



WHAT'S NEW AT MODA IN, MILAN & SHIRT AVENUE, COMO

NEW TEXTILES, RETRO STYLING AND THE REVAMPED CLASSIC SHIRT GIVE THE CONTEMPORARY MAN SOMETHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO NEXT SEASON.

BY JULIA M. CHIARELLA-GENONI

Before designers go to the drawing board with their hot new collections, they head to the major textile trade shows in Italy for direction. And last September's editions of Moda In in Milan and Shirt Avenue in Como didn't lack for inspiration.

The Italian textile industry, which includes cotton, linen, wool, silk, and various textiles and ennobling, is building its current success on centuries of tradition and innovation. Quality and performance are what makes the Made in Italy label as important today as in the past. With the global market being a concern, the stats still speak for themselves: in 2003, Italy ranked second in textile production after China, which was noted as a low-cost producer.

The big talk this year was about Italy's decision to create a one-week trade show extravaganza in Milan—just as France has done with *Première Vision* in Paris. This one show, with its first appointment set in the fall of 2005, will combine four major exhibitions: Shirt Avenue, Idea Biella, Idea Como and Moda In, allowing buyers to see more in the span of a few days.

MODA IN, MILAN

Expanding to over 140,000 square feet in area, Moda In displayed the best in midrange textiles for Fall 05. With all the anxiety for the

new season, this trade show—the year's first—is usually where ideas and trends are summed up for the buyers. "It's a type of free consultancy," says show chair Angelo Uslenghi.

Established in 1984, Moda In is entirely dedicated to the presentation of fabrics and accessories in clothing. The focus is to present an organized preview of innovative and creative proposals from Italian and European textile producers.

A whopping 387 companies presented this year, 304 of them Italian. Categorized into leisure, fancy, fancy knitting, fancy wool, and accessory sections, Moda In had an eye-ful of information for buyers.

Three themes were presented in the trends area: Sharp, characterized by keen results through interventions of neatness and rigour; Nesting, where nature, protection and intimacy received a techno touch; and Excessive, which rested in the delirium of creativity with a mix of culture and imagination.

New additions to the show included the *Sentesi Areas*, where each exhibitor displayed samples, giving buyers easier access to trends and looks.

The largest issue plaguing the textile industry today is how to make textiles more unique. With this in mind, Moda In showed three strong techniques for the Fall 05 season. Fibres were distorted away from their tradi-

tional forms; polished wool was given a silky texture, for instance. Dyeing and prints had richer shades, with unusual overlaps changing their appearances, making some three-dimensional. And, finally, traditional materials were assembled differently, fusing textiles that would not normally be seen together, like fur with silk and tweed with lace.

With textiles at the core of the industry, Moda In revealed the top four looks for men next fall. The grandfather-inspired aesthetic, based in corduroys and large plaid shirt-jackets, is now geared toward a much younger clientele. Plaids, checks, tartans and some stripes in streamlined silhouettes mirrored this style. Producers like TMG had an array of work shirt plaids as well as trendy, khaki-coloured jeans and cords. Parkas were big for winter, both literally and figuratively, cut voluminously and trimmed in fur for an added edge.

Retro prints also made a strong showing. While some prints continued to hint at the '50s, '60s and '80s, the more influential era to emerge was the '40s. Lanificio Corti Marcello embraced the trend with funky brown patterns for men's shirts.

Along with prints, there was also a clear trend to retro colours, with '40s-inspired greens, browns and oranges reigning. Eye-catching burgundy and browns were displayed at Nova Top.



1. Main showroom of Moda In.
2. Excessive fabrics at Moda In.
3. Sharp fabrics at Moda In.
4. Nesting fabrics at Moda In.
5. Main showroom of Shirt Avenue.
6. Classic prints at Shirt Avenue.
7. Retro prints at Shirt Avenue.

ACCESSORY LABEL OR LABEL ACCESSORY?

The most significant development at Moda In was the growth in accessories. All in the name of luxury and uniqueness, the fastest-growing trend right now is to accessorize a classic piece and let your individual style take over.

Interestingly, printed labels are reaching new heights of innovation, making statements as accessories in themselves. Printexx embodied this notion, showing scented labels that could help in launching a new fragrance. Other advancements included glow-in-the-dark and hand-painted labels. The more unique, the better.

SHIRT AVENUE, COMO

Located at the prestigious and private Villa Erba in Como, Shirt Avenue showcased 39 companies dedicated to high-quality shirting fabrics and accessories.

The 11-year-old Shirt Avenue has continued to grow in popularity among the trade thanks to its highly specialized points of reference, not to mention its relaxed and luxurious atmosphere. The exhibition attracts some 2,000 qualified visitors each

season, with 40 percent coming out of Italy's leading export markets.

Italy continues to have some of the most important shirt producers and manufacturers. In fact, according to Shirt Avenue president Silvio Albini, exhibitors at this show are insulated from the repercussions of the global market by their specialization, constant development and creativity.

Since trends are of the utmost importance at Shirt Avenue, the show is organized such that new exhibitors get front-row billing in the exhibition hall. Albini was therefore clearly upset about having to relocate his show to Milan. In a press conference, he said he was not confident in the union of the textile trade shows and was disappointed in losing the location and privacy of Villa Erba. Noting that it will be a year of experience and change, he mentioned that six businesses from Milan chose to show at Como for the more selective atmosphere and now they will have to return to the larger Milan venue.

On the contrary, many exhibitors were happy with the change. Since Como is private and selective, the down side is a small crowd. Most expressed regret at the loss of a fantastic location, but were aware of the positive business potential of being in Milan.

For Fall 05, innovation is the key trend. Although classic and versatile are strong traits, a very contemporary take on retro patterns is making itself known. Shirt Avenue made it very clear that a man's shirt has become a very individual thing: an expressive space which indulges in subtle and sometimes daring patterns. Now, more than ever, men are becoming bolder in their workwear. Along with accessories, shirt textiles are

showing off a much more fashionable look.

Again, retro is the name of the game in prints and colours. Here, '40s-inspired greens, reds, oranges, pinks and browns made a big statement, along with bolder and brighter geometric and optical patterns, as well as stripes.

Direct prints also made a strong showing. Digital stamping, for example, as seen with TCS, with images of appliances, cars and ads from the '40s or '50s. So did new patterns and prints using retro colours, as seen at Manolo Borromeo.

Denim was given something of a colour overhaul in greens and browns, but also stood out in a range of classic blues. A worn look was emphasized, washed out and worked in.

In shirting, delicate additions appeared for men in touch with their feminine sides. Leggiuno's purple floral sample was one of many floral patterns and subtle designs. Clean, intricate textures were important, paving the way for fabrics like jacquard.

And finally, even the classic white shirt was updated with new patterns and textured finishes, giving the more conservative man a chance to be trendier as well. Somelos Tcidos had a few new prints, as well as GE.TE.CA. Manifattura D'Olmina.

What better way to lead up to the last season of independent shows? From here on in, until the combined shows kick off, it's clear that each exhibition will be historic.

The next Moda In show is scheduled for March 1-3; Shirt Avenue runs Feb. 27-March 1.

Julia M. Chiarella-Genoni is a Montreal-born freelance journalist based in Milan. 