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GOING BEYOND NERDY

While retro still rules as a design trend, eyewear designers are refining the look and branching out.

Beth Schlau

The current evolution of men's eyewear has centered around the ubiquitous retro, geek chic style that's taken hold of fashion in general. Chunky plastics in an array of muted colors prevail, but thinner profiles take the lead. Design elements range from laser treatments to wooden inserts to two-tone colorings. Stepping outside the vintage box, however, is rimless which is still in the picture albeit with a new twist—the temples have become more dramatic.

CHANGING IT UP...

Vintage is a trend that is still relevant for today's man who's looking for staying power in his eyewear. And this works well for the male consumer who is typically conservative and less likely to take fashion risks.

What's different is that the geek chic look is getting more streamlined and less heavy and frame manufacturers are exploring more expressive interpretations of retro styling. G MB Flat by GANT by Michael Bastian from Viva International Group, Jaguar Spirit Style No. 31009 from Eastern States Eyewear, and ClearVision Optical's Cole Haan Style No. 210 take retro a step further in this way. Key hole bridges, temple designs, an array of embellishments (i.e., wood inserts, laser treatments, and antique brushed finishes), and accent colors all add to the modern slant of the trend. Aspex Eyewear's Greg Norman Style No. GN205, JOE Style No. 4008 from Altair Eyewear, and i-dealoptics' Haggag Style No. 223 rev up the sophistication with temple treatments.

While rectangles remain an important shape to reckon with, P3's and rounds are becoming increasingly popular. Hickey Freeman's Cambridge from Signature Eye-wear, Randy Jackson Style No. RJ 1034 from Zyloware Eyewear, and Safilo USA's Giorgio Armani Style No. GA828 are examples of the newer rounded shapes.

Aviators and navigators are on frame boards everywhere, especially in sunwear, as they're classic yet very wearable. Look to Burberry Style No. BE 3051 from Luxottica for a modern take on these shapes.

RIMLESS RETURNS

It's not that rimless ever really went away, it's just undergone a renaissance with more emphasis on the temples. Men will always be drawn to this design for its light weight and comfort and near invisibility on the face, and today's styles have all that plus bolder shapes. The real change, however, is in the temples which sport dimensional carving, sculpted detailing, and hot new colors. Temples are constructed of lightweight materials (e.g., titanium, stainless steel, TR-90) as a way to maintain rimless' main attraction of comfort, but yet two-tone coloring, split temples (Evaik Style No. 9030 from Wescan Optical, Oga Krok from Morel, and Orvis Rapidan from The McGee Group show this), and patterns give a modern, fashionable look. And for the ultimate geek chic look, there's semi-rimless styling as in Victory Optical's Atlas Style No. VC 311.

COLOR BRANCHES

In addition to the classic men's colors of black, gunmetal, and tortoise, today's hues have started to branch out into more dynamic shades. Navy has come to the forefront as a chic change from neutrals, while khaki and more interesting tortoisés are also moving in as popular colors. Tod's Style No. TO0034 from Marcolin USA, Arrow's Robert frame from Nouveau Eyewear, and Tura Ted Baker Style No. B196 are three different takes on the use of blue. Red appears in John Varvatos Style No. V342 from REM Eyewear but is also being used as accents on other frames, as are burnt orange, burgundy, and green.

Also prevalent are two-tone colorations, with different shades of the same color family or similar hues. Look to Kenmark Group's República Montreal and Marchon Eyewear's Michael Kors Style No. MK228M for gradient coloring.

As men become willing to take more risks, eyewear manufacturers will expand their offerings in this very dynamic category.

Beth Schlau is Vice President, Editorial at First Vision Media Group.

WHERE TO FIND IT

Altair Eyewear
800-505-5557 • altaireyewear.com

Aspex Eyewear
800-277-3979 • aspexeyewear.com

ClearVision Optical Co.
800-645-3733 • cvoptical.com

G MB Flat by Gant by Michael Bastian

