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Signature Eyewear's Carmen Marc Valvo Brand



Retro



Photo: Erica McCannoy

While Tom Cruise (far left) and his Risky Business Wayfarers fueled the trend for heavy frames, the latest style is this '50s-inspired Clubmaster shape (worn by the late Malcolm X, near left). Ralph Lauren glasses, \$350; ralphlauren.com for store information.

Unusual Details



Photo: Erica McCannoy

"Plastic frames will still dominate the market in 2009, but subtle design details like graphics or colors and finishing treatments [like these clear glasses with a rosy tint] are differentiating the progressive from the mundane," explains Jordan Silver of Silver Lining. Vue de Pantos 2 glasses, \$375; Silver Lining Opticians, 212-274-9191.

Bright Colors



Photo: Erica McCannoy

"Men who have worn tortoiseshell and black for years are sticking with traditional shapes but adding color," says Jordan of these blue frames. Moscot Nebb Limited Edition glasses, \$220; moscot.com.

Tortoiseshell



Photo: Erica McCannoy

Women are gravitating toward traditional colors like tortoiseshell and brown or black this winter. Silver Lining Opticians Henri glasses, \$395; Silver Lining Opticians, 212-274-9191.

Specs Appeal

Add instant points to your fashion IQ by donning a pair of geeky eyeglass frames—this year's hottest accessory.



By Kirsten Flanning



Photo: A JustPants Melissa; Brian ZAVLADON; James Denney/WireImage; AJD; RALPH LAUREN; Malcolm X; JEFFREY BAZAAR; PIERA GELARDI; MARY ANDREW; GARY FINE/MAGAZINE DENNEY/WIREIMAGE; Elizabeth Lippman
Red carpets are awash in A-listers wearing heavy glasses. Above, from left: Refinery29.com's Piana Colanzi; actress Amy Sedaris; and Jay-Z. Below, clockwise from top left: Kimball Hartings, director of celebrity dressing at Ralph Lauren; Vogue frames associate Stephanie LaCava; Scarlett Johansson; Chloe Sevigny; and Tom Vogue's senior fashion market editor Juana Hillman.

For years, poor-sighted New Yorkers wore contacts, hoping to avoid the style stigma of being called "four eyes." But thanks to fashion editors, Brooklyn hipsters and celebrities seeking gravitas, looking like Buddy Holly has become fabulously fashionable in 2009. "A lot of women and men have worn contacts for so long and haven't bought glasses, but they're back buying glasses in droves," says Jordan Silver, co-owner of Silver Lining Opticians on Soho's Thompson Street. He's sold specs to Kirsten Dunst and supplied glasses for hip label Band of Outsiders' fashion show last September. "People are wearing glasses now as a fashion accessory, just like they do caps," he says.

"Our sales were up 20 percent in 2008," says Kenny Moscot of Moscot, the Lower East Side frame institution that has been a driving force in the recent nerd-chic explosion. "Our frames are based on our archives, so thanks to the popularity of vintage-looking glasses our success has been a perfect storm," adds Kenny, whose specs have graced the mugs of actors Forest Whitaker, Jason Schwartzman and Johnny Depp.

Raul Becerra, a personal shopper at Jeffrey New York and stylist who has worked for Harper's Bazaar, says glasses have been big since the economic crash. The rage has been fueled, he notes, by the craze that began with the revival of Risky Business-style Wayfarers in 2006. "The look is recession-proof. It's easier to update or change your look with a \$200 accessory than an \$8,000 wardrobe splurge," Raul adds.

But A-listers like Jay-Z and Scarlett Johansson (who don't have to worry about budget wardrobe buys) have also been channeling their inner Arthur Miller recently. Kenny is collaborating on a range of frames with actor-writer Justin Theroux and is in discussions with singer Kanye West about a new eyewear line too. (For civilians without moose to burn, American Apparel, which is selling vintage specs for around \$50, is an affordable option.) Meanwhile, New York designers like Carmen Marc Valvo and Michael Kors sent their catwalkers down the runway in oversized spectacles at their spring '09 shows.

Chris Benz, clothier to downtown ingenues, has put them on his models too. "I love how the entire direction of an outfit can change depending on the glasses," he says. "There's something innocent and quirky about a girl in big glasses and a party dress, and the glasses are what create friction and balance the look."

But 20/20 vision is no obstacle for today's specs seekers. Both Jordan and Kenny say they have many clients who wear glasses without a prescription. Refinery29.com's style director, Piera Gelardi, has been wearing nonprescription eyewear by Anglo American Optical for a year. "I fell in love with a pair of glasses and wore them without getting a prescription until the lenses got scratched. They made me feel stylishly shielded," Piera says.

Bona fide four eyes might want to put that LASIK surgery on hold. Raul predicts, "This movement isn't going anywhere soon."

Carmen Marc Valvo Featured in NY Post's Page Six Magazine Piece on Retro Eyewear

Its all about RETRO for Spring and the New York Post's Page Six Magazine was quick to point out those designers that are "on-trend" including Carmen Marc Valvo who included eyeglass frames in his recent Spring runway collection. Page Six is every fashionista's bible for gossip and news in fashion, sport and music, attracting over 1.5 million hits per month.