

THE NEW classics



Photographer LIM SIN THAI;
 Stylists IMRAN JALAL and
 ROHAIZATUL AZHAR;
 Hair ALEX LOH, from Creme
 Hairdressing, using Redken;
 Make-up BÉNÉDICT CHOO,
 using M.A.C;
 Models BRUNNA N and
 RUSLAN K,
 from Upfront Models

STATEMENT CLUTCH

DERBY SHOES

The credit-crunching days may be back, but don't cross shopping off your to-do list just yet. Here are pieces that will last you beyond this year



With news of an impending global recession, some consumers may be preparing to tighten their purse strings once again. But not everyone is paying heed to the news.

Despite the economic uncertainty, luxury brands are enjoying strong growth. For instance, British label Mulberry, which is known for its leather goods and accessories, is expecting this year's financial year results to exceed last year's.

Last week, Reuters reported Mulberry's sales grew 30 per cent in the fourth quarter of last year, compared to the third quarter. Orders for its spring/summer 2012 goods also jumped by 35 per cent compared to those for spring/summer 2011.

Mr Seshan Ramaswami, associate professor of marketing education at Singapore Management University, says: "The luxury brands keep a decent pace of sales in good times and bad because they target the ultra rich whose consumption is not affected very much by the economy. Also, they are helped by consumers who pick up a little luxury treat for themselves once in a while."

The key to surviving a bumpy economy, he says, is to shop smart and spend on things that will give you more bang for your buck.

In Singapore, there are signs that shoppers are not cutting back their spending on luxury items that are considered to be investment pieces.

These items, which are worth more than US\$1,000 (S\$1,265) apiece, include watches, jewellery and designer apparel. These are the top three categories of luxury goods that Singaporeans

covet, according to a MasterCard survey last November on consumer purchasing priorities.

Of the 191 Singaporean shoppers in the poll, 68 per cent say they want to maintain or increase their spending on luxury items in the coming months.

However, the study also notes that these consumers are showing prudence in their decision-making process and the choice of luxury items acquired.

For example, one in four Singaporeans tend to research extensively about a luxury item and make the purchase only two to six months after deciding on it.

Ms Julienne Loh, vice-president and country manager, Singapore, MasterCard Worldwide, says: "The survey results show that Singaporeans are savvy luxury shoppers who try to strike a balance between seeking the highest-quality luxury goods and getting the most value out of their purchases."

Ms Shabnam Melwani-Reis, director of multi-label watch retailer Watches Of Switzerland and the Jay Gee Melwani Group, which distributes labels such as Levi's and New Look here, says she will re-assess the way she spends this year.

"With the economic uncertainty, it's important to look at things with a more macro perspective. I used to buy things on impulse but now I will look for pieces that are versatile and can give flexibility to my wardrobe," says the 42-year-old mother of two young boys.

Urban lists 10 covetable spring/summer 2012 items for him and her that will last you beyond the year.

rohail@sph.com.sg
 imrjalal@sph.com.sg

On her: Dress, price upon request, from Marc Jacobs; Serpenti shoulder bag, \$2,350, from Bulgari; shoes, price upon request, from Burberry
 On him: Scribe Arien shoes, \$1,290, from Bally; blazer, price upon request, from ck Calvin Klein; chinos by Sparks, \$175, from Actually...

STATEMENT CLUTCH

What: Where arm candy is concerned, statement clutches are the It bags this season. They come in a variety of sizes, from tiny ones that can fit only your phone and lip gloss, such as those at Gucci; to large foldover bags, such as those at Chloe. As long as you can hold it comfortably in your hand, it is on trend.

Clutches also come in a variety of designs this season, from bold prints at Dolce & Gabbana to those made from woven leather at Ralph Lauren. One of the most covetable pieces is Bulgari's jewel-toned Serpenti bag which, at 20cm by 15cm, makes for a great evening bag. Priced at

\$2,350, this structured purse comes in emerald green, rich purple or striking yellow. It doubles as a clutch when the shoulder chain is tucked inside.

Why you need it: Every style maven worth her salt needs a head-turning evening bag in her wardrobe. A statement clutch not only allows you to store everything you need for a night out, it is also an understated way to make a style statement.

How to wear it: What we love about these statement clutches is their versatility. Sling one over your shoulder or carry it as a crossbody bag. Team it with a T-shirt, jeans and a pair of flats for a casual but chic weekend look.

URBAN'S PICKS



\$660, from Mulberry

\$349, from Raoul

\$710, from Kate Spade

URBAN'S PICKS



\$249, from Raoul

\$219, from J Shoes

\$660, from Paul Smith

DERBY SHOES

What: These are a less formal option in the dress shoe department. Derby shoes are sometimes called open-laced shoes as the eyelets for the laces are stitched at the top. These multicoloured Arien derby shoes (above, on him), \$1,290, are the latest design from Bally's Scribe range and sport a punctured brogueing detail along the seams.

Why you need it: These shoes can be both formal and casual footwear. This makes them more versatile than, say, patent leather shoes, which are largely reserved for the evening and formal occasions.

In the past, when dress codes were stricter, shoes with a brogueing detail were considered 'rugged' shoes. These days, derby shoes are accepted as dress shoes as long as they sport thin leather soles instead of chunky rubber ones.

How to wear it: If you intend to wear brogueed derby shoes to the office, go for a pair in a dark colour like black, ash or dark brown. Team it with trousers in black, midnight blue, charcoal or thin pinstripes for an elegant look.

Shoe colours like tan and white are more suitable for casual occasions. For more pop in your outfit, skip neutral colours on your trousers and go for a bright shade like green.



STATEMENT WATCH
What: This Portofino Hand-Wound Eight Days watch, from \$14,000, is one of the latest additions to Swiss watchmaker IWC Schaffhausen's Portofino range, which was created in 1984. The watch employs the 59210 calibre, or movement, which is developed from the brand's famed 50000 calibre family. The calibre is noted for its large components and for employing the Pellaton winding system and Breguet spring, which are considered among the finest in the market.
 The watch comes in a stainless steel case and has a power reserve of eight days. The alligator leather strap is made by Italian shoemaker Santoni.
Why you need it: It is all about precision with this watch. The movement is encased in an extra-large barrel, which ensures it will run for a long time. Though it can store enough power for nine days, the watch is programmed to stop at 192 hours, or eight days. Stopping the movement before all the tension in the spring is gone reduces the amount of energy that could be lost in the mainspring. This, in turn, maintains the accuracy of the watch.
How to wear it: This watch is built for work and play. This wrist candy is great for formal wear and exudes a preppy vibe when worn with a polo or Oxford shirt for the weekend.

On him: Portofino Hand-wound Eight Days watch, from \$14,000, from IWC Schaffhausen; blazer, price upon request, from Dunhill; shirt by Daniele Alessandrini, \$319, trousers, \$119.90, and tie, \$49, both by N. Tyler, all from Level 3 Tangs Orchard

On her: Dress, price upon request, from Burberry; earrings, \$590, from Dolce & Gabbana; Serpenti yellow gold coil bracelet, \$20,300, from Bulgari; bangle, \$1,710, from Gucci

LARGE EARRINGS

STATEMENT WATCH

LARGE EARRINGS
What: Get ready to embrace the bold as earrings come back in full force for spring/summer 2012. Huge earrings were de rigueur in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Since then, women have generally erred on the side of modesty and decorum when it comes to size.
 This season, however, big, bold and long door knockers have resurfaced in quirky shapes and motifs, such as vibrant rose buds at Missoni and creepy critters at Emilio Pucci.
 Italian label Dolce & Gabbana also offers statement shoulder-dusters in the form of plump tomatoes and dangly pasta (left), priced at \$590.
Why you need it: What better way to frame your face than with gobstopper earrings? Time to lock up those small diamond studs for a while.
How to wear it: Let the earrings stand out by keeping your hairstyle simple. Opt for loose chignons and ponytails or easy blowouts.
 Go easy on necklaces, hair accessories and sunglasses. Instead, work with one or two items at a time.
 For make-up, play with contrast and balance. Either pair the statement earrings with effortless make-up or team simpler designs with bold lips.

URBAN'S PICKS



Oyster Perpetual Rolex Deepsea, price upon request, from authorised Rolex retailers

Santos 100 large model in steel, from \$8,700, from Cartier

Montblanc TimeWalker Dual Carbon Chronograph Automatic watch, from \$9,300, from Montblanc

URBAN'S PICKS



Price upon request, from Dolce & Gabbana

\$660, from Marni

\$650, by Natalie Dissel, from doorstepluxury.com

SCARF PRINT
What: Scarf prints for shirts were the height of chic in the 1980s and early 1990s, until they became associated with outlandish and tacky designs as fashion trends gave way to minimalism.

This perception has changed in the past year as labels such as Celine and Givenchy endorsed the style again on womenswear.

One of the earliest adopters of the silk print resurgence is Kanye West, who donned a silk scarf-printed blouse onstage at the Coachella music festival last April.

Then, labels such as D&G, Prada and Versace started to show intricate patterns, paisleys and florals for their spring/summer 2012 menswear shows.

Why you need it: Think of this as wearing a piece of art.

These scarves give your style an instant European bohemian appeal.

How to wear it: A silk printed scarf shirt can work equally well in both casual and dressy occasions.

Pair it with a white tank top underneath and a pair of dark denims and loafers for the weekend.

Or wear it underneath a slim-fitting cardigan and dark trousers with a slim tie for a dandy look.



SCARF PRINT →

GRAPHIC PRINT ←

On her: Tresor de La Mer print dress, \$3,250, from Versace; bag, \$1,710, and bangle, \$9,110, both from Gucci; heels, price upon request, from Salvatore Ferragamo
 On him: Shirt, \$514, and scarf, \$482 (used as belt), both from Etro; jeans, price upon request, from Dunhill; loafers, price upon request, from Yves Saint Laurent; leather and silver bracelets, \$500 to \$670 each, from Montblanc

GRAPHIC PRINT
What: Forget about blending into the background. This season, bold graphic prints take centre stage, showing up on frocks, jackets and skirts.

The always-quirky Marni has covered its dresses in gigantic geometric shapes, while Carven plays with bright, zig-zag prints that look as if they came straight out of a comic book.

One of the most notable patterns for spring/summer 2012 is the baroque 'n' roll pastel seaworld prints at Versace. This under-the-sea printed dress (left), priced at \$3,250, will have you riding high in the fashion stakes.

Why you need it: Unlike the gaudy multicoloured prints it put out in the 1980s, Versace is now opting for a more subdued palette. While the prints may be bold, the colours are pastel pretty, which makes this piece less faddish.

How to wear it: Unless you are a fashion risk-taker who knows how to work clashing prints, keep everything else simple and minimal. The bold print on the frock makes it a standout number on its own. No accompanying accessories are required except for a pair of killer heels.

Tone the look down for the office by wearing a dark-coloured jacket over it and putting your hair up in a sleek ponytail.

URBAN'S PICKS

\$599, from Paul & Joe



\$514, from Etro

\$460, by Jonathan Saunders, from Club 21 Men

URBAN'S PICKS

\$890 (available from March), from Calvin Klein

£481.50 (\$\$952), by Erdem, from Net-A-Porter.com



\$475, from Shanghai Tang

PEPLUM
What: A short overskirt or ruffle attached at the waistline of a jacket, blouse or dress, this is for the woman who wants to accentuate her curves.
 While it may bring forth flashbacks to the 1980s, this hot trend, seen on almost every runway this season, has thankfully steered clear of dated clichés with designers such as Jason Wu and Cynthia Rowley interpreting it over a wide spectrum of looks.
 Peplum makes for a versatile all-occasion detail, as can be seen in this herringbone top (right; from \$1,265, available from next month) from McQ Alexander McQueen. It is a trend that will last beyond one season.
Why you need it: It adds flair and drama to an outfit. Peplum is a more ladylike and sophisticated way to get an hourglass figure than opting for a clingy bandage dress.
 No wonder celebrities of every shape and curve, including Emma Stone and Jennifer Hudson, are fans.
How to wear it: Black on black is the safest and most slimming option. For a more interesting pairing, opt for pencil skirts or slim-cut pants with a bit of sheen to further emphasise the flounce.
 Because peplum adds a structured silhouette to outfits, be sure to wear a pair of sturdy heels or pointed shoes to keep the look streamlined.
 Also, choose hems that hit above the knee to avoid looking frumpy.



PEPLUM DETAIL

PATTERNED JACKET

PATTERNED JACKET
What: Playing with lapels and buttons is not the only way to pep up a blazer. Check out the patterned jacket in a myriad of, well, patterns, including traditional checks – refer to the Gucci plaid suit on our cover – and the punkish striped sleeves of this H&M blazer (left).
Why you need it: Consider this a way to ramp up the style factor in your wardrobe.
 A patterned blazer is more vibrant than a solid-coloured jacket and lets you skip the accessorising.
 It might seem a little daunting at first, but the blazer can easily go with existing basics, such as a solid-coloured crew neck T-shirt or a polo shirt and jeans in a dark wash.
How to wear it: The bold stripes on this jacket already make a daring statement. So, tone down the shirt by opting for pastel shades.
 Alternatively, pair the jacket with a plain white crew neck tee to complement the monochrome shades of the striped sleeves.
 If you are feeling adventurous, team your jacket with a pair of printed pants (left).
 The look works because the thick stripes are balanced by the smaller prints on the slacks. The rust shade also brings out the navy blue of the jacket.

On her: Peplum top, from \$1,265, by McQ Alexander McQueen from Club 21; pants, \$79.90, from H&M; heels, price upon request, from ck Calvin Klein

On him: Jacket, \$159, and pants, \$79.90, both from H&M; boots, price upon request, from Yves Saint Laurent; shirt by Teddy, \$135, from Actually...; leather and silver bracelets, \$500 to \$670 each, from Montblanc

URBAN'S PICKS



£133 (\$\$263), by Carven, from Net-A-Porter.com

Price unavailable, from Banana Republic

£32 (\$\$63), from Asos.com

URBAN'S PICKS



\$469.90, from N. Tyler

\$219, by WanderWonder from Parco NextNext

£289.79 (\$\$572), by B. Store, from MrPorter.com



SHINY SHOES
What: From metallic toe caps to mirrored heels, shiny shoes were all over the spring/summer 2012 runways.
 Labels which are rocking this trend include Chanel and Dior. But it is Stefano Pilati's spring/summer 2012 shoe collection for Yves Saint Laurent that is causing the biggest buzz, especially this \$3,050 pair of satin heels with crystal rhinestones (right).
Why you need it: These new stunners boast minimalist lines and neat silhouettes, making them versatile enough to be worn with casual ensembles. Gold, silver, pewter and gemstone embellishments provide instant glamour to outfits.
How to wear it: Depending on where you are headed to, a pair of shiny shoes can be dressed up or down.
 If you are wearing them to work, the key is to balance the sparkle with something simple and in plain, solid colours. Wear them with cigarette-cut pants, a white blouse and a dark-coloured jacket.
 Alternatively, pair the shoes with sheath dresses or frocks in neutral shades, such as white, beige or cream, to give your outfit a lift while ensuring it is still office-appropriate.
 For night, the sky is the limit. Play with textures by teaming the shoes with bold prints on dresses or skirts. This combination creates a fun party ensemble.

SLEEK HOLDALL
What: Fashion brands have been reworking menswear bag staples for a while now. Last year, the humble knapsack was given a luxe makeover by brands such as Gucci and 3.1 Phillip Lim. This year, the oblong holdall is getting its turn in the sun.
 On our watchlist is Italian bag and accessories label Furla, which has given the roomy bag a handsome update by ditching drab canvas material in favour of buttery-soft calf leather. Priced at \$980, the bag also comes in a nautical-inspired off-white and blue leather version.
Why you need it: This is one bag that can take you places. The colour and pattern are timeless details that go with your officewear. The detachable strap, meanwhile, allows you to sling the bag across your body for a relaxed vibe on off-duty days.
 The roomy interior means you can fit both your notebook and gym gear nicely.
How to wear it: Dress up your weekend get-up of a sand-coloured bomber jacket and slim chinos with this bag. Or spruce up a white blazer and orange trousers (left) with the structured shape of the bag.
 Give a twist to the standard blue shirt-and-pants combo for the office by slinging on this bag. Then play with colours on your socks or tie.

SHINY SHOES

SLEEK HOLDALL

URBAN'S PICKS



Price unavailable, from Kate Spade

\$2,850, from Yves Saint Laurent

\$165, from Nine West

URBAN'S PICKS



\$1,330, by Yves Saint Laurent, from Club 21 Men

\$2,750, from Givenchy

530 euros (\$875), by Bonastre, from Farfetch.com