



Eco and Deco

Mike Hale reports from Vision Expo East in New York on frames ranging from Art Deco-inspired models to eco-friendly designs

Vision Expo East made quite an impact on New York this year, with even the city's weekly culture bible *The New Yorker* running a feature on eyewear during the show, and at the Jacob K Javits centre there were plenty of new frames making a similarly strong impression on show visitors.

Rosemarie Mueller, manger of public relations at Charmant, felt that general trends in the sunglass market remained similar to last year. However she did note that the strong retro looks dominating the market are being supplemented by increasingly ornate designs and frames incorporating chain links are proving very popular across Charmant's collections.

Classical designs

Charmant was focused on bringing its new signature collection Line Art to the attention of attendees. Line Art features the frames Quintet and Trio, which are inspired by music, particularly the delicacy of classical string instruments. The temples of the frames consist of interweaving arches that invoke both a music score and the strings of a violin. The colour range includes soft hues and pastels from semi-matt to shiny, with clear or transparent tip ends.

'This design is made possible by our development of a new memory metal called Excellence Titan,' says Mueller. 'This is a very flexible material that is completely nickel-free and to develop it took eight years of joint research with the world authority on metallurgical research in Japan. It opens up new design possibilities and we've combined it with the latest laser welding techniques to create Line Art.'

Also new from Charmant was the spring/summer Lacoste sunglass collection for men and women. The frames are named after places synonymous with fantastic beaches and are said to offer a contemporary twist on vintage silhouettes by utilising colour blocking, enamel inlays and stripes.



- 1 Nova by Frost
- 2 Lacoste Bermuda from Charmant
- 3 Mumu from Pierre Eyewear
- 4 Calvin Klein 011 by Marchon
- 5 Eco 109 by Modo
- 6 Black & Bling from B&BW

Modo introduced the debut eyewear collection from Seven for All Mankind, a Los Angeles based lifestyle brand. The collection consists of seven sunglass designs and eight optical pieces. The sunglass range features oversized aviator shapes with lamination details reminiscent of the Art Deco architecture of Los Angeles.

Optical styles for men focus on sleek metal shapes while the women's are smaller and more feminine.

Modo expanded its eco range with the introduction of 10 sunglass models. The frames are constructed out of a minimum of 95 per cent recycled materials and the company plants a tree in conjunction with Trees for the Future for every frame sold.

'The shapes for the eco sunglasses are contemporary variations on aviators, rectangles and retro,' comments Giuliana Grosso, sales manager of Modo Eyewear. 'We are also here promoting the Jason Wu collection of eyewear. He is a very big fashion designer in the US as Michelle Obama wears his designs. In Europe this is more of a niche product for those in the know.'

Marchon had several new collections to promote in New York.

'We're particularly pleased with our Karl Lagerfeld collection because this





Featuring frames



reflects a unifying concept throughout,' says Robert Scheinberg, head of public relations at Marchon. 'The Calvin Klein range is appealing to students and school kids. Something we have noticed is that our Nautica sun clips are very popular at the moment because of the recession putting pressure on people's willingness to buy separate sunglasses.'

Away from the larger companies, New York saw the launch of a new Sculpture Collection from Kirk Originals, in which the six new shapes are complemented by nine new colour combinations. The colour combinations include violet and anthracite, orange and scarlet and chocolate and yellow.

Acrylic art

Jason Kirk notes that three years of development went into the conception of the acrylic temples to achieve a product that is not only technically advanced but also aesthetically unique.

'Working with specialist acrylic artists, we have created materials with textures that change in different lights. The colours are electrifying while the interiors of the frame have been decorated to create a hue that complements both the front and the exterior tint. The temples play on the notion of three dimensions and optical illusion to create a texture and depth of colour.'

Attracting a great deal of attraction in the Galleria area of the show was Frost, a German eyewear company founded by Paris and Marion Frost in 1994. Its f-type collection incorporates a screwless hinge system that is based on the joints in a person's fingertips. The frames are constructed out of stainless steel and also feature easy fitting temples with bending grooves

for anatomic adaptation.

'The target of Frost is to create timeless modernity with a necessary step ahead and a conscious look back,' says Marion Frost. 'The frames have a feel for colour and form, and behind their theatrical elegance is a touch of modern sensuality.'

Individualist French company Pierre Eyewear was displaying in the Galleria area of the show with eye-catching optical frames, which are also reworked into sunglasses models.

'I've been designing and manufacturing my own frames for only two and a half years so this is the first time I have brought my products to the US and business has been very good,' says Pierre Cariven, owner and designer of Pierre Eyewear. 'My latest designs are vintage in feel but I aim to redefine the idea of vintage through unusual use of colour and shape.'

Los Angeles lifestyle

Von Zipper is an alternative lifestyle eyewear brand from Los Angeles that focuses its marketing on sports like surfing and snowboarding. The company has long supplied ski goggles and sunglasses lines but has now introduced an optical collection.

7 Taboo by Von Zipper

8 Sculpture by Kirk Originals

9 Geek 703 by LBI

10 Model Mia Carm by Jason Wu

11 Karl Lagerfeld KL6775 from Marchon

12 Model H23 by Gold & Wood

13 Line Art Trio from Charmant

'The optical models stay true to the spirit of the brand while exploring some new avenues,' comments Greg Tomlinson, co-founder of Von Zipper Eyewear. 'Von Zipper frames are for people who want to promote their lifestyle and personality.'

Gold & Wood brought three new designs to New York. H23 is a unisex reinvention of the pilot style with precious wood used on the temples and front of the frame. A Kit is a men's rimless frame featuring redesigned temples and B13 is a contemporary version of a 1950s design.

New from B&BW in New York was the Black & Bling collection, which combines sleek shapes with jet black colouring and decorative crystals.

'We think this offers real value to consumers and will attract people through its distinctive and glamorous look,' says Jane Lam, sales and marketing director of B&BW.

Playing into current market trends at Vision Expo East was Geek, a new collection from LBI. 'We've seen the rise of geek culture over the past few years,' asserts Denny Yu, managing director of LBI. 'It is about identity and the frames invoke a fashionable idea of a geek.'