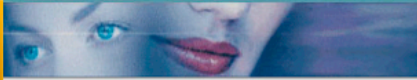


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By [HEATHER TOSKAN](#), Special to QMI Agency

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Whether you've been wearing glasses for years or have just been handed your first prescription, a new pair can give you a clearer outlook.

"Changing your frames instantly updates your look and is a great way to show off your style and your personality," says Kristie Whitford, a spokesperson for The Vision Council, a Virginia-based organization which represents manufacturers and suppliers in the optical industry.

"Eyeglass trends are changing faster than ever. Eyeglasses should be seen as accessories and be updated just as you would update your shoes and handbags," says Amin Mamdani, a vice president with Josephson Opticians in Toronto.

Styles that mix materials include those with metal fronts and acetate or plastic temples.

"Translucent, patterned acetate is a definite trend that provides more depth and interest to plastic frames," says Beverley Suliteanu, a creative director and vice president of product development at Westgroupe, producers and distributors of eyewear.

Leading edge styles trend toward architectural, earthy and oversized "geek chic" frames with a retro vibe. Fifties-inspired cat-eye shapes continue to gather steam, as do bold rectangular, square, and round shapes inspired by the sixties and seventies.

"Eyewear gets its design and colour cues from what's hot in the fashion world. The retro look in eyewear corresponds to the retro-inspired (clothing) looks that we saw on the runways and to the fact that Hollywood as a whole has really embraced the geek chic, retro look," says Suliteanu.

According to Whitford, celebrity geek-chicers include Lauren Conrad, Scarlett Johansson, Hilary Duff, Demi Moore, Emily Blunt, Avril Lavigne, Leighton Meester, Kelly Osbourne, and Katy Perry.

Guys such as Justin Bieber, Johnny Depp and Justin Timberlake are also taking to the look in rounded and squared plastic frames.

Frame colours include bold black, bright colours and two-tone laminates, while specific hues include violet, plum, black and red.

"The green movement has also had an influence on frame design. Natural earth colours are popular and eyewear designers are taking their cues from the environment with the use of natural materials such as wood and also in the development of new finishings to make plastic look like wood," says Suliteanu.

Whether you're able to shop for a wardrobe of glass frames or whether you prefer to find one pair that suits both your personality and your wardrobe, you'll want to be certain that the frames you choose work for your face shape. To that end, the classic advice of choosing glasses that are opposite to your face shape still holds true.

"If you have an angular face, choose a slightly rounded shape. If your face is rounder you will want frames with angles. When selecting eyewear, the number one goal is to make sure the frame you choose creates balance with your face," advises Whitford.



Ruth models a pair of black white and blue frames that feature a slightly marbled style (\$425, Josephson Opticians, josephson.ca). Marbled effects offer a distinctive textural look and are a way to add colour in a subtle way. (Sue Reeve/QMI Agency)

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Slim rectangular burgundy metal frames (\$235, Kliik, kliik.com) feature a streamlined shape that will suit those with smaller facial features. (Sue Reeve/QMI Agency)



A pair of violet coloured metal frames (\$240, Fysh, fyshuk.com) features an oblong shape and turquoise swirls at the temples. (Sue Reeve/QMI Agency)



SHOT OF 3 FRAMES: Red rectangular frames feature brown striped detail at temples (\$230, Kliik, kliik.com), square blue, brown and white frames (\$425, Josephson Opticians, josephson.ca) and burgundy and turquoise green laminate cat-eye glass frames (\$500, Josephson Opticians). (Sue Reeve/QMI Agency)



Dark purple elliptical shaped frames with decorative circular cut outs on the temples (\$240, Fysh, fyshuk.com) show off a seasonal trend of shapes and etchings. (Sue Reeve/QMI Agency)



Two-tone black and turquoise plastic frames feature a modern, oversized square shape (\$240, Fysh, fyshuk.com). (Sue Reeve/QMI Agency)