

Fashion Outlook

Getting the details

Accessories follow fashion's lead

By Joan Lebow

The best way to get a sense of new trends in fashion accessories is to look at clothing worn without them.

In spring ready-to-wear collections, designers showed lots of bare necklines and well-defined waists. Some clothes are short, sleek and fitted, with hot flashes of brilliant color. Other styles with ruffles, flounces and bows are no less revealing.

As a result, the newest accessories include yards of necklaces to nestle at an open neck or in plunging-decolletage. Brightly colored belts come in many widths but always cinch the waist. Romantic flowers in shades of rose and mint are everywhere on hats, jewelry and hair accessories to complement the softest silhouettes. And, to dress up contoured, steam-lined clothes for work or evening, there are neat, structured handbags and small, tailored earrings.

the use of whimsical flowers and vivid, fanciful colors. And even in home fashions, the English country look, full of cabbage-rose ebintzes and cluttered disarray abound.

Accessories designers have picked up those cues and designed flowered hats, belts and theatrical, flowery necklaces and earrings.

Necklaces are the most significant new item. "Flowers are happening, especially in necklaces now, since so much neckline is exposed," says jewelry designer Gaetano Fazio.

Fazio's ornate collection of crystal and beaded collage-like brooches, wristbands, necklaces and earrings is imbued with a sense of fantasy and the exotic. "All of fashion is very kicky and playful," he says. "It's somewhat baroque."

The designer's other key theme is what he calls "ethnic" jewelry, a major trend for spring. Glass and ceramic beads, filigree and wood are strung together in multicolor necklaces that

however, does not mean conservative. Jill Stuart designs small fabric handbags in whimsical pin dot and gingham. Stuart's patent-leather bags have stretchy bands as closures and come in vintage or retro-inspired shapes. Stretch materials are turning up in body-hugging clothes and in accessories to wear with them.

"We're using lots of stretch in leather belts," says Stuart. Her widest belts have two rows of "double-breasted" black buttons that contrast

bright-colored stretch fabric. Stuart also uses softer shades in those ubiquitous cabbage roses styled into bags and waist-cinching belts.

Romantic frills and fantasy provide a counterpoint to all the bright shades, smooth curvy lines and neat

modernism. It will certainly be fashionable this spring to wear a tapered suit, pull one's hair into a chignon and carry a squared-off bag. But move over, Scarlett O'Hara. Designers are also showing big flowered hats, bows for the wrist, lacy pocket squares and even snoods.

"Women today want to look pretty instead of tough," concludes Steven

Kokin. Known just as Kokin, he designs floral hair accessories and wide-brimmed flower-trimmed hats, some that mix rose-printed fabrics with straw. His hottest looks: "Anything with roses and my multicolored hat with bows."

That's not to say the soft and romantic is always better than simply chic and practical. Says Kokin,



STRAW hat with silk flowers by Anne Moore (about \$300) and orange hand-blown glass floral and crystal earrings by Gaetano Fazio (about \$76).

All of these styles were on display in New York in mid-January at the Accessorie Circuit, a show of 71 leading designers' accessories. Their products will soon be available in fine specialty and department stores.

"The trend is all about making women look pretty. Designers are telling us all about femininity and about showing the body," says Elyse Kroll, whose company, E.N.K. Productions, produces the Accessorie Circuit show.

For a recent interview, Kroll, who has the advantage of looking great in her clients' designs, was dressed like a delicate black pen stroke. But punctuating her all-black hose, way-above-the-knee skirt and jersey top was a trim waist-length bright orange jacket and, of course, a sampling of next season's accessories. These included large orange and yellow pansy-shaped earrings and a row of neon bracelets.

"All of fashion has been so saturated with black," says Kroll. "But now we're seeing lots of hot-house brights to wear with it. It's a way to cheer things up a little; we haven't looked this pretty in a long time."

Pretty and cheery are indeed two ways to sum up some of the new accessories. One reason is that florals are so prevalent.

Influential French designer Christian Lacroix has helped popularize

evoked Asian and American Indian styles. "Ethnic is in, and now it's even being worn for evening," Fazio says.

While big, visible jewelry goes with bare clothes and the confidence to wear them both, there's a simultaneous trend toward smallness. Little,

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