

**Optical Prism**  
THE MAGAZINE FOR EYECARE PROFESSIONALS



May/June 2010 | Vol. 28 No. 2

# Spring

**fashion spectacular**

**Colourful new collections**

**The revitalized luxury market**

**Vintage and beyond**

[www.opticalprism.ca](http://www.opticalprism.ca)

**Optical Prism**  
THE MAGAZINE FOR EYECARE PROFESSIONALS

**Optical Prism**  
THE MAGAZINE FOR EYECARE PROFESSIONALS



# A farewell to hipsters

*by Craig Saunders*

**Retro is now mainstream,  
let's look at what's next  
in frame fashion**



**L**ooking at most of the spring 2010 collections, you might not notice it at first, but the vintage trend is dying. You won't notice it because the oversized aviators and modified wayfarers favoured by hipsters everywhere still dominate almost every collection.

But lean in. Look a little closer. There's something else there. Something new. Something fun. Something that isn't a chunky black plastic P3!

**Optical Prism**  
THE MAGAZINE FOR EYECARE PROFESSIONALS



Top: Frost

From left: Karl Lagerfeld KL 676, Face à Face Ivory and O'Connell by I.a. Eyeworks

After a dismal autumn in which almost every collection was using the same shapes and the same palette, Spring 2010 marks a change. There's more diversity in shape, lots more colour and, in general, more adventurousness. Manufacturers are generally attributing this to increasing consumer confidence in the economy. But it's also because we've reached that time in the design cycle where a dominant trend has become so universal and mainstream that designers are getting bored...and creative.

"It's not the only ticket," says Linda Mulford-Hum, who designs collections including Roots and Alfred Sung for Centennial Optical. "In my opinion, it's only a small segment of the market that's willing to wear that vintage. It's not worth doing vintage if you don't add a modern twist to it. If you're just going to take the same old P3 you did years ago, what's the point?"

**Shape**

Black plastic wayfarers are everywhere and have definitely moved into mainstream collections. For men,

the choice is pretty much a Buddy Holly frame or a simple metal modified rectangle.

But the vintage frames are taking on a life of their own, mostly through colour and pattern. There are a lot more tortoise frames in this category now, as well as richly textured acetates. For example, California's I.a. Eyeworks has breathed new life into its collection with a green and black striped model. They're also leading the charge with one of the season's hottest trends: gradient frames. More and more frames have plastic fronts that shift from one colour on the top to another on the bottom. It's not a traditional laminated look. Instead of front to back, the acetates are laminated top to bottom with a smooth transition from, say, brown tortoise on top to purple acetate below the eye.

If you want to see vintage gone wild, you need look no further than Toronto's Rapp Optical. These are big plastic frames with richly textured fronts in comfortable colours. They're frames with character.

What's important to remember about the vintage trend is that it's not baby boomers looking back to the glasses of their childhood.

"I think people are having fun with [the vintage trend]," says Robert Schienberg, head of communications for Marchon Eyewear. "Historically, there would always be references to Clark Kent or Buddy Holly, but there's a new generation wearing them who don't know who Clark Kent or Buddy Holly are."

One important new shape is an upswept oval or almond. There are a few iterations on the market, and they're taking the place once held by the cat eye. These are not sharply peaked frames like the traditional cat, though they are inspired by them, designers are saying.

Not surprisingly, Lafont has been selling just such a new shape. But so have others. Ivory by Face à Face sits on the edge of this trend, and Schienberg says that his company's Karl Lagerfeld collection has seen its upswept almond flying off shelves.

**Optical Prism**  
THE MAGAZINE FOR EYECARE PROFESSIONALS



**Metal**

While modified rectangles in classic or flat metals remain popular mainstream choices, many designers are using newer cutting, bending and printing techniques to create new looks. In some cases, what they're doing is significant enough that the result almost needs to be considered a new shape, even though the base still tends to be a modified rectangle.

On the more mainstream side, there are frames such as a new Rampage from Viva Eyewear. It looks a lot like the split-temple frames that rose in popularity at the beginning of the millennium, but the cutout is interrupted by a stylish logo plaque decorated with rhinestones.

For pure effect, it's hard to beat Frost's F-Type frames. Some contrast a rectangular lens with an artistic, rounder eyewire. Their cutouts are dramatic and accented with bold colours. They also stand out because many models are not rectangular, instead playing up rounder and oval shapes, particularly for women.

Architecturally, some of the most interesting temples come from Eyenigma, the young collection of Toronto designer Stephen Kapoor. His cut and folded temples are three-dimensional, as well as colourful. Three-dimensional metal temples are another strong trend,

and many collections use simpler approaches to good effect, often marrying strips of metals in contrasting colours.

**Materials**

Marrying materials is a big trend again this season. It began with designers applying plastic temples to metal fronts in order to have more decorative options. As metal temples widened, thanks to lightweight materials such as titanium and aluminum, that became less necessary. Today, some are putting thin metal temples on wider plastic fronts. Wescan Optical in Montreal has blended a metal front with patterned TR90 temples to create more excitement, says Beverly Sulteanu, who oversees collections including Kliik Denmark, Fysh UK and Evatik.

Face à Face takes the materials marriage trend about as far as it should go. Their Naomi frame has acetate temples, combined with fronts made out of two layers of metal in contrasting colours.

The bigger trend in materials, however, is the continued rise of natural materials. Without a doubt, wood is leading the trend. There are classic luxury looks from Gold & Wood, Teka or Lumiere, and also more exciting applications. For example Wood Look WL062 is a

vintage frame in acetate with laminated wood in a wave pattern adorning the temples.

Horn is also popular, particularly on those vintage hipster frames. It's a material that suits the style, even if animal parts might seem an odd fashion choice for urban sophisticates. But, as one designer said, "I suppose you can wear cow ironically."

Snakeskin, be it real, fake or just part of a pattern, is also included on the temples of many collections this season.

**Textures and patterns**

Wood and horn are expensive and difficult to work with. Vancouver designer Mehran Baghaie has long admired the look of horn, and this year brought out a new Spectacle Eyeworks collection using horn-patterned plastic. The retro-looking frames have sharply contrasting tones in the horn patterns, and a gold inlay on the temples is reminiscent of a Masonic emblem.

Because matte black is very much in fashion, designers are doing all sorts of things to make it more interesting. One approach is a striated acetate. Done in black or brown, it gives a wood grain effect that looks good, be it on an I.A. Eyeworks frame or a modern vintage Fendi F852.

**Optical Prism**  
THE MAGAZINE FOR EYECARE PROFESSIONALS



## Optical Prism

THE MAGAZINE FOR EYECARE PROFESSIONALS

Wescan certainly picked up on the natural materials trend. They used a bamboo pattern on Fysh temples last year, and this year have wood-patterned acetate temples with metal fronts for men's Evatik frames.

"We used a lot of patterned acetate this year, particularly on the fronts," says Suliteanu, adding that she chose subtle lace or camouflage patterns with a translucent background.

One reason why patterns are getting more lively and common is that it's getting easier to do short runs of highly specialized plastic. For example, Centennial Optical had a Roots hang tag and T-shirt converted for use on their frames. The company that does it takes the

graphic, applies it to a coloured plastic and laminates a thin, clear coat on top.

"This whole thing started due to frustration in getting plastics," says Mulford-Hum. "Plastics exploded over the last few years and people were looking for faster ways to get plastic made. This is very fast. They can make these laminate sheets in a day." Regular laminated plastic, by contrast, can take months to re-order, she adds. "For someone producing frames who needs frames and repeats quickly, it's wonderful."

### Colour

The big, exciting news this season, however, is about colour. Last fall, everything was black, tortoise or

dark, earthy colours. There were even three collections featuring frames in a colour called "Mud."

Not this spring. Black and tortoise are still going strong, particularly on the vintage frames, but colour is definitely back.

Frame colours, other than neutrals, tend to follow fashion. This year, purple is continuing as the big fashion colour. Purples show up in almost every collection, and it works well with other colours. That might explain why it's showing up in so many gradient sunglasses.

Moving in to replace purple is this spring's hot new colour category: blue-greens. Many collections are using teal or turquoise. Some have translucent teal acetate, others a stronger turquoise on metal.

Orange is also rising once again. It's not yellowy sunflower oranges or earthy terra cotta, though. The oranges are warm and whimsical, sometimes reminiscent of a Creamsicle. Red is also a popular colour this season. It's a niche colour, and fairly bright this year, but it's one that designers say sells well in Canada.

The spring collections are a breath of fresh air. Designers have begun to turn their backs on the recession as eyeglass buyers are becoming adventurous once again. Most frames are still conservative, going for the long play. But whimsy is making its way back into style. Even men's frames are becoming more colourful.

You might still sell more simple metal rectangles or black wayfarers than anything else. But there's choice again, and that's always a good thing. •



Purple remains the big fashion colour this season, with teal and turquoise on the rise. Both trends are evident in the Frost F-Type collection.