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Designing Eyewear for Men

By Jackie O'Keefe, LDO Today's men are seeking distinctive looks in their eyewear and frame manufacturers are heeding the call.

Do men think about how their frame was created or why it fits and looks so well on them? Do eyewear designers design differently for men than women? You bet they do, and after interviewing five remarkable designers, here's what I discovered.

DIFFERENTIATING

While we all want to be treated as equals, there are differences between women and men that need to be addressed sometimes. Look through any fashion magazine and you'll see distinctive differences in fashion for women and men. So why should eyewear be unique?

French Designer Alain Mikli of Alain Mikli International Group

says: "In this world where we are really confused about who we are, it's nice to know sometimes that we are a woman or we are a man. Historically, I am like everybody else as many years ago I designed unisex product. Two years ago I began introducing real designs for women and men. My women's ophthalmic frames are very sexy and provocative. And for men, it's completely the opposite. I wish to give the man a strong-looking and serious style with a little bit of sensual feeling. Today I offer strong, large frames in thick acetate material, like Style No. AL0929, for example, that have a light feeling, yet are almost unbreakable."

In addition, with its angular



A cut-out bridge adds some casualness to the otherwise business-like design of Evatik Sun Style No. E-1014 from WestGroupe.

shape and unique brow bar, metal Style No. AL1118 pleases the business executive by using color innovations and introducing technical detail to improve the fitting.

SPECIFIC TO MEN

There are physical and facial differences between women and men that need attention when designing men's eyewear. For example, the distance from the back of a man's ear to the front of his face may be longer and the width of his bridge may be wider than a woman's. Comfort is key to the styling process yet a fashionable look is part of it as well.

Todd Rogers, designer for Todd Rogers Eyewear, explains: "When creating eyewear for men, there are specific design considerations. I use wider keyhole bridges, for example, because they fit well on men with larger noses. Here the frame front not only sits properly in front of the eyes, it also sits closer to the eyes making visual acuity better. The overall eye-size needs to be wider and the A measurement should mirror the B measurement. When we pay attention to the total temple length the

eyewear is more comfortable. Lots of men are thicker temporally too and for this reason, the front must be wider. I also design frames with a heavier browline for men."

Classic '40s' styling is the hallmark of the Uncle D style with its visible rivets, five-barrel hinges, and a wide keyhole bridge. It's wearable geek chic for those men who think "I can't pull this off." Another example is Jax. Here Todd Rodgers increased the frame wrap which naturally lengthens the temple rather than lengthening it. Jax is classically styled, with colorways to match.

MANUFACTURING CHALLENGES

Eyewear begins in the designer's mind and goes to the drawing board, then it moves on to the manufacturer. Even with the best design, there may be a few challenges at this point.

Cindy Swain, Director of Product Development and Design at Zyloware Eyewear, says: "When designing Randy Jackson Eyewear, I work closely with Randy for his inspiration. He likes to

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The sexy strength of Marc Ecko Cut & Sew Defender from ClearVision is represented through colorful smoke crystal and green olive tortoise.



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include special, intricate, and unique materials that won't affect fit and comfort. We were able to meet Randy's request of creating extended fit frames without them looking oversized. Men want really masculine shapes and quality and they'll assess these things when they try it on so it's got to be there."

Some examples include Randy Jackson Sun Style No. 902P, a full-rimmed metal with a stylish double-bar bridge in a modified oval shape that suits a variety of faces; and Randy Jackson Limited Edition Style No. X103, a handcrafted zyl that is sleek, retro-inspired, and shaped with metal rivets on both the front and temple.

BALANCING ACT

Men are less likely to have multiple pairs of glasses, so it's important for them to have a look that will work across all aspects of their lifestyle. This includes acknowledging their fashionable side.

Beverly Suliteanu, Creative Director and Vice President of Product Development at WestGroupe, states: "Men of all ages are beginning to experiment with fashion.

Eyewear is a key element of a man's wardrobe and it is important for optical retailers to recognize the shift and adjust their offerings to address these new needs. Clean, modern, and masculine tends to be my style of design. The overall design has to be interesting but not in a manner that overshadows the wearer. Men are becoming more accepting, and even more demanding of color too. We are constantly evolving our color palette as men become more daring in their eyewear choices and the colors they will wear. Finding that balance of just enough detail and color to make the eyewear interesting while maintaining a clean, masculine look is key to the design process."

Evatik Style No. E-9059 is a full-rimmed stainless steel frame that boasts a modern, contemporary look. Its five-barrel hinge doubles as a design element. A great transitional style, this model is equally appropriate for a man to wear with a suit or jeans. It's available in navy blue, an easy color for men to wear; the tone-on-tone temple design creates interest without being too fussy. A cut-out bridge adds some casualness to the otherwise business-like design



Alain Mikli offers strong large frames in thick acetate material (Style No. AL0929 is shown here).

of Evatik Sun Style No. E-1014. Two-tone coloring offers some interest as does the temple design.

IMPORTANCE OF COLOR

For eyewear designers, the world is their color palette and the colors they choose complete the look of their work. Color transforms an ordinary frame into extraordinary eyewear and today's men are paying more attention than ever to color.

Jennifer Coppel, Manager of Product Design and Development at ClearVision Optical Co., recognizes this: "Men are often more conservative than women with regard to frame color. For metal frames, the best-selling colors continue to be gunmetal, brown, and black. For plastic frames, tortoise and black still dominate. ClearVision launched Marc Ecko Cut & Sew Eyewear as an affordable alternative to higher-end bou-

tique eyewear for men looking for more colorful, stylish styles."

Lip Reader translates fashionable, sexy color for men who want to make exciting conversation through their eyewear. This iconic wayfarer style in a palette of green, olive multi, merlot tortoise, and blue black tortoise is sexy, smart, and attainable. The sexy strength of Defender, a bold statement maker, is represented through colorful smoke crystal and green olive tortoise; black is also available for the more conservative man.

So, designing eyewear for men takes thought, skill, and innovative thinking. Remember that the next time you recommend a new style to a male patient. **vcpn**

Jackie O'Keefe is a licensed optician and writer, lecturer, and consultant in the Virginia Beach, VA, area.



Randy Jackson Limited Edition Style No. X103 from Zyloware is a handcrafted zyl that is sleek and retro-inspired.

WHERE TO FIND IT

Alain Mikli Ltd.
800-829-8032 • mikli.com

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

Todd Rogers
800-601-0620 • toddrogerseyewear.com

WestGroupe
800-361-6220 • evatik.com

Zyloware Eyewear
800-765-3700 • zyloware.com