

A top that shimmers, a jacket that slouches, colorful dresses that drape just right.

Fashion insiders zero in on the season's best, most wearable trends.

Five Sure Things for Spring

Photographs by ROGER NEVE



THE GLITZY TANK

With its matte sequins and uncomplicated shape, this top lets you shine.

ISAAC MIZRAHI, designer

You don't normally think of sequins as practical, but there's a simplicity and restraint to this shell (IsaacMizrahiLive!, \$160) that gives it surprising versatility. "It's like a luxurious accessory—great for evening with a dressy long skirt, or an unexpected bit of finery for daytime with jeans or a pencil skirt," says Mizrahi, pictured in the studio where he shoots *IsaacMizrahiLive!*, the show featuring his new lifestyle collection for QVC. Metallics, in fact, can act almost like neutrals, adding luster to anything you wear (like these separates in tender spring colors from Mizrahi's regular line). Jacket, pants, earrings, and shoes, Isaac Mizrahi New York. Cuff, Kara by Kara Ross. Bangle, Alexis Bittar.

Just because you're wearing a blazer doesn't mean you have to come off like a stuffed shirt. A more fluid silhouette loosens things up.



THE EASY BLAZER

Keep the professionalism, lose the primness, with an attractively relaxed jacket.

LISA AXELSON, senior vice president of design, Ann Taylor

Wanted: A work uniform that's both feminine and authoritative. Found: "An updated blazer that's softer, less crisp and structured," reports Axelson, *above right*, from her midtown New York showroom. She wears the jacket (\$228) with a print dress (\$158). Necklace, Ann Taylor. On the model, *above left*, the single-button version (\$268) looks beautifully nonchalant over a lilac petaled shell (\$88) and handsome trousers (\$128). Bangles, Vicki Turbeville. Belt, Ann Taylor. For formal occasions, the jackets can also suit up with matching pants or a skirt. Pale neutrals like these, Axelson says, are terrific for seasonal transitions: "Wear them with black or dark denim now—when it's too soon to do light colors head-to-toe—then mix with similar tones later."



THE PRINTED JERSEY DRESS

Comfortable and kind to curves, a one-piece makes color an everyday pleasure.

TRACY REESE, designer

For busy women, there's nothing easier or chicer than a dress. "On Monday mornings, I almost always grab one," says Reese, *above left*, in a blue maxi (\$295) that brightens her design studio. "Sportswear takes more time." Color lifts her mood ("It helps when you feel low or drab"), and she likes jersey because it's packable, flattering, and comfortable. "More body types can wear a fabric that stretches and gives," says Reese. Dresses are also an excellent value; they can segue between events with a mere change of accessories: The blue, *opposite page* (\$275), and the red print (\$275) get a slightly ethnic look from embellished belts (Be & D), hoop earrings (KC Designs, Me & Ro), and bracelets (Cara Croninger, Ben-Amun by Isaac Manevitz). Ring, Paige Novick.

A rumpled jacket or a bit of messy hair makes you approachable. "Too polished and perfect can be intimidating," says Jenna Lyons.



THE UTILITY JACKET

Safari meets military in this classic that can anchor anything from jeans to a party dress.

JENNA LYONS, creative director, J.Crew

"Borrowed from the boys" is the mantra for spring, says Lyons, *above*, citing the rumpled, offhand charm of a casual jacket (*opposite page*, \$110). Feminine clothes, she explains, seem fresher spiked with masculine elements—an oxford shoe, a big watch, a long cardigan (\$70). And menswear fabrics are a fine balance for delicate shades and girly details like sequins (minidress, \$495). Unexpected combinations are key: "The other night I wore an army green utility jacket to a black-tie event with a white tweed dress and tons of jewels," Lyons recounts. "I got a *lot* of compliments." Lyons's clothes and all accessories, J.Crew.



These colors lend themselves to organic-looking accessories in materials like leather, woven straw, and resin.

THE SPICY PALETTE

A pinch or two of warm color adds flavor to a basic wardrobe.

ADAM GLASSMAN, creative director, *O, The Oprah Magazine*

Bland clothing is as boring as tasteless food. Glassman, pictured at work in the *O* fashion department, is wild about saffron, not to mention ginger, nutmeg, cayenne, mustard.... "These are colors that connect to nature," he says. "They make every skin tone look luminescent." Pick something in a strong orange, like this silk-blend halter, *above right* (dress and belt, Max Mara), if your complexion is dark or olive; paler types should choose a more subdued shade, like the marigold of this short, drapery dress, *opposite page* (Costello Tagliapietra, \$1,500). Necklace, Ben-Amun by Isaac Manevitz. Bangles, R.J. Graziano, Ashley Pittman Collection. Shoes, Cesare Paciotti. Not that you have to commit to a whole outfit: An inexpensive update (a vibrant chain or T-shirt, say) is fine for starters. *For details see Shop Guide.*

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