

2005 fall & holiday fashion forecast

legwear fashions

by CHARLENE NELSON,
Fashion Editor



As the biggest retail season of the year approaches, legwear manufacturers are singing a familiar tune: "Tis the season to wear and give hosiery."

But, not as many manufacturers are making holiday-specific legwear as in the past (those which sport holiday themes, patterns and designs that are specific only to the holiday season), choosing instead to update specific styles and market them for the season and for gift-giving.

"Holiday socks are fun, but very niche," explains Denise Yow of Moretz Inc. "For Moretz, we are more successful with making special styles and color updates to existing planograms specific to the Christmas Holiday. This helps to give merchants a longer selling period and reduce markdowns."

In its HUE line, Kayser-Roth Corporation rolls out holiday socks, slipper socks and SHUES (slippers) featuring everything from snowflakes, santas and metallic gingerbread

men to tucked out kitties hanging on giant ornament balls. HUE's holiday gift categories are not confined, however, to holiday themes, they also include a variety of slipper socks, slippers, socks and sheers that could be worn year-round as well as glittery show-stopping styles for ringing in the New Year.

Socks and sheers fall into two marketing arenas for the holidays: gifts and holiday wear. Most legwear makers target both with their holiday products. Socks and sheers make for good gift-giving because they are affordable and functional.

And, they can be used for accessorizing holiday outfits ranging from the most-casual to the extremely dressy.

Fine Line Hosiery makes sheers for the holidays with decorative backseams. Backseams doted with red hearts in either black or white sheers are big for the season as well the manufacturer's floral vine pattern. The Randalman, N.C. company also features

sheers for the holiday with a stripe which come in black, white and red, according to Lisa Elliot, vice president and plant manager.

For holiday dressing, Wells Hosiery is decorating sheers with rhinestones: rhinestones decorate the backseams and are sprinkled on black sheers.

Metallics and shine applications which have been rolled out for fall also should be good sellers for holiday wear.

"Sheers sparkle with lots of shine while they provide glamour to holiday attire," says Kim Smith of Acme-McCrary Corporation.

For a night on the town, HUE has rhinestone backseams, tuxedo stripe sheers in black or nude, Lurex rib sheers, shimmer sheers in black, gold or silver; lace trim tulle thigh highs and stockings with built-in garters.

Skirts Expected To Step Up Consumer Interest In Tights and Sheers

With skirts being the hot fashion item for fall, legwear is stepping onto center stage in the fall fashion scene. And, legwear designers are anticipating a good season for tights and sheers as well as socks.

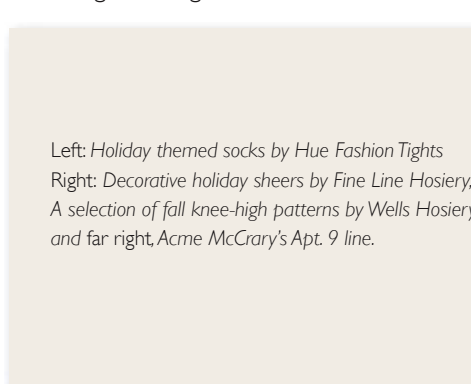
"Legwear once again had a starring role on the fall runways of top designers ranging from Anna Sui to Marc Jacobs to Dolce Gabbana," says Allison Hessert Kayser-Roth Corporation, makers of HUE legwear.

"Making an appearance at the shows were traffic-stopping graphic prints, romantic openwork, textured legwear, solid opaques, school girl knee-highs and ladylike sheers

" Even Chanel showed funky legwarmers in a variety of fabrications from ribbed knits to sheers on almost all the looks."

Legwear in general is getting much more press in fashion magazines and catalogs this season.

Predicted to hit the fall fashion scene running this year will be knee-high socks. Traditionally a fall basic with a limited following, knee-highs are



Left: Holiday themed socks by Hue Fashion Tights
Right: Decorative holiday sheers by Fine Line Hosiery,
A selection of fall knee-high patterns by Wells Hosiery
and far right, Acme McCrary's Apt. 9 line.

expected to take a giant step into the fashion arena to be one of the hottest fashion trends of the season

"Knee socks are all the rage," says Hessert. HUE has rolled out an array of knee-highs



sock styles with a lot of marling and tweed textures. The manufacturer is using luxury blends with wools, angora and cashmere.

Romantic influences will continue to be big in ladies' apparel giving another boost to the sale of tights and trousers.

"Tights are perfect with the romantic influences we are going to see this fall," says Kim Smith of Acme-McCrary

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Hue's collection of fashion tights includes bold plaid opaques, textured tights in leopard, houndstooth and herringbone, antique openwork, crochet and nets and colorful, crazy tights inspired by Pucci's graphic designs. They also have sweater tights and legwarmers.

Browns will dominate the color palette along with rich burgundies, warm greens and golds and rust tones. There will be some interesting palettes of blue including turquoise and teals.

"Another important palette this fall is the inky blues," says Smith of Acme-McCrary. "They transform into refined casual with a laid-back attitude. They are jean-friendly and provide a break for the khaki family. Shades of inky blues includes Rio, Wonder Blue and Midnight."

Shine will shine through in fall hosiery, especially gold and bronze.

"Metallics have become the new neutrals," says Hessert.

Fine Line Hosiery is making several styles of plated tights in diamond, floral, heather patterns and ribs.

"Consumers will also pay close attention to the hand of this fall's yarn palette," adds Smith. "Our yarns will be fine yet dense as they provide unique hand and fit properties. This is being executed in modal, microfiber nylon and fine grades of wool blends."

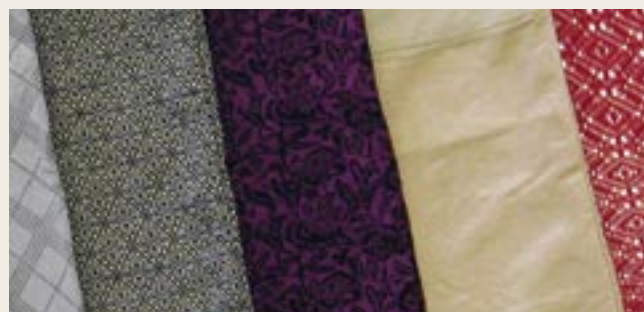
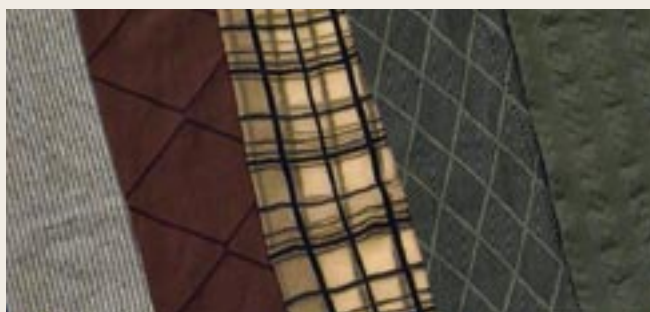
in bias plaids, classic argyles in both traditional and funky colors, contrast herringbone, heavy tweeded styles, stripes and femme angora openwork. Detailing includes colorful flecks, fur pom poms and embroidered edging.

Although fashion forecasters expect the sales of knee-highs to boom with consumers pairing them with skirts as well as pants, some manufacturers are taking a wait-and-see approach.

"Knee-highs are very much being talked about as being in great demand, but it is too

poration. "They will be available in both net/crochet constructions and opaque textures. The continuation of beadwork, embroidery and crochet in apparel and accessories complements the looks that we'll see in legwear."

Floral prints will continue to be big sellers and plaids, mixed plaids, herringbones and argyles will be important patterns in tights and trousers, according to Well's Hosiery's Linda Measmer. Wells Hosiery makes



early to know if the consumer will actually respond," says Denise Yow of Moretz Inc.

In socks, surface appeal will be important with visible textures taking precedence over patterns, says Yow. Moretz has introduced

trousers and tights in microfibers.

"We can expect to see an increased demand for items such as opaques (darks and ribbed) and cable knit tights, menswear patterns and footless tights," says Hessert.

Top: Hue Fashion opaque knee-high tights for fall, and Top Right: Moretz' Fall socks in natural fibers of angora & wool, bamboo fiber, and cotton ragg.