

The **WWD**List

A Season of Change

The top 10 Pantone colors chosen by New York designers for fall 2008.

There's change in the air for fall, and it's not just a political one. The warm, subdued colors that typically make up a fall palette have given way to rich blues, greens and purples. "It's a big change for the season," agreed Leatrice Eiseman, executive director of Carlstadt, N.J.-based Pantone Color Institute, which supplied WWD with its top 10 colors for New York designers for fall. "The bottom five colors are the warmer colors we're more accustomed to seeing for fall. The dominance of blue, purple and green really makes a statement about how influential they are for designers this season." In addition, while the shades have a coolness to them, "they're actually quite rich. They've got some excitement behind them, too, and they act as a nice balance to the warmer, neutral palette that's represented in the bottom five colors." — Cecily Hall

<p>1</p> 	<p>PANTONE 18-3843 BLUE IRIS Chosen by 13.95 percent of designers</p> <p>Pantone's 2008 Color of the Year is also designers' favorite color for fall. "Each year, Pantone chooses a color that we think represents what the year is about," said Eiseman of Pantone Color Institute. "What's the message this year? People are looking for calm in such a volatile year — especially now, with the election and the turbulent economy. We need that element of calm, but at the same time, this color also has some strength to it." With purple undertones, the color transforms into something a little richer than any plain blue or purple. Designers who incorporated Blue Iris into their collections include Reem Acra and Alice Temperley of Temperley London.</p>
<p>2</p> 	<p>PANTONE 18-3531 ROYAL LILAC 13.18 percent</p> <p>Zac Posen worked a little Royal Lilac magic into his creations for fall — as did Douglas Hannant, whose signature color for the season is "imperial purple," according to Pantone. "This color takes an element of the Blue Iris and injects some red to make it a little hotter. Women — and even men, these days — are discovering how fabulous a color purple can be." Designers are obviously getting the message, too, since they're using it in their work. Eiseman also pointed out that retailers also have warmed to the color purple. "They're nowhere near as fearful about featuring purple on their floors as they once were," she said.</p>
<p>3</p> 	<p>PANTONE 18-5634 SHADY GLADE 12.4 percent</p> <p>"This is such an elegant representation of the green family," noted Eiseman. "This green works beautifully in an evening dress with a satin finish." And it's already been proven popular, having made a huge splash when Keira Knightley's character in the film "Atonement" wears a green satin evening gown from costume designer Jacqueline Durran during one of the most poignant scenes. Though not decidedly yellow or blue green, it's a color that fits somewhere in between the two. "I'm loving the direction that green is headed. You will definitely see this shade of green at the Academy Awards this year," predicted Eiseman. Perhaps from designers such as Carmen Marc Valvo, Luca Orlandi for Luca Luca and Doo-Ri Chung for Doo.Ri, who all feature Shady Glade in their dresses for fall.</p>
<p>4</p> 	<p>PANTONE 18-4525 CARIBBEAN SEA 11.3 percent</p> <p>Tracy Reese sums up her color philosophy for the season this way: "Embrace the elements of nature and wear rich and bold explosions of color for fall." She, along with designers Peter Som and Akiko Ogawa, chose Caribbean Sea to complement their collections. "I see this color choice used more in a flash of an accessory, or mixed in with prints and patterns," said Eiseman. "It's a great color to think about for winter vacations. People want this in their wardrobe for their upcoming trips. It's always a consumer favorite." She pointed out that the color can be paired with greens and deeper blue shades, such as Shady Glade and even Blue Iris.</p>
<p>5</p> 	<p>PANTONE 19-3938 TWILIGHT BLUE 10.85 percent</p> <p>"This isn't your average navy blue," said Eiseman. The color includes a bit of red to give it a warmer, more exciting feel. She added, "We think of this more as a spring background color, but here it is in the top five for fall. It'll work great with textures that have a sheen to them." She said the color will be seen in wardrobe basics, such as suits and pants — "this is a great color option for those pieces." Yigal Azrouël, who said he chose a "dark and moody, somber but rich and healthy" fall palette, according to Pantone, included Twilight Blue in his collection. The color also lent itself to Kimora Lee Simmons' collection — she was inspired by stained glass and Art Deco finishes this season.</p>
<p>6</p> 	<p>PANTONE 18-1550 AURORA RED 8.87 percent</p> <p>This fall's red is just that — a true, rich red, which will have a very broad appeal to consumers, noted Eiseman. "We'd be astonished not to see a red for the fall palette," she said. "And this version is particularly beautiful. Not to mention, it's an ideal color for the holidays, so of course we know there will be consumer response to that point alone." Waleed Khairzada for Cynthia Steffe noted in Pantone's fall report that red was his signature color for fall. It also can be found throughout David Rodriguez's collection. "Red rules!" he said of the color. "A beautiful, rich red has been my favorite color since childhood." Hanii Yoon and Gene Kang for Y & Kei also chose this version of red, stating that their color philosophy focused on "rich and warm colors that are communicated in a subtle and indirect manner."</p>
<p>7</p> 	<p>PANTONE 14-1036 OCHRE 8.52 percent</p> <p>When pairing this version of yellow with others in the top 10 palette, "the combinations are endless," said Eiseman. "Designers are doing more of the unexpected in their color combinations. While most can imagine seeing this against Shitake or Burnt Orange, a more unexpected match would be up against Blue Iris or Caribbean Sea." Lela Rose chose this shade as part of her fall collection, noting that her color philosophy included "jewel tones, texture and layers all mixed into one." And we'll see Ochre in Alvin Valley's lineup, too — his prominent shades this season: "Earth tones and industrial neutrals, with accents in Picante, Inca Gold, Ice Flow and Burnt Orange." Said Eiseman: "People are ready for yellow. We're going to see much of this color in knitwear and accessories."</p>
<p>8</p> 	<p>PANTONE 16-1448 BURNT ORANGE 7.75 percent</p> <p>Wichy Hassan for Miss Sixty said of his signature color for the season: "It's purple with a touch of orange — vintage and modern, hippie but haute, tough yet feminine. Pops of bright coral orange add a graphic, rock 'n' roll element..." Eiseman, too, pointed out that the color combination of Burnt Orange against something like Blue Iris was thinking out of the box: "You're getting these kinds of complex pairings that are really going to tweak the consumer's eye. This color, which is a deeper, more intense version of your typical orange, lets designers really explore such a wide range of combinations."</p>
<p>9</p> 	<p>PANTONE 18-1015 SHITAKE 6.98 percent</p> <p>It's the ideal neutral, yet versatile color for fall. "Is it brown? Is it gray? Is it green? It's all of those. The complexity behind this shade of brown offers consumers a lot of different options when pairing it against other colors in their wardrobes," said Eiseman. She selected colors such as Aurora Red, Royal Lilac and Caribbean Sea as interesting matches against Shitake. Or, to keep it quieter, a designer could mix it with Twilight Blue. This is Elie Tahari's signature color this season. His inspiration: "Saturated hues inspired by gemstones and gold ornamentation." Tia Cibani for Ports 1961 and Jenni Kayne also incorporated this version of brown into their collections.</p>
<p>10</p> 	<p>PANTONE 18-1435 WITHERED ROSE 6.2 percent</p> <p>Brian Reyes made Withered Rose his signature color for fall. In the Pantone fall report, he said of the color: "Withered Rose is a very strong element that stands out on its own. It plays a dual role as a strong mineral hue and also has a touch of natural terrain." The combination of pink mixed in with brown undertones makes Withered Rose a very subtle, warm shade that will be found in many different kinds of fabrics, said Eiseman. "This blends so beautifully with most of the colors in the fall palette. It's a quiet color, and designers are putting it against the blues and the browns in the top 10."</p>