

Lauren, Tahari, Herrera, Leger Emerge as Favored Brands During New York Fashion Week

By Arthur Zaczekiewicz

March 8, 2016



New York Fashion Week, mainstay and legacy designers struck the right chords with consumers who also favored colors such as purple and white while preferring floral looks over geometric patterns.

That's according to an analysis by First

Insight Inc., which examined the sentiment of more than 3,600 consumer responses concerning 16 brands and 294 styles. The analysis revealed the top four brands this year as Carolina Herrera, Hervé Leger by Max Azria, Ralph Lauren and Elie Tahari.

Joe Callahan, director of marketing at First Insight, said "there's been a bit of a change at the top" and noted that last year, Ralph Lauren was the top brand. However, Callahan said Ralph Lauren garnered the top overall item this year with a 77 percent positive sentiment score. And the designer had three of the top five items measured.

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Among women, Carolina Herrera was favored most while men preferred Ralph Lauren. Among participants between the ages of 19 and 44, Elie Tahari was the preferred brand while those 45 and older leaned toward Carolina Herrera.

This year Hervé Leger by Max Azria experienced the “largest increase in positive sentiment among the brands tested” both this year and in 2015, according to the analysts who compiled the report. The brand rose to a positive sentiment reading of 40.7 percent this year from a reading of 30.7 percent a year ago. Other gainers in positive sentiment on a year-over-year basis included Tory Burch, Michael Kors, Nicole Miller, Calvin Klein, Desigual and BCBG.

Regarding style attributes, purple and white were the most popular colors — a repeat of last year’s most favored colors. But green

showed the greatest gain, rising to a positive sentiment of 36.6 percent this year from a reading last year of 23.8 percent. Pink was the third most-favored color, climbing from a reading of 33 percent last year to 36.8 percent this year. Blue, however, fell from 35.1 percent last year to a positive sentiment reading of 31 percent this year.

With patterns, florals were favored over geometrics, with the sentiment reading for florals jumping to 37 percent this year from a reading of 29.9 percent last year. Sleeveless styles were once again the most popular look this year with a sentiment reading that climbed to 41 percent from 34.3 percent last year.

Three-quarter length sleeves dropped to 27.2 percent from 31 percent last year, while long sleeves came in with a reading of 29.2 percent versus 29.4 percent in

2015. This year, halter necklines were most popular while plunge came in second and round was third.

Jim Shea, chief commercial officer at First Insight, noted that consumers, overall, had a higher positive sentiment, with the average reading climbing to 33.4 percent from 31 percent last year.

The analysis also revealed that sentiment doesn’t always correlate with value. The analysts noted that “women valued a top Ralph Lauren dress \$16.51 more than men.” However, men had a much higher positive sentiment reading toward this item than women, the researchers said.

Nearly 800 of the participants were men while 2,066 were women, and most were between 30 and 44 years old. Over 1,600 had a household income of under \$75,000 a year.



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The shifts in color and brand sentiment underscore what Shea noted as an old adage on Fashion Avenue:

“Designers propose and consumers dispose,” he said, adding that shoppers are “clearly and increasingly more in charge.”