

LEGGWEAR FASHIONS

by CHARLENE NELSON

FALL FASHIONS: Layers & Layers of Colorful Footwear

Fall should be a good season for socks as legs take center stage as the hot spot for accessorizing.

Layering will be the trend as cooler weather moves in. Kneehighs, legwarmers, over-the-knees and tights will be the key players as consumers seek to dress up (or down) their wardrobes.

The influence of the '80s when hosiery was an important part of the total fashion look is expected to push legwear to the forefront of fashion. Short skirts and the consumers' continued interest in boots are also pushing the trend.

"It's about accessorizing, says Jody Eskenazi of HUE. "It's about updating your wardrobe. It is less expensive to accessorize with socks than to buy new apparel."



Two-Tone Fishnets by Wells Hosiery.

Manufacturers are making legwear that calls for layering. For the less-creative consumer, manufacturers are packaging layers together. The more adventurous can mix and match.

HUE makes customizing easy with two new categories it is introducing for fall. HUEtique offers the latest looks and colors in tights, leg warmers, kneehighs, over-the-knees and leg tubes. They come with special embellishments such as crochet and felt flowers.

HUE's ButtonUps offer the assistance in layering by providing layers that can be connected with a



Huetique by HUE.

Legwarmers which made their comeback as a hot accessory item last fall and winter will be back on the scene in hot new colors and are expected to be very good sellers. Over-the-knee styles and kneehighs also will be big draws: the key element in all three styles being the fact that they lend themselves to layering.

"Over-the-knee socks will do well with ladies, especially younger ones. They are worn over tights," says Bloomingdales' Donna Wolff, divisional merchandising manager for intimate apparel.

"There is still a lot of interest in fishnets. We have done very good with the colored fishnets."

Consumers do love fishnets. Manufacturers are prolonging that love affair by offering new and different variations each season.

For fall, we'll see a variety of fall colors that can be worn alone or layered with tights as well as styles that portray the layering look. Wells Hosiery is introducing a shaper fishnet as well as a two-tone fishnet. In the two-tone fishnet, the black remains constant and an over-dye gives the hosiery an additional color. They come in black and denim, black and chocolate and black and burgundy.



ButtonUp Embellishments by HUE.

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button. Consumers can connect two or three pieces together for a customized look.



Renfro Corporation's Bonnie Doon Line.

"The boot look is back so we'll see raggy, slubby and chunkier looks in fashion socks," says Schierlmann.

Denim looks will experience another big season as apparel fashion houses continue to experiment with new and different applications for denim. Jeans and denim capris for fall will sport big boot cuffs that will call for socks with a denim appeal.

Renfro Corporation relaunched its Bonnie Doon socks and legwear accessories brand during March market week. The brand, recognized by its popular Scottie dog in the 1960's,

"You start with the sock buttonup and then choose a coordinating connector and then the add on," explains Eskenazi.

Moretz Inc. is making fashion tights in a cotton blend that can be paired with their over-the-knee and knee-highs or legwarmers in wool blends, angora, and cashmere. Because of the layering trends and continued popularity of boots, Moretz designers expect the hottest sellers to be knee-highs.

Fall will usher in a chunkier look in fashion socks, according to Carol Schierlmann of Neuville Industries which makes Keds socks.



Knee-Highs by Moretz Inc.

premiered its fall line of socks and legwarmers. The line includes argyle prints, whimsical patterns, logo details and darker hues such as mulberry, midnight navy and charcoal.

"We're confident retailers and consumers are ready for a new fun line of socks and hosiery that is in keeping with the current whimsical fashion direction," said Lisa DePriest, Director of Marketing for Bonnie Doon.

Bonnie Doon, which was established in 1919, was acquired by Renfro Corporation in 1994.



Keds For Ladies by Neuville Industries.

Feeling Good

Comfort socks are still a hot-selling item, according to retailers. And, sock manufacturers are continually introducing new varieties to catch consumer's eyes.

Keds fall line will include lounge socks for ladies in heavy fluffy fibers that are soft to the touch in playful colors which will include patchwork and hand knit styles. HUE's new Feel Good Socks for fall include fluffy socks, furry socks and a creamy crew that has an extra soft hand.

Keds featherweight line has transitioned from a primarily cotton construction to microfiber nylon styles.

"It gives the consumer a nice soft, slick, thin style," explains Schierlmann. "Keds is making a big play with its micro-stretch shoes, and the socks with microfibers will tie in."

In the Peds line, Americal is offering some new styles in their low-cuts including seamless styles in a heavier cotton and a low-cut footie with a ribbonlike foldover elastic around the edge. They also are introducing a CoolMax liner with arch support in red, navy, gray, black and white.