page: Cotton jersey Bentley dress, \$445; suede Lucette shoes, \$595. dvf.com.

Haider Ackerman
Opposite page left: Dark grey wool pencil high-waist skirt, \$585, barneys.com; carved black leather belt, \$1,135, net-a-porter.com, coat and sweater, by special order.

Opposite page center: Origami-sleeve cropped wool jacket, \$1,315; wool knit tube skirt, black, \$555; black virgin-wool turtle neck sweater, \$680; aubergine balloon shirt of 61-percent wool, 39-percent silk, \$1,735; and taupe large leather corset belt, \$1,315.

Opposite page right: carved black leather belt, \$1,135, and silk-lined lambskin gloves, \$1,135, both net-a-porter.com; peplum leather jacket, matching slacks, by special order, select Saks Fifth Avenue stores haiderackermann.be.



OUT FOR OXBLOOD:

Dark Hues Cue Royal Glamour

by MICHELE MEYER

This fall, fashion flirts with the dark side. After the forced cheer of summer's clashing brights, pastels and prints, a cool cloud hangs over collections.

Yet moody merlot, plum, raisin, eggplant, grape, graphite, bottle green, espresso and black "are anything but depressing," says Leatrice Eiseman, Pantone Color Institute's executive director and forecaster. "They're rich yet robust, elegant yet mysterious. By darkening hues, they become powerful."

Unlike other autumns, this season's star isn't

black. Instead, dried blood colors saturated the runways of Diane von Furstenberg, Alexander Wang, DKNY, Tommy Hilfiger, Helmut Lang, Sophie Théallet and many others.

"Oxblood is sophisticated: We call it 'Her Royal Highness' because it's aspirational," says Leslie Harrington, Ph.D., executive director of the Color Association. "Like the rest of this timeless and flattering palette, it speaks to our fascination with recent British events—the royal wedding, queen's Diamond Jubilee and Olympics." ▸



Derek Lam
Wine lambskin riding pant,
\$1,995; white leather shell
with black jersey knit back,
\$1,990. dereklam.com



J. Mendel
Plum techno-jersey
V-neck dress with
pleated bodice and
full skirt, \$1,990.
jmendel.com.

Enhancing the opulence are lush fabrics: cashmere, leather, velvet, suede and silk charmeuse. "You can't go wrong investing in those pieces," she says.

What makes classics modern is the way they're paired. Instead of slamming black against jewel-toned blocks (as in the '80s), these ensembles progress monochromatically, from oxblood to eggplant, olive to forest green or smoke to soot.

Sound drab? They're anything but, by juxtaposing sharp shapes and modern materials.

Though both are grape, Haider Ackermann's origami-folded nubby wool peplum jacket and shawl-necked charmeuse blouse excite. So do Derek Lam's inky cable-knit sweater and ankle-grazing chiffon skirt. Quilting, leather trim and asymmetric minis make Proenza Schouler's all-black suits So-ho cool. ▷



7 For All Mankind
High-gloss snake-print leggings, \$259
bloomingdales.com.



Jason Wu
Calf/suede leather boot
with tassel, \$1,195.
net-a-porter.com.



Derek Lam
Wine lambskin cap-sleeve
dress, \$2,850.
dereklam.com



Haider Ackerman
 Concord grape jacket, \$2,945; black leather trousers, \$2,495; black corset belt, \$1,135; silk-lined lambskin gloves, \$1,135. net-a-porter.com. Charmeuse scarf, haiderackermann.be.



Peter Som
 Above: Wine felted wool jacket, \$1,771, Elizabeth Charles, 212.243.3201. Stretch lambskin skirt, \$2,275, special order only. petersom.com.



Derek Lam
 Above right: Black corded wool crewneck cable sweater, \$1,250; black silk georgette evening skirt, \$2,650. dereklam.com



Alexandra Knight
 Kirby clutch in cherry glaze alligator with black glaze alligator strip, \$3,600. alexandraknightonline.com.



Prabal Gurung
 Tulle gown embroidered with filigree cutwork, jet beads and onyx crystals, \$13,995. Ikram, Chicago. prabalgurung.com

RICHgirls RULE

The Brocade
 Brigade Musters a
 Midas Touch

by MICHELE MEYER

After years of unadorned minimalism, designers this autumn are going for baroque.

As Dries van Noten and others tap into tapestry, Salvatore Ferragamo garnishes with curls and Miu Miu plasters wallpaper prints from head-to-toe, the Renaissance appears to have reawakened.

“Designers have upped the ante after all the print we saw last summer,” says Penny Lovell, Rose Byrne’s fashion stylist.

Credit Stella McCartney for first rocking rococo last spring, with scroll work on neoprene and net sheaths adding texture and depth to a season otherwise marked by neons and madly clashing prints.

While yesteryear’s lamé seems tired and tacky, velvet, brocade and bullion braiding feel rich and romantic—a regal rebellion against the recession’s restraint, Lovell says.

Rendered in deep and elegant emeralds, rubies, sapphires and onyx gilded with gold, the new opulence recalls the glory- and excesses of Russian imperialism, France’s Louis XIV and the finest work of late great Italian Gianni Versace (in the early ‘90s) and Brit bad boy Alexander McQueen’s final collection (in 2010).

“Historically, brocade was reserved for the wealthiest and most powerful people, so it signifies total luxury and refinement,” Lovell says. ▶

Elsewhere, tones harmonize with smoke and charcoal-tinged satin, leather and neoprene sleeveless sheaths at Prabal Gurung, and paprika cashmere wrap coats and viscose capris at Banana Republic. The contrast of maroon leather round clutches and pointed stilettos adds sizzle to shirred berry-brown jersey dresses at Diane von Furstenberg.

If clothes beg to be pawed you’re on the right track, says Simon Kneen, Banana Republic’s executive vice president of design.

“This season is about quiet glamour and simple, smart dressing. Reference novelist Virginia Woolf, not Great Gatsby flappers, and skip the sequins! While the look isn’t plain, it’s never flashy.” ♦



Jason Wu
Asian-inspired gold-brocade hobo handbag with silk cord tassel, \$1,770, select Neiman Marcus stores. jasonwustudio.com

Ferragamo
Left: Gray wool military coat, \$3,150; gold-embroidered green wool turtleneck, \$2,150, brown leather pants, \$2,150, Salvatore Ferragamo boutiques. ferragamo.com

Valentino
Far left: Round-neck sleeveless tulle illusion dress with multi-colored floral embroidery, \$25,000. Neiman Marcus. valentino.com

Ferragamo
Above: Black embroidered velvet boots, \$1,500, Salvatore Ferragamo boutiques. ferragamo.com

Dries Van Noten
Above Center: Black tapestry belted 51-percent wool, 49-percent silk Regine coat, \$2,670. Nordstrom.com, Barneys.com.

Gucci
Above right: Sapphire cotton velvet dress brocade embroidered in black, \$2,995. gucci.com.

Brian Atwood
Embroidered gray suede Moya shoes, also available in wine, \$1,076, Gito in New Jersey, brianatwood.com.



But that doesn't mean you should flaunt it. "You don't want to pile it on like they did in *Dynasty*, or it becomes a costume," warns Cher Coulter, celebrity stylist for Nicole Richie. So skip jewelry, tone down makeup and keep hair sleek and pulled back. "Wear Valentino's delicate embroidered lace dresses with simple black tights and shoes to convey the mood without overpowering."

Or keep the look "less in-your-face" by adding barely braided Brian Atwood peep-toe shoes or black-on-black embroidered Ferragamo boots to otherwise unadorned outfits, Lovell advises.

The unexpected modernizes granny's upholstery. Balmain places old-fashioned cross-stitching on leather sweatshirts, while Christopher Kane weaves his needlework clutches with wire, not yarn, then frames them in thick black rectangles.

Should you find wallpaper prints charming, scale back to smaller patterns on shrunken, narrow jackets over capris—or mix with solids as does Sophie Théallet, Coulter says. "Otherwise, it looks like you've borrowed from the '80s—and it's gone wrong."

Beyond that, rich girl, if it's baroque, don't fix it. ♦



Straight from
the runway,
it's high
time for the
low ponytail.

Pony Down

by MICHELE MEYER

The polished ponytail is fall's "mane" event. Indeed, this peek of sleek has marched down runways from Chanel to Calvin Klein and Jil Sander to Jonathan Saunders. So why, after years, did designers banish Bohemian bed head?

"A pulled-back ponytail complements, rather than competes with, this season's strong prints, embellishments and metallics," says Jeanie Syfu, a stylist whose tails lay low at Charlotte Ronson. "It also works with the current minimalism. It's clean and refined, understated and sophisticated."

Unlike the more playful, childish and dominatrix-inspired high and side versions, the latest look works day or night—and for all ages, hair textures and face shapes, Syfu says. "The dropped pony really can change your look."

To be in lock step with catwalks, the new pony must ride low (at the nape), and be chopstick-straight, with no volume or stray strands. Side or center parts are optional, as are brooches or barrettes, which tell a dressier tale, as at Rochas.

You can be a "lock star" with minimal effort.

Spread a dollop of volumizing mousse in baby-fine hair or argan oil and flattening serum in unruly thick hair, advises Michael Dueñas, founder of New York's Hair Room Service, who has styled Lady Gaga's hair. Then blow dry, from the forehead to the nape, using a flat brush.

Dampen hair for the sleekest pony and gloss it with silicone spray or a quarter's worth of a shine cream, directed to the nape with a fine-tooth comb, Syfu says. Look to the ceiling and pull hair back as tightly as possible. Wrap the base of the ponytail with an elastic tie, hooked at each end.

Bangs can be slicked back with a nickel's worth of gel that has been emulsified between your palms and rubbed on the surface. But don't let the pony itself get plastered. "Hair shouldn't be so sculpted it looks hard," notes Syfu.

For an even cleaner look, hide bands with strands. Take an inch-wide swatch from below the pony, wrap around the base and clip beneath the tail with a bobby pin.

Once you've ponied up, you can escape bad-hair days all winter. ♦





Bespoken
Double-breasted
black wool
blazer, \$865,
Five Story NYC;
black check short
point shirt, \$270,
parkandbond.
com; skinny
burgundy-dot tie,
\$165, Odin NYC;
black wool formal
trousers, \$360.



Hugo Boss
Wool single-
breasted suit,
\$1,695; cotton
shirt, \$285; silk
tie, \$125; leather
shoes, \$595,
available at BOSS
stores in Dallas
and Houston.
hugoboss.com.



Ermenegildo
Zegna
Three-piece slim-
fit cashmere suit,
\$4,295; jacket,
\$2,395; slacks,
\$700; slim-fit
cotton denim dress
shirt, \$395; knitted
cashmere tie, \$295;
brown leather belt,
\$325. zegna.com.



DKNY
Black wool suit,
\$595; grey silk
striped tie, \$59.50;
dress shirt, \$65,
black wool coat,
price upon request.
dkeny.com.

Gentleman Dressing

Polished Head-to-Toe Menswear.

by MICHELE MEYER

Menswear has spiffed up for fall and beyond. "The British influence is strong right now," says Mark-Evan Blackman, an assistant menswear design professor at New York's Fashion Institute of Technology. "The opulence of a handmade suit or wearing a tux to dinner is appealing. Everyone, from rockers to hedge fund managers, orders made-to-measure. Even the average guy is looking at fit and finishing touches." These details range

from pocket squares and tie pins to three-piece suits, double-breasted jackets, morning coats and pleated and cuffed trousers.

Epaulets, brass buttons and olive twills add a dash of West Point to London West End polish, notes Blackman. Otherwise, designers cling to classic tweeds, flannels and muted plaids in grays, navies, blacks and camels.

Gaze in the dressed-up direction of Baz



Todd Snyder

Above left: Black wool tuxedo jacket, \$1,425; olive wool pointed tie, \$125; 80% cotton, 20% wool sport shirt in khaki, \$215; 85% cotton, 15% hemp infantry pants in olive, \$325.

Above right: 50% wool, 50% camel hair top coat, \$1,995; white cotton dress shirt, \$295; charcoal wool lapel vest, \$295; wool pointed tie, \$125. toddsnyder.com.

Luhrmann's upcoming remake of *The Great Gatsby*. Mix it up, rather than draping yourself head-to-toe in velvet or tartan.

"The look shouldn't be matchy-matchy: As long as the colors work together, a paisley pocket square, or a plaid tie with a denim shirt are handsome and distinctive," says Blackman. "But your accents shouldn't have more personality than you. So if you're low-key, don't mix four or more patterns."

Instead, the sartorially smooth give modern twists to the traditional. Many designers, including Todd Snyder and Michael Bastian, add pressed cargo pants or dark jeans—even hiking boots—below blazers or vests. John Varvatos' urbane urban warrior lets his elongated vest hang beyond his jacket, while Canali pairs cashmere coats, not blazers, with old-fashioned cropped double-breasted vests.

And rather than flirt with foppishness,



Ermenegildo Zegna
Silk/cotton trench, \$3,995; fair-isle turtleneck sweater in cashmere, \$1,595; wool trousers, \$495; leather fringed loafers, \$725; leather gloves, \$380. zegna.com

Ermenegildo Zegna garnishes three-piece suits with open-necked shirts over turtlenecks. A shawl-neck burgundy cable-knit vest softens Paul & Joe's otherwise crisp fedora and flannel slacks.

"The well-dressed man doesn't want to walk through a door and be noticed," Blackman says. "He wants people to realize a half-hour later, 'Wow, that's a great suit.'" ♦



Canali

Wool-angora double-breasted long coat with black belt, price upon request; wool flat-front slim-fit trousers with silk belt and side band, \$560; cotton shirt, \$325; double-breasted wool-silk waistcoat with shawl collar and fancy pockets, price upon request; floral printed silk tie, \$150; velvet ankle boot with lateral zip, \$595. canali.com.



John Varvatos

Black convertible notch lapel Hampton jacket in 93% wool, 5% cashmere and 2% Elastane with leather-trimmed bessom pocket, \$1,595; black button-front waist coat with contrasting collar and lapel seam, \$598; black wool wing-collar shirt with shaped front and French cuff, \$398; black slim-fit straight-leg dress slacks, \$550; black Parisian Beetle boot in laser-scored calf, \$798. johnvarvatos.com.



Ferragamo

Blue wool double-breasted suit, \$2,790; dark purple cotton slim-fit button-down shirt, \$310; dark purple wool knit sweater, \$650; metallic scratch silk bowtie, \$90; bordeaux natural hand-finished lace-up shoes, \$1,600 available at Salvatore Ferragamo boutiques. ferragamo.com