

# Warm Up, This Winter!

As you feel the nip in the air, there are new trends in apparel that will envelop the season. **Bindu Gopal Rao** looks at the mix of professional forecast of trends in the upcoming season.

This year, winter clothing is reverting to minimal designs and clean, simple styles, with a dash of colour here and there. Hence, blazers, jackets, cardigans, pullovers, boots and brogues are being seen everywhere. Checked shirts are a wardrobe staple and have ruled the throne of style for years. They always give a unique and eye-catching look to an outfit. Breakbounce's Autumn-Winter 2016 collection showcases experimental designs and premium fabrics which have been included to give the urban youth greater access to global street wear trends. Every piece is a well thought-out creative expression not bound by the mundane and the obvious. Winter categories such as sweatshirts see a lot of graphic appliques and detailing, textured fabrics, colour blocking and pocket variations. Mr Esa Mohammad, M D Kashish Infioré adds, "Winter is also about travelling; and the resort wear collection is most sought after. Organic and Banarasi weaves products are much in demand—the new trend. Also, we go by the designers' sensibilities and what they foresee for the season and showcase during the fashion week." In the Zapyle Autumn/Winter collection, we have a large range of winter wear from sweaters, ponchos, jackets and other outerwear, and lots of boots from international brands like Michael Kors, Burberry, Louis Vuitton and so many more.

## NEW VISTAS

The new winter collection is all about different fabric blends. "I have combined unique and trendy patterns with warmth-ensuring fabrics like wool, linen and more. I have also added bright, yet classy colours like blue, green, red, black and rust to our winter collection," says Mamta Gupta, Founder & Owner, Buzzaria Dukaan. As a brand, Mee Mee attempts to make parenting and motherhood a hassle-free and joyful journey. Their recent Autumn/Winter Maternity collection is an

extension of the same. Naresh Khattar, Founder, Me N Moms & Mee Mee explains, "Every piece designed keeps the utility as well as comfort in mind. Another thing we noticed was that during pregnancy, the entire wardrobe undergoes a major style change—and the mother loses her personal style in the process. Many of them opt for plus size outfits instead of maternity wear due to lack of availability, as well the price points offered by most brands in the range. Our collection ensures that it is designed to fit a mother's personal style and will be usable during pregnancy and post pregnancy during the feeding period. The collection brings with it three themes—work wear, festive wear and tribal fusion, to glam up your everyday as well as special occasions. What makes the range more interesting is the fact that the tops come with a hidden zipper that make breastfeeding simpler post pregnancy. This ensures that you can utilise the collection from the pregnancy to the breastfeeding phase."

## DEMAND BOOSTERS

Winter wear is one of the major seasonal categories. The winter wear market in India was pegged at ₹15,670 crore back in 2014. This market is expected to demonstrate a Compound Annual Growth Rate of eight per cent to reach ₹33,590 crore by 2024. Aspects like investment in new technology and being abreast of international trends have helped in boosting this market. The women's winter wear has also been on a growth trajectory. The size of women's winter wear stands at ₹3,290 crore in India, is expected to grow at 7.5 per cent to reach ₹8,080 crore by 2024. "The major products in this segment are cardigans, sweaters, jackets, sweater tops, sweater-cum-kurtis, pullovers, sweatshirts, tracksuits, stoles and shawls, caps, mufflers. The sale of winter wear, in the months starting from October till January, are equivalent to the total business sale for the



@Rocky S



@Store Untold

entire fiscal year. Most of the festivals, weddings, social functions, etc., take place around this time. Shoppers, specially the youth, are active buyers of this segment because of the growing awareness and availability of many retail channels. The retailers provide heavy discounts and promotions more prudently in this period during Diwali, Christmas, New Year and end-of-season-sales in January-February,” say Ms Ankita Mantri Lahoty and Srishti Nadhani, Founders, Store Untold.

**STYLE CHECK**

While clothing staples such as blouses and trousers are allowing for style exploration, there is a trend of simple and fail-safe styling. Shoppers are increasingly looking for outerwear pieces that are simple, yet stylish enough to last several winters. In addition to being lightweight and warm, natural fibres are also an excellent choice as the natural fibres hold dye hues better than synthetic fabrics. Plaids, windowpane and buffalo checks are the key patterns in varied colours and details this season. “While minimal contrast trim and band collar updates the smart dressing; washed indigo checks and structured fabric adds a fresh look to the casual checked shirt. They need to be paired with a slim fit chino or ripped jeans to drift into the season with style. As the temperature drops, jackets are one of the winter essentials for layering,” says a spokesperson from Spykar. One of the most exciting trends this season is



@Store Untold

‘comfort clothing,’ the use of masculine elements to add comfort and functionality to feminine outfits—perfect for the working woman of today. “Oversized and puffy sleeves from the summer continue into the winter. The exposed shoulder and cut out shoulders will continue to be a hot trend this season. Layering is one of the key trends, this season. Fitted jumpsuits in vibrant colours are also gaining popularity. The 80’s have also made their comeback this year. The most optimum use of technology is in fabric. Producing fabric with excellent finishing, giving a luxe look

and feel while being extremely comfortable is what the industry is striving towards,” opines Designer Rocky S. “Whilst nostalgia and looking backwards for inspiration was a key for the winter trends, technology and newness were equally important to the design department when designing the winter collection. We sourced the latest fabrics from China, Korea and India. We also incorporated digital printing techniques, and used the latest technology for embroidered and embellished garments. We strive to incorporate the latest silhouettes into our ranges. We are constantly updating our blocks and patterns, so that customers get the best and latest fits,” says Manjula Tiwari, CEO, Cover Story. A spokesperson from Zapyle says, “Oversized street wear, lots of fur and leather, and shots of colour are going to be the watch-words this season.”

OVERSIZED STREET WEAR, LOTS OF FUR AND LEATHER AND SHOTS OF COLOUR ARE GOING TO BE THE WATCH-WORDS THIS SEASON.



@Store Untold

**OVERCOMING CHALLENGES**

The brands need to devise strategic planning for innovative and fashionable products, pricing range, store display, packaging, production, marketing, how to cater to their target customers and gain an edge over other competitors and capture a greater market share within this segment. Though the segment has shown promising growth and elicited enthusiasm from brands and retailers, there is still an arduous task ahead for merchandisers and product developers. “The biggest challenge faced today by brands like us is the heavy discounting at the online retail platforms. Although online retail gives us huge volumes and reach on a large scale, the channels are largely driven by price. It is a huge challenge to maintain profitability of a brand. The second biggest challenge is that, considering in India winter sets in only in December and January, and January being the season of End of Season Sales, the brands are left with a very short window to push full price sales,” says a spokesperson from Breakbounce. With inclusion of innovative materials such as silk and denim, alongside cutting-edge design, winter fashion for ethnic is set to break traditional sensibilities to emerge into a must-have. Pankaj Anand, Director, Sabhyata opines, “The market is nascent, as winter is yet to set in. Due to advent of fusion into Indian market, winter wear has evolved to take an Indian avatar. Therefore, the market is still to bloom but with a promising reception, we hope to make this a staple in every fashionista’s closet.” ■



@Rocky S