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Ryan Autullo

Article published Sunday, December 23, 2007
 THE SEASON TO SHINE

Fashion's mixed message: Gold and silver go together

By **ANN WEBER**
 BLADE STAFF WRITER

Amid a tsunami of plastic gift cards, it's metal and baubles - real or not - that mist the eyes of a jewelry lover.

And although the Christmas shopping window is sliding shut, it's not too late to buy something that fits into a nice little box rather than an envelope.

"It's all about shine this season and anything metallic is a win," advises Laura Schara, trend expert for Macy's. "So look for gold, silver, gun metal, bronze - basically anything that shines."

JEWELRY SAVVY

Here's some advice from Jewelry Savvy, What Every Jewelry Wearer Should Know, by Cynthia Sliwa and Caroline Stanley (Jewels on Jewels, Inc., 2007, \$19.99).

- The eye is drawn to the point at which an earring ends, especially if it's shiny or has movement. If you have jowls, multiple chins, or sun-damaged skin on your neck, consider whether you really want that area to be a focal point.

- Don't confuse the eye. Harmonize your necklace with your neckline. More than any other item of jewelry in your collection, a necklace needs

Cuff and bangle bracelets and cocktail rings "are also must-haves for the season," reports David Hacker, vice president of trend and color for Kohl's. However, he says via e-mail that "necklaces continue to be the top jewelry item, with pendants being most important."

Gold is becoming more popular in fashion jewelry, Mr. Hacker says. That doesn't mean you have to put away your silver, though. "The idea of mixed metals is new and adds versatility to a look," he observes.

Mixing metals is trendy in jewelry, but we've also gotten away from matching finishes from top to bottom in an ensemble, says Betsy Thompson, fashion spokesman for

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to be chosen with the outfit you plan to accessorize in mind.

•The optimal size of pearls or beads for you to wear, like the other design details of your jewelry, relates to the size of your facial features, not the overall size of your body or the size of your wallet.

•Give yourself the blink test: Stand at least five feet back from a full-length mirror and close your eyes for several seconds. When you open your eyes, notice where your attention focuses first. That's what others will notice about you first, too.

•Avoid putting lotion and sunscreen on jewelry, especially on rings and items with gemstones. The lotion or sunscreen will gum up the piece of jewelry and dull its sparkle, and will make it more difficult to clean.

•To keep thin chains tangle-free between wearings, thread each of them through a straw cut to a length that allows you to fasten the chain.

- Ann Weber

Talbots in Hingham, Mass. Women aren't so concerned anymore about wearing a gold belt with a silver necklace, for example, or vice versa. "It's no more 'one or the other,'" Ms. Thompson says in a telephone interview.

Mixing it up doesn't stop with metal finishes. It's also happening with matched sets of jewelry.

"People aren't necessarily buying the earrings that go with the necklace - or if they're buying them they don't necessarily wear them together," Ms. Thompson says, speculating that women are trying to put together a look that has more visual interest and reflects their individuality.

"Jewelry is certainly something that is very expressive of a personality, of a mood," Ms. Thompson adds.

The mood is often playful - pairing a T-shirt with a dressy necklace, for example, or a stretchy, multi-strand bracelet with a smooth silver bangle. Some women wear necklaces looped around their wrists; a soft mesh chain belt can be worn as a necklace.

Retailers also say the chunky look is popular this season - and it has nothing to do with the consequences of making too many trips to the buffet table.

Today's trendy bracelets and necklaces are bold and oversized, Macy's Ms. Schara says via e-mail. Look for fat gems in deep jewel tones as well as clear, she adds.

Kohl's' Mr. Hacker agrees on the move to bold-and-chunky looks, items that he calls "statement pieces." Another way to make a statement is to layer jewelry by wearing multiple necklaces and bracelets, he points out.

Not matter what kind of jewelry you wear - or how much of it - you need to consider how it's going to work with your clothing and body type.

As Ms. Scara points out, "If your outfit has a busy pattern, you will want to keep your accessories simple; however, if your look is clean, jewelry is your best ensemble completer."

Embellishments on clothing, such as a beaded edge on a T-shirt or sweater, can compete with a necklace, Ms. Thompson says.

She adds that certain types of necklaces may be bad choices because they draw attention to physical characteristics you'd rather hide - a choker necklace on a ringed neck, or a long necklace that swings off the ledge of a full bust.

"Too often women don't get advice about how to accessorize," declares Cynthia Sliwa, co-author of a new paperback called Jewelry Savvy, What Every Jewelry Wearer Should Know (Jewels on Jewels, Inc., \$19.99). Not wearing jewelry correctly is a common mistake, according to the authors.

"If a piece of jewelry calls to someone, it's probably going to be beautiful or flattering on her, but not always," Ms. Sliwa says in a telephone interview from her home near Los Angeles.

A common mistake is not coordinating a necklace with the neckline of a dress, blouse, or sweater. "The necklace needs to fit above or below the neckline. If it crosses over, one or the other needs to be dominant," Ms. Sliwa advises. The key principle, according to the book, is that "the eye does not like to be confused. The eye wants to see harmony of line."

The size of a woman's features is another consideration, she and co-author Caroline Stanley write. A woman whose eyes, nose, and mouth are large relative to the size of her face can successfully wear jewelry with larger scale detail.



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Delicate features call for smaller, finer details.

But size is a tricky matter.

"I have seen women who are afraid to choose pieces that are large enough to really flatter them," Ms. Sliwa says. "Earrings are a good example," she adds, asserting that they are a woman's most important jewelry because they draw attention to her face.

"Stud earrings pretty much look fine on anyone, because they don't interfere with the line of the ear, but they should relate to the size of the earlobe," she explains. "I think we start wearing earrings when we're children and never really graduate to something that has more presence ... earrings that relate to a more mature woman and her features."

If you're still gift-hunting, Ms. Sliwa suggests that bracelets are very popular now and can be worn by most women.

And brooches or pins work for everyone, she says. "They don't care what size you are."

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