

What's trending for menswear in S/S 2020?

 By [Maroefah Smith](#)

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Are you unsure of the spring/summer 2020 trends and how best to utilise them for your new menswear collections? Well, we've got you covered. WGSN fashion and beauty editor Polly Walters recently summarised the season's key colours, patterns, items and more at the Source Africa in Cape Town.

Let's get to it!

Get some colours on

According to Walters, social media has become one of the prime considerations for making purchases thus old colour and pattern with basic products are key. She adds that must-have shades aren't changing at massive speed either, which results in more decoration.

WGSN has cited purist blue as a key colour for spring/summer 2020, which is one of the aqua shades that builds towards its Coloro AI aqua shade for 2021. Another "pure" shade is botanical green, a direct update from the sporty, more artificial greens that was forecasted for spring/summer19. In a similar vein, natural neutrals in shades of mushroom, almond and birch are making a mark, which is driven by a rise in natural-base fabrics such as lyocell and Tencel. These naturals increased by 119% in the UK and 70% in the US across new season new-ins.

Another neutral to keep a look out for: grey. It's a shade that is trending for spring/summer20, increasing by 13% year-on-year at luxury retail.

And just when you thought pink was over, it's come back with a vengeance in richer, darker tones. Walters reckons that pink can be used across all items and she's not wrong, at luxury retail, pink trousers more than double year-on-year – 122% in the UK and 80% across spring/summer19 new in-season deliveries. But if you're over pink, there's also lilac. While it may seem a bit non-traditional for menswear, it's an ideal complimentary colour to blue and yellow and tobacco hues, especially for the younger consumer.

Speaking of the younger consumer, Gen Z yellow is being overtaken by a more subdued variant, mellow yellow. This toned-down shade of optimism is the fastest growing colour of spring/summer19 with new-ins growing by 106% in the UK and 10% in the US.

Get it patterned

A staple menswear pattern that is not going anywhere is camouflage. The pattern offers an opportunity to minimise risk while still adding colour and pattern to consumers who understand it as an alternative to plains. Walters suggests using it on matching sets and as a commercial print across apparel and accessories. Another staple that's not going anywhere is checks. Although it's more predominant in autumn/winter, its application in spring/summer asks that you think outside the box with graphic prints, Madras styles and tablecloth designs. At luxury retails, checks increased by 20% in the UK and 16% in the US across spring/summer19 and there was a notable increase in the outerwear category increasing by 87% in the UK.

This rise in painterly print asks that you think of your garment as a blank canvas for opportunistic collaborations with up-and-coming artists. Painted and painterly prints increased 60% year-on-year across printed apparel. You may explore this artistic premise with saturated darks and summery brights upscaled with sporadic brush strokes, paint splatters and watery mark-making. The vertical resort stripe is a brilliant way to introduce your consumers to something new. It can be done in two ways: super laidback '90s or smarter '50s looks.



Vertical stripes and a new take on check at Acne Studios. Image credit: Acne Studios

The resort shirt is making a splash and forcing you to think of base colours as much as your print colours. Go beyond the Hawaiian-shirt style with the hibiscus print and introduce leaves, floral and animal motifs. Tie-dye allows you to use sustainability as a selling-point so ensure that you use sustainable and environmentally-friendly dye ingredients when creating garments with this pattern. And tie-dye is definitely in demand, it increased by 60% across new-ins in retail. Implement it in indigo variations that feel smart, monochrome options that allow more commercial matching sets as well all-over print artwork as an inexpensive option.

Mundane prints may seem boring and everyday but these utility and bad taste themes are continuing to garner pace. Walters says that it's all about mixing minimalist and lo-fi looks for a tongue-in-cheek comment on consumer culture. And the easiest way to add this to your looks is simple messages in San Serif fonts on jersey staples, denim, knitwear and accessories.

More than jeans and t-shirts

Given the state of the world – environmentally and economically – consumers are looking for more bang for their buck. “There's a continued breaking down of silos across menswear and designers continue to create clothing that straddles smart and casual worlds, offering the consumer a versatile wardrobe for multiple end-uses,” says Walters.

Focus on rethinking and redesigning old items with new and innovative styles and shapes. With the emphasis on being sustainable and keeping climate change in mind, include items that enable consumers to continue to buy trans-seasonally. In terms of outerwear, the boxy jacket, the bomber, the anorak (or parka) and something that may not be for all your shoppers, the summer trench.

The resort shirt is here to stay; new-ins grew 63% in the UK and 78% in the US. A return to minimalism will have you reworking your basics, which includes the t-shirt. Breathe new life into this old faithful with plains, melanges, micro-tech textures and blends. The volume t-shirt is another basic that doesn't need too much to be updated. Walters says that it doesn't even need to be super oversized – just drop the shoulder by the seams and add quieter photo prints and placement text prints the focus on plainer tees and weightier fabrics.



Looks from Jacquemus's debut menswear S/S collection. Image credit: Jacquemus.

A more commercially-accessible iteration of the much-imitated sculptural shirt presented by Raf Simons in spring/summer17, the reworked city shirt allows you to play with varying levels of contrast patterns and change up the fit, length, pocket collar and cuff details. A bit more preppy, the rugby or polo shirt saw an increase of 90+% in the UK and 29% in the US and has been carried through to the runways of spring/summer20 in London. In terms of execution, the retro-style polo has to be contemporary in execution, slightly retro colourways and interesting textures.

Trousers are either relaxed or smartened up. In the smart corner, you've got the aptly named smart jogger, the straight crop and a premium fabric cargo pants. In the chill corner, there are the relaxed jeans, wider, knee-length Bermuda shorts and the slouchier, looser volume trouser. This trend follows through to suits, which are more relaxed and less structured while also allowing more experimentation with modern updates on pinstripes, checks and summery Madras-styles.

Keep it light, keep it fun

Because basics are being updated in fun and new ways, experimentation in details and fabrics is amped up for spring/summer 2020. "Details and trims are playing an important role in supporting familiar key shapes that are changing at a glacial pace in light of tough trading conditions," says Walters. Her advice? Enhance these pieces with interesting badges and prints as well as trims and details and add newness to excite consumers.

The resort shirt needs more than florals. So where to put all your flowery imagery? Your vacation knitwear in lyocell and Tencel blends. While the traditional fade into the past (where it belongs), oldie checks are still ace for new tailoring in cotton, linen and wool bases. Innovative use for boring checks is in everything else but shirts. Upbeat checks grew 139% on trousers in the UK and 35% in the US. You can look at diversify traditional shirting cotton with nylon weights for sportier outerwear, says Walters.



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And remember to keep sustainability in front of your mind when using fabrics. Refined proofs allow you the opportunity to push your green agenda. Recycled polyester grew by 132% in the UK and 43% in the US year-on-year in online retail, so

ensure that you use recycled polyester wherever is possible. This aesthetic is also a great vehicle for re-using dead stock fabric or repurposing from unexpected places.

Also, consider using natural and pared-back fabrics in your basics line. Celluloses drive shine and drape with wider appeal – S/S19 saw [cellulosic shirts](#) increase by 119% in the UK and 70% in the US year-on-year on online retail. While viscose will offer a lower price point than Tencel, Walters suggests that you consider using lyocell fabrics as a part of your core sustainable offering.

The devil is in the details

Given that the season is all about updating pieces we know and love, details are the utmost importance. Grosgrain and woven tapes is an ideal trim to re-invigorate the items that have been essential for menswear for some time. In fact, tape details increased 92% in the UK and 22% in the US year-on-year across spring/summer 19 new-in season deliveries. Block panels also offer reinvigoration and a way to use up your dead stock, but make sure you are creative in your placement. Bright colours and photo placements provide playful elements to ensure that you still incorporate fun into your youthful offerings despite the broader smartening up of menswear.

Selling neon colours as plains can sometimes be tricky, but contrast highlights allow you to drive these shocking colours. Photo-style print placements offer an easy refresh for utility outerwear and jersey staples through vinyl transfers. Placement is key here, ensure that the prints are at the centre to ensure that it is still seen in a layered outfit. Brands are using out-there labelling to assert their place in the world. This is mostly seen through playful, minimal and heritage-led branding, but keep your consumer in mind when implementing this.

The utility look with hyper-functionality for menswear is still being utilised. Modular pocket designs in technical proofs, treated cotton, workwear canvas, twill and denim are trimmed with great detail and consideration. Accents of mesh, useful zippers and velcro tabs complement these busy, functional-orientated styles. Military, workwear and uniform-inspired looks continue their influence creating a bedrock of wardrobe building pieces that menswear can rely on. And zip tapes are easy to bring a bit of fashion colour to a universally understood garment.



Upscaled utility looks sported by BTS in custom Dior by Kim Jones. Image credit: Dior.

The concealed placket is a key styling detail for spring/summer 2020. It is great for purposeful outer and retro sportswear and makes for a cleaner minimalist finish, especially for formalwear looks. The biggest WGSN is currently tracking is new

prep decoration. It's a preppy look but executed in a more subversive way – multiple badges, gigantic lettering and quirky placements. While this may be a bit more youth-orientated, Walters asks that you consider the kind of fresh element you can bring to this.

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