

Cherry, Crimson, Claret, Ruby – red enlivens wilted summer looks

by Sharon Mosley

Don't let the heat and humidity dampen your summer wardrobe. Just add a warm splash of red to freshen up this season's wardrobe and you'll be ahead of this fall's fashion scene that touts red as one of its hottest colors, too.

Here are a few ways to wear red now and into fall:

GO FOR ACCENTS: Got a black or white dress that you're wearing now, but doesn't quite have that punch you need? Wrap it up with red as a rich accent to your waist. Cinch your middle with a wide obi-style sash dripping with fringe or a thick red leather belt decorated with metallic studs.

RED ALL OVER - Heat up your wardrobe with the color red, one of summer and fall's hottest hues. From Target, Paul & Joe's berry red dress is topped off with a black leather baseball coat and plaid owl shoulder bag. CNS Photo courtesy of Target. **PLAY WITH YOUR NEUTRALS:** Since khaki was "the" neutral of spring and summer, it's easy to add red to your wardrobe of naturals and come up with some new combinations: a red tunic over khaki trouser shorts for a twist to the cocktail hour, a red plaid pencil skirt with your safari jacket for work. For fall, think about substituting gold contrasts with red.

DIFFERENT HUES FROM HEAD TO TOE: Look around you and scope out the newest flower arrangements. Sound weird? Yes, maybe, but sometimes you'll get some great ideas of new ways to put color together from the strangest places. Those dark, ruby-red roses mixed with brick-red dahlias and mahogany coffee berries make a stunning bouquet. Take notes and try mixing interesting combinations of red with pieces from your own wardrobe.

THINK IN PIECES: Most of us don't buy complete outfits anymore; we put together our own looks piece by piece. In the summer we might buy a sleeveless berry-red dress; in the fall, it's easy to layer a suede or leather jacket over that same dress when the weather gets cooler.

GET IT IN PRINT: Now is a great time to do red in a fabulous print. The Asian influence is shaping up to be a big trend - and where does red fit in more than an Oriental-inspired pattern? Another important print cropping up: the red animal prints. One of my favorite ways to wear the new prints is a long, knee-length jacket. A perfect starting point to layer over leggings or skinny pants this fall.

GO FOR KNITS: The sheer tunic tops and tank tops paired with slim jeans may be one of summer's hottest looks; but for fall, it's easy to top off the same look with a sweaters capelet or shrug - in red, of course. A different twist from the expected black or brown, red knits will definitely be a hot extra layer for fall.

ACCESSORIZE: Always a great way to add the "newest" color to your wardrobe. The reds this fall will look great with black, brown, gold and gray - the newest neutrals. While scanning the stores for summer sales, scope out the latest fall extras - the red patent platform pump, the oversized red croc satchel, the long red, leather gloves, a red ballet flat or dark red ankle boots.

EVENING SUNSET: Be on the lookout now for that all-important holiday evening gown - of course, in brilliant red - from frilly organza standouts at Christian Dior to voluminous scarlet capes from Vivienne Westwood.

FACE IT: And don't forget those scrumptious pots of red color at your favorite cosmetic counter. Crimson red lips are it for fall; you can fudge a little this summer and tone it down with some shiny gloss to highlight summer's last sunburn.

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