The Neck’s Big Thing

For spring ’08, texture and florals are making a resurgence

BY BRENNER THOMAS

Vendors are getting their first samples and strike-offs from overseas, and already there are notable trends taking shape for next spring’s neckwear. Paisleys are beguiling botanicals; texture will continue to triumph; and patterns—taking a cue from the handbag and youth markets—are getting splattered all over, with boutique tie makers to licensing powerhouses investing in the trend.

Randa, which produces ties for Trafalgar, Izod and Geoffrey Beene, barely offered any printed ties in its lineup for the past few years, but that’s going to change. Come spring 2008, prints—inn geometric, retro and allover patterns—will make up 10 percent of the lines. “They’re going to be flat, with little shading,” says senior vice-president of merchandising John Kammeier. “We feel better about prints because we’ve been working on the processing. Prints can feel dry.”

Small players, like Aussie Bird Dog Bay, will evoke the traditional Hermès equestrian chain link in an allover-print ties. The company, which is licensed by Steve Mayer in January of last year, has up to now gravitated toward animal motifs novelty ties.

to Hermès’ iconic patterns for its spring line. Expect to see chain link and bridle bit laced across its neckwear. Simon Mender, president of British Apparel, which also represents Pantherella, says its print business will outpace woven next year. “There’s been much more interest for prints in the market lately.”

For an exception ever proved a rule, Vineyard Vines, known for its beachy novelty prints, is introducing wovens this fall and will expand the collection next spring. “We think we can hit another customer [with wovens],” says cofounder and CEO Ian Murray. The Connecticut-based casual lifestyle company will also play up another of next spring’s trendy textures. It will be showing its growing line of wovens on a sweatsucker jacket. “It’s the prettiest thing you’ve seen in your life,” says Murray.

Another holdover is in the textured realm is stripes. While fashion editors have been ringing their death knell for years, Lou Bonnanzo, vice-president of sales for Pull and Co., which represents the A|X Armani brand, says stripes have continued to sell well as long as they mix color and pattern. The Italy-based neckwear company, which retails in better specialty stores, it bucking another spring trend: pastels. “No pastel treated textiles. Next year’s collection will be cut from raw silk, rough linen and what he calls ‘deliberately messed up’ cotton. “I like ties with a natural hand that have a nap to them,” says the young designer, whose trendy neckwear retails in Bergdorf Goodman Men.

In addition to seasonal fabrics, which will make a strong appearance in the Trafalgar and Geoffrey Beene lines, Randa is taking a shine to iridescence. “We’ll have micro-texture solids that have high sheen,” Kammeier says, adding that the sharkskin look will also crop into the company’s offering.

In addition to seasonal fabrics, which will make a strong appearance in the Trafalgar and Geoffrey Beene lines, Randa is taking a shine to iridescence. “We’ll have micro-texture solids that have high sheen,” Kammeier says, adding that the sharkskin look will also crop into the company’s offering.