

THE DEVIL WEARS

PANTONE By Catherine Murphy, CCR

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Purple was the hot color this back-to-school season, but not anymore. Are you curious about what new colors are coming down the pipeline? Do you wait for your clothing rep to tell you? Do you think it will just randomly show up in next season's line?

Do you ever think it is coincidence that a particular fashion color has taken off? Do you think that it is because that is the color that everyone likes? Maybe the color has been on a few items and because it began to fly off the shelves, the stores brought in more. If you think that is how the fashion industry works, you are sadly mistaken.

Phlox is the actual name of the color of Fall 2011, not purple. It was not just a forecasted color, but rather a planned color. You see, every season Pantone surveys the designers of New York Fashion Week and beyond to collect feedback on prominent colors in their collections, color inspiration and color philosophy. This information is used to create the PANTONE Fashion Color Report, which serves as a reference tool throughout the year for fashion enthusiasts, reporters and

retailers....and hopefully YOU.

Ann Taylor seems to follow the Pantone color report to a tee. Their entire line focuses around the colors of the season. Shopping in an Ann Taylor store is like browsing the Pantone color palette.

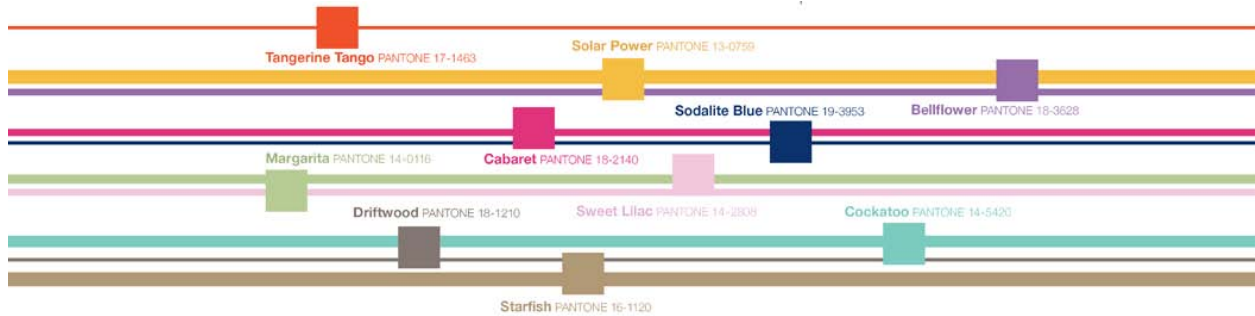


However, don't think that just a conservative, sophisticated store such as Ann Taylor, is the only store that adheres to the Pantone colors. Urban Outfitters, as trendy as they are, also follows the Pantone color palette. Here is a tank from Urban Outfitters in the color Quarry (left). No matter what the store, or what niche they fall into, they all follow the palette in some form. If they didn't, they wouldn't stay afloat in the sea of retail choices. Consumers want the Pantone color palette, whether they know it or not. Meryl Streep said it best when she commented on a sweater in the movie, *The Devil Wears Prada*. Her profound statement enlightens us with the truth behind colors and why they end up in our stores. She says, 'that (color) represents millions of

dollars and countless jobs. It is comical that you think that you've made a choice that exempts you from the fashion industry, when in fact you are wearing a sweater that was selected for you by the people in this room, from a pile of stuff'.

quarry

With that being said, think about the following....Tangerine Tango, Solar Power, Bellflower, Margarita, Driftwood....does this mean anything to you? If it doesn't mean anything, then you are not up-to-date on the Pantone colors for Spring 2012 (see below).



Because the new color palette has already been determined, you will start to see these colors popping up in stores soon. As a matter of fact, take a look at Vera Bradley's Spring collection (right). Can you see the Sodalite Blue and Solar Power on one bag, and then the Margarita and Cockatoo on another? Nearly every color of the collection is found in the palette. You don't even realize that you will like these bags, but come spring you will!



The colors also represent the 'feel' of the season. The word is (well, at least according to designer Ella Moss) that we will crave 'easy and playful with an elevated sense of casualness'. What is more playful than 'solar power and cockatoo' or more relaxed than 'sodalite blue and driftwood'?



Now you ask, what does this mean for the Collegiate Retail industry? Well, the collegiate retail industry is experiencing a very volatile period of transformation. It is imperative that college stores find themselves...and quick. We are retailers and why shouldn't we follow suit with the successful retailers of the world and give our customers what they want. We can't just rest on our past as successful stewards of course materials. We need to prove to our students that we are professional retailers. If we carry the latest, most popular styles, then we give ourselves credibility with our customers. In order to do that, we must be prepared in advance so that we can introduce the trends in our stores...not a few months after all of the other major retailers.

So here's a link to put in your 'favorites'. Check it often and have it handy when placing orders for the upcoming season! www.pantone.com

