

## FEATURE

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### **INTERMEDIATE SETS**

What pre-collections lack in pomp, compared to the seasonal fanfare of Spring and Fall collections, they make up with sensible practicality. Here, a round-up of Pre-Fall's top 10 collections.

#### **YVES SAINT LAURENT**

Stefano Pilati channelled austerity and volume via double-faced fabrics in an elegant, menswear-influenced collection. Featured were sexy power suits and details like braided effects on flannel frocks and swirling drapes and twists on evening dresses in a palette that's mostly made up of shades of grey and black. Mimicking super-luxurious materials with less expensive fabrics, Pilati's creative resourcefulness outwitted the tough economic times. But it is not all scaled down: Look closely and you will find authentic luxurious accents of textured fur and nappa leather.

#### **LOUIS VUITTON**

Inspired by a book about wartime (World War II) fashions, Marc Jacobs revisits the '40s with retro silhouettes and soft, muted colours. Luxury remains – the lace, the rich embroidery and the fur. The waist takes the spotlight in this feminine collection, with belted coats and fitted jackets balanced by pencil-slim or poufy ballerina skirts. Day dresses stand out in pretty key prints: A paisley pattern and a ribbon motif. All perfectly underscored by Veronica Lake waves, elaborate brooches, oversized platforms and beaded socks.

#### **MIU MIU**

Tough times or not, Miu Miu is set in her ways. The pre-fall collection reiterates her core value of luxe, make that super-luxe. Think fur galore, in the form of long-haired gilets and jackets. It's essentially a monochrome collection, with snatches of grey. Exceptions are a long pale yellow dress and dusky pink skirt, featuring details of bunched waistline and quirky pockets that stick out. Coats, knee high socks and white cotton blouses with Peter Pan collars complete the looks.

#### **CHRISTIAN DIOR**

The Dior codes from Monsieur Dior's days undergo reinvention for pre-fall. Reference points included Helmut Newton's strong glamazons and Alfred

Hitchcock's icy blonde heroines. With a signature red pout and a chic-sexy attitude, the modern-day muse gets fitted in belted nipped-waist jackets, double-faced wool suits and dresses in Chantilly lace. Fur is of course an integral part – from astrakhan to fox, weasel to chinchilla.

## **PRADA**

Versatile fashion that lets you go the extra mile? Prada's mostly black and grey collection, with shots of burgundy has it down pat. On the practical front, there are sources of comfort like arm warmers and knitted tasselled beanies to create different looks. Add to that a functional black pantsuit and black capacious utilitarian bags to take you through all occasions. The accessory *du jour* is a fringed curtain of jet beads that can be tied at the hip or wrapped around the neck like an elaborate neckpiece. Of note is the alluring burgundy pouf-skirted cocktail dress and also, little black velvet dresses.

## **CHLOÉ**

Hannah MacGibbon's first pre-fall collection for Chloé has an uninhibited attitude that's fully reflected in the laid-back looks. With references from the '80s, such as sharp shoulders, big crystal beads and bows, with a more feminine vibe, pieces range from delicate crystal-embellished tops and oversized coats to tailored trousers, plaid-lined blanket capes and carrot-legged suits. Luxurious and masculine fabrics abound: Pressed felt, flannel, jersey and wools. And when night falls, pretty dresses with delicate pleats or frills in sheer tones file out.

## **GIORGIO ARMANI**

The detailed jackets are structured and fitted, in shades of grey and black that allow for some mixing and matching with the pants Giorgio Armani has come to be loved for. And for pre-fall, he went for narrow or wide-leg options, along with an elegant line-up of evening looks that include a one-shoulder long dress and a chic black number – all set off by slender heels. Narrow silhouettes, understated embellishments, minimal accessories: Call it the new formal dress code.

## **BOTTEGA VENETA**

Classy, chic, sophisticated. Once again, Tomas Maier went the whole nine yards to achieve his signature elegant vibe for Bottega Veneta: Calling linen boucle to task for slim, sleeveless dresses, tailoring wool herringbone into suit jackets and using quilted soft nappa leather for a caban coat. Relaxed silhouettes were sent down the runway in what appeared to be weightless fabrics cosy enough to nooze in, and a sedated colour palette of muted wines, shades of brown, grey and pink. Two words: Understated luxury.

## **LOEWE**

Besides referencing Paloma Picasso as inspiration, creative director Stuart Vevers also looked to menswear, albeit in softer shapes for this line-up. It's a focused collection for a clearly defined woman: The attitude is polished and groomed yet she is tough and sexy. Sharply silhouetted, with a marked waist and heavily accented by bold jewellery. Enter masculine overcoats, belted jackets, a velvet tuxedo suit, embellished dresses and accessories such as oversized Amazona bags, suede gauntlets, felt hats and a structured bag with Loewe's new logo, to match.

## **CHANEL**

"Everyone in the West should succumb to Slavonic charm to understand what it really means," Gabrielle Chanel insisted. And this, Karl Lagerfeld did to full effect in his directorial debut for "Paris-Moscou" (his theme for the seventh edition of Chanel's Métiers d'Art collection designed to showcase the skills of the house-owned specialty couture ateliers). The clothes were opulent – in fabrics like cashmere, lamb leather and embellished with displays of motifs, fur and pearls. There was a striking coat with a shawl collar and sloping babushka shoulders, suits with military touches and even gold Cossack boots. The most imperial piece of all: Hair-and-pearl-adorned tiaras inspired by Byzantine empresses.