There seems to be a light at the end of the tunnel. As sales are on the rise and people are returning to normality after nearly two years in the grip of the pandemic, designers are letting rip. Their Spring/Summer 2022 collections are varied and colourful, a melange of eras featuring a 1990s and 2000s vibe combined with an infusion of lightness and joy that dips decidedly in the 1960s.

The women’s ready-to-wear collections that marked the come-back of physical shows in New York, London, Milan and Paris, between September 7 and October 5 2021, showcased a kaleidoscope of sensations, colours and styles, emphasising an unabashed yearning for fun through an abundance of super summery, ultra sexy looks.
1) Mini-skirt suits

Men’s-style suits are still an essential item in women’s wardrobes, as shown by the vigorous return of the suit. Especially combined with short skirts and even miniskirts, often with a 1960s vibe. Skirts reached just above the knee at Moschino, Chanel, Michael Kors and Christian Dior, the latter presenting a series of fun suits in bright colours. Miuccia Prada for Miu Miu was even more drastic, shortening the skirt to just under the buttocks with a savage slash of the knife.
2) Gingham

Still steeped in a 1960s mood, designers have rediscovered gingham fabrics, with their deliciously retro small checks in pink, light green, orange, daffodil yellow and black. Michael Kors presented classic mini-check patterns in Vichy pink or black, while Carolina Herrera, Luisa Spagnoli, Prabal Gurung and MSGM went for larger checks to bolster volume.

3) Snipped by scissors

SEE CATWALK
Rather than a scalpel, designers have wielded good old-fashioned scissors with sadistic satisfaction this season, creating slits, gaps, notches, tears and more. As seen in drilled trousers, perforated coats, open-work dresses, macramé outfits and fishnet sets. They have played with transparencies and added plenty of slashes, manhandling garments and forcing them to become lightweight, to slip off the shoulders, leave the back bare and uncover the hips. Clothes reveal the body beneath with openings large and small, positioned on the belly or across the breasts. Some of the silhouettes have a lacerated look, others feature geometric asymmetries.

4) Briefs/underwear peeping over trousers

A regular menswear feature in the last few seasons, sagging, low-waisted trousers that reveal the underwear have now become a look that women too like to flaunt, as seen at Boss and Coach, among others. And this despite the controversy around the trompe-l’œil joggers by Balenciaga, accused of cultural appropriation, which made news.
controversy around the trompe-l’œil joggers by Balenciaga, accused of cultural appropriation, which made news headlines recently. On the womenswear catwalks, this look has taken on a sexier, more subtle twist. It was no longer plain underwear that peeped over the trousers, but g-strings (as at Act N°1 and Givenchy) or lace briefs, as at Dolce & Gabbana. At Miu Miu, discreet flesh-coloured briefs could be glimpsed beneath a skirt.

5) Skin-tight bodysuits

The pandemic and related lockdowns have had a definitive impact on people's wardrobes, prompting designers to create comfortable, versatile clothes. Stretchy, body-contouring fabrics are extremely popular, as shown by the success of the skin-tight body-suit: ultra chic at Saint Laurent and AZ Factory, sexy at Burberry, made in printed fabrics at Lanvin, Marine Serre and Weinsanto. The top part of the body-suit comes in a variety of shapes (draped, corset-style, with braces), while the bottom part can take the form of a cyclist's bib-shorts.
6) Bandeau bras

Skin-baring tops were already highly popular last summer. The trend is here to stay. Jackets are worn over a bare torso, with just a bra or a fabric band, ideally rather thin. This is the leading look for next summer, seen in virtually all collections. Sporting a bandeau bra that matches the suit is a must. In leopard print at Cavalli, lace at Marras, or in cotton, leather and even latex. Skimpy like a bikini top, it can be clearly glimpsed underneath a sheer tunic dress. Absolutely ubiquitous, it is often worn over a jacket, dress or blouse, as an essential accessory to affirm one’s femininity.
7) The wrap top

A garment typical of the world of ballet, from which designers have drawn extensively, with tulle details and tutu dresses, the wrap top is enjoying a new lease of life. Plunging necklines are trending, and this kind of cardigan wrapped around the bust, often fastened with long interwoven laces, has been reinterpreted by designers in sportier, sexier fashion, more like a mini bra-top. Sleeveless and made in body-hugging fabrics, like those used for bras, it is worn with a bare belly under a jacket, or over a chest-clinging dress.
8) The colour violet

Colours are definitely back in the summer 2022 season. Monochrome total looks are very much the order of the day, featuring intense, bright, vibrant hues, among which violet, at once chic and aristocratic, has pride of place. It is featured in all its shades, from lilac to lavender, mauve and purple, in a wide variety of combinations, from the freshest, lightest hues to darker tones.
9) Bare shoulders

Shoulders are revealed thanks to rounded openings in jackets and dresses, and to sleeves that glide down the arms. Bardot-style scoop necks are especially popular. With necklines that lay bare the neck and shoulders, frilled dresses and tops with drop-down sleeves will be next summer’s must-have, uber-wearable items. A clear example of the sensual, romantic and summery mood prevailing on the catwalks, especially given the plethora of frilled outfits. Brigitte Bardot’s unique style has visibly inspired designers, resulting in a spate of country-girl dresses, asymmetric boho blouses and gingham outfits.
10) Platform shoes

Thick wedge soles and chunky platforms, from the top of which one can strut and gain height, continue to be hugely desirable. Boots are still popular and continue to be a feature, but maxi wedge sandals have been a recent catwalk hit. Top of the charts was GCDS, which dared to present 25 cm heels! Thick soles, to stay firmly grounded and especially to avoid going unnoticed, seem to be a sure bet for summer 2022.

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