

# The Washington Post

# Sunday Source

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## THE LOOK | Necklaces: What's Next?

### To Bead or Not to Bead

By SUZANNE D'AMATO  
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Obstopper-sized beads were one of spring's major trends, from \$200 lacquered wooden spheres by French designer Nathalie Costes to their \$10 cousins at Claire's. Local shoppers — be they ladies who lunch or Hot Topic-clad mall rats — took note: On several days this summer, shiny, supersized strands were looped around many necks in the District.

So will the beaded necklace still be fashionable this fall? At what precise moment does a popular look cross the line from Hot to Not?

"I think every trend reaches its saturation point," says Alison Burwell, editor of *W Jewelry*, a quarterly spinoff of the fashion magazine *W*. "With beaded necklaces, we're almost there."

To some, it may seem as though this trend just got started. Chalk that up to a fashion cycle that has gotten much shorter, says Amanda Freeman, vice president of Youth Intelligence, a trend analysis firm based in New York.

It used to take months for runway styles to wend their way into the real world, but during the last several years, trend trickledown has turned into a gush. Weekly magazines such as *Star* devote pages to dissecting the fine points of Lindsay Lohan's jewelry. H&M can manufacture their take on a trend-setting design in as few as six weeks — making them technically able to hawk the imitation before the original arrives in stores.

As egalitarian as that notion may seem, some industry watchers think that the fashion-for-everyone whirlwind comes at a cost.

"Cool has become formulaic," Freeman says. "You can walk into Urban Outfitters, and it's all there: Anyone can buy what's perceived as cool." The result, she says, is that

accessorizing is currently less about being creative than following rules established by others.

Of course, just because shoppers covet designer wares doesn't mean such pieces are easily copied. Louis Vuitton's elaborate velvet-trimmed necklaces, for example, rely on the kind of attention to detail that doesn't come cheap. If the beaded necklace is ubiquitous, it's at least in part because it's inexpensive to create beads out of wood or plastic — and, from a design standpoint, easy to make them look good for less.

"You're not talking about semi-precious stones," says Khajak Keledjian, CEO of Intermix, a New York-based chain of boutiques that opened its first D.C. outpost in April. Though Lee Angel's wooden beads sold well at his store this spring, Keledjian doesn't plan to offer the same style for fall — a case of a status-minded store positioning itself as more trendy than any trend.

"We have to be on the next big thing," he says, adding, "When the lower class gets into it, we have to move on."

Other retailers don't see beaded necklaces as quite the socioeconomic signifier that Keledjian does. Fern Elliott, the owner of Annapolis boutique Lilac Bijoux, says that the look has considerable staying power.

"It's not going away," she says, noting that beaded styles will comprise approximately 70 percent of the necklaces she plans to carry for fall.

Irene Barbieri, owner of Mia Gemma in Del Ray, agrees. Beaded necklaces, she says, have transformed jewelry, because they are considered stylish by customers of myriad ages and fashion sensibilities.

"They're really timeless," Barbieri says. She adds that her clients see the rules of the runway as more or less inconsequential when it comes to planning their own purchases. Though the beaded necklace will, she thinks, continue to appeal to D.C. shoppers, it won't be because of fashion designers' dictums.

"Women here aren't slaves to fashion," she says. "They're going to pay attention to those trends, but they're going to translate it to what works for them. They have greater confidence in who they are."

Wondering how to wear it? E-mail Suzanne D'Amato, Sunday Source's deputy editor and a former fashion writer at *Vogue*, at [style@washpost.com](mailto:style@washpost.com). Please include your name, city and phone number.

### SPOTTED ON THE STREET



◀ Ashley Davis, 19  
Ocean Springs, Miss.

This necklace used to be my grandmother's — she had it since the late 1960s.



▶ Vanessa Espinosa, 25  
Washington

I got this when I was in the Philippines a few months ago.



▶ Paulo Unalivia, 22  
Lorton

I wear a lot of beads; I like to mix the cheap wooden ones with more expensive stones. Now that everyone's wear-



▶ Emelyn Northway, 20  
Grand Rapids, Mich.

I liked the color and size of the beads; They'll give anything some style, even a plain T-shirt.

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### Tracing a Trend

Beads first made it big at the spring 2005 fashion shows, popping up on runways as diverse as Lanvin, Marc by Marc Jacobs and Michael Kors. Celebs, from the stylish (Maggie Gyllenhaal) to the scary (Kimberly Stewart), helped make the look a mass-market must-have. This fall, the statement necklace continues to reign supreme. Depending on your style, that might mean buying still more beads or experimenting with a totally different treatment, such as Marc Jacobs's light-as-air fabric links.



### SEEN FOR SPRING

◀ Lanvin. Designer Alber Elbaz's ribbon-wrapped pearls were lusted after by style cognoscenti.

### ON THE RED CARPET

▶ Maggie Gyllenhaal of the movie *Mean Girls*



### CHIC FOR FALL

◀ Marc Jacobs. Weightless chains at a hefty price — wait for the inevitable knockoffs.

▶ Louis Vuitton. This opulent piece, below left, combines two fall trends: lavish baubles and lush velvet.

▶ To look at Saks Fifth Avenue's fall ad campaign, below right, beads are still going strong.