

Bellisima

Maternity's New Look

Over the last year, tunic tops, empire waists, baby doll dresses, tent dresses and bubble silhouettes have been all the rage for ready-to-wear designers. While the fad took the spring season by storm, maternity retailers and manufacturers confirm they have seen a negative impact on their business.

"Everyone in maternity has felt the impact of rtw styles being worn in maternity," said Song Pardue, ceo of Pickles & Ice Cream Maternity Apparel. "When pregnant women can shop in rtw stores, it's obviously diluting sales for everyone in the maternity business that sells strictly maternity."

Emily Rosenberg, owner of Bella Belli Maternity retail store, agreed that not only retailers, but customers, have suffered from the latest trend. "If you're not pregnant and wear that style, you look pregnant! I think people are getting sick of the poofs and empire waists."

While baby doll and trapeze styles in the regular market have caused some slow down in business, those looks won't fit women for the full nine months of their pregnancy, according to Cathe Verduco, owner of West Coast Maternity. "Maternity is designed to fit the growing tummy and bust and should be longer in the front to cover the tummy. Your shoulders don't grow when you are pregnant, so moving up a size or two will only give you a sloppy look."

Jennifer Strom Simonte, owner of Belly Dance Maternity, agreed that many women don't realize how important it is for maternity styles to be cut differently for pregnant women. "We always tell people when they are pregnant they need more length in the front of a shirt. Just because something fits when you're five months pregnant, when you're nine months pregnant it might get short."

Although many maternity insiders are concerned about this new trend in rtw, some have noted the tide is already shifting.

"Customers come in saying specifically, 'I don't want a baby doll top.' It's a reaction to everyone on the streets wearing clothes that look like maternity clothes," Simonte said. "The rtw market had these 'flowy' and empire styles, but I'm seeing a return to styles that fit closer to the body. I think when you're pregnant that's actually a more flattering style. If you have the belly, you might as well show it."

Pardue agreed that "fashion is cyclical" and expects more fitted and tailored looks to emerge in fall and spring.

And this shift to form-fitting styles in 2008 will be good for maternity businesses and good for customers.

"We believe in bringing out the goddess in every woman," said Armanda Texidor, president of A New View Maternity. "Showing their curves is a nice way to go."

And in order to provide women with the clothes that will flatter them throughout their pregnancy, A New View Maternity offers a number of stylish options. Olian is a Miami-based collection offering trendy, hip pieces with

fantastic prints and designer details; Japanese Weekend is fashionable and high quality, offering convertible clothing maximizing a maternity wardrobe; Maternal America has west coast chic designs, offering wispy cottons, rusched mini dresses, ultra-washed denims, swimsuits and more; and Ripe is an Australian-based brand that offers fashions for all occasions.

A New View also offers Noppies, based in the Netherlands, offering advanced European fashions; and pure t, which features sweet sayings and sophisticated graphics on pre-shrunk tees.

Essentials for the expectant mom are BellaBand, the must-have belly accessory; and a dress from Pouch by Expectant Sport, which can be worn a number of different ways for work, dinner, a wedding or a stroll in the park. Prego offers hard to find, stylish lap suits and nursing suits.

For buyers hoping to see all that maternity wear has to offer in the next season, the best place to find it in one place is the MOM2B tradeshow at the Cooper Design Space in Los Angeles, September 30–October 1, 2007.

Created in 2006, the MOM2B tradeshow was started to fill the need for a maternity tradeshow timed for market. "We felt the maternity market was being ignored and should get its own tradeshow for buying and showing spring and fall," said Amy DeCamillis, cofounder of MOM2B Tradeshow.

"A lot of the industry is driven by entrepreneurial women, discovering what products are needed by their own experience and then bringing them to market."

- Amy DeCamillis, cofounder of MOM2B Tradeshow

of MOM2B Tradeshow.

Apparel makes up 50 percent of the tradeshow floor, and additional categories include new mom products: burpies, diaper bags, slings, etc.

"A lot of the industry is driven by entrepreneurial women, discovering what products are needed by their own experience and then bringing them to market," explained DeCamillis. "The show is where buyers can see lines and products that are not repped or that aren't in showrooms. We have also concentrated on getting international lines here. We see that as a growth area—both for buyers and exhibitors."

Japanese Weekend
photo by:
Marcy Maloy



MOM2B also offers two fashion shows each day of the tradeshow (11 a.m. and 2 p.m.) with time slots for each collection. "This is important to educate buyers because there is so little education about things like opening orders and merchandising for maternity, specifically. The fashion shows allow them to see the clothes on pregnant bellies and understand how the collections are put together. It makes their buying easier."

Maternity's New Look

Get Online

Online apparel sales have grown across the board, so its only natural that maternity will see a boost in Internet sales as well, sources attest.

"Maternity is following the general small business trend of trying to capture as much business as possible, and selling directly to the consumer is one way," said DeCamillis. "Accessories, gear, beauty products, nursing equipment and health care, those are easily researched online and you don't have to be out shopping."

Janet Lee, co-owner of Mia Bossi, confirmed that 50 percent of Mia Bossi's purchases are made online: 30 percent on miabossi.com and the other 20 percent at various other online retailers. The other half of their business is from boutique and department stores.

And while Lee attributes such large online sales to the fact that women don't have to try a bag on, many apparel and nursing vendors have seen a substantial increase as well.

Meryl Kutzin, vice president of production for Q-T Intimates, confirmed nursing apparel sales were divided between in store and online purchases. "I'm not surprised," she said. "Women prefer to buy where they can find the bras they like and want. Many stores don't offer what women are looking for."

Line Rothman, founder of Glamourmom®, agreed that many women are probably "more comfortable than you think" buying nursing products online. "For the new mom, it is convenient to shop online at home and women are very confident purchasing our nursing tops on the Web as we provide a reliable service and a quality product and our selection online is greater than they could find traveling to the traditional retailer."

The Business of Baby

While maternity retailers continue to explore fashion-forward offerings, a new category has been popping up in their stores: baby.

"Maternity retailers are expanding their categories into baby and baby is expanding their categories into maternity," said DeCamillis.

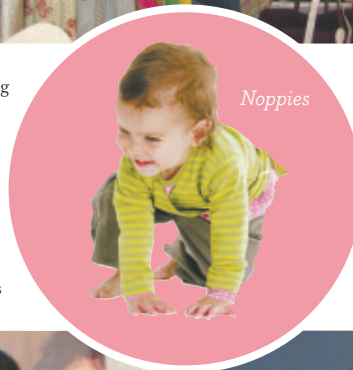
Rosenberg of Bella Belli Maternity has begun carrying baby items in her store and the response has been so great, when she recently expanded into a larger retail space, she dedicated more area to the baby items. "At first we just wanted to offer some gift items, and they went like crazy. People began recommending we sell those items because



pure t



MOM2B Tradeshow



Noppies

customers were also buying them for themselves. Now we're offering more baby items, including bedding. I think it's nice for new parents when they can shop for everything in one place. The one-stop shop is where things are headed."

Kutzin agreed. "For retailers

that are thinking about including baby items, it's a good way to expand their business. If you have a mother with her baby already in the store, why not have some cute baby outfits for sale? I'm sure we'll see that crossover a lot more."



MOM2B Tradeshow



Glamourmom®

Bella Band | Bravado! | Japanese Weekend | Mama Spanx | MaMe | Maternal America

Melinda G | Noppies | Nummies | OiOi | Olian | Pouch | Prego | pure t | Ripe



Noppies



Bella Band



Japanese Weekend

PHOTO BY MARCY MALOY



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Maternity's New Look

trends

Color by Number



Japanese Weekend
photo by:
Marcy Maloy

With new, boutique lines coming out, expect to see a real diversity in styles, patterns and colors in the upcoming seasons, according to Kristen Tait, partner in MOM2B Tradeshow.

Retro "hippy" looks with florals and embroidery, safari looks with pocket pants and shorts, earthy colors mixed with touches of metallic, and romantic looks with soft color palettes and flowy fabrics are featured in the spring 2008 designs, according to Cathie Verducco, owner of West Coast Maternity. "We have also seen a lot of bold, graphic prints in primary colors and black and white."

Song Pardue, president, Pickles and Ice Cream agreed that black is still hot

this season. "Navy is also big, and jewel tones."

Armanda Texidor, president of A New View Maternity, cites orange and green as important colors for spring, while grey, purple and brown will have a major presence. Touches of gold and turquoise can also be seen in many designs.

For Noppies, light blue, sand, grey, light olive, peach and white are the primary color palate.

In the nursing category, pink seems to be the desired color for spring.

For Bravado! Designs, shades of coral are at the top of their customer wish list for spring.

Chocolate is strong for fall, as well as combinations of neutral colors.

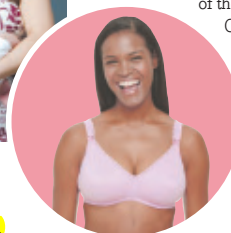
"Mocha with a touch of honey, for example," said Kathryn From, ceo and co-owner.

For Q-T, prints are gaining in popularity with their floral animal-print pattern a must-have for customers.

For Glamourmom®, floral prints and nautical stripes are big.



Glamourmom®



Bravado! Designs

Below the Belt



Noppies

While dresses are still the rage for spring, bottoms are coming back in a big way. "Skirts have

been hard to find since the market has

been so dress heavy, so I'm happy to see it's not all dresses in maternity," said Tait of MOM2B.

Leggings and tunics are still popular, but what's really exciting is the demand for denim and fashionable bottoms, according to Emily Rosenberg, owner of Bella Belli Maternity.

Skinny jeans and trouser jeans are definitely growing, according to Sarah Pollack, owner, Moms the Word. "Now you need at least two or three pairs of jeans. And skinny is really starting to happen because with the bigger tunic-y tops, it brings you back to a shape."

Denim and designer denim are still hot in maternity looks, agreed Pardue. "Hot trends include high-waisted pants, and not so maternity-looking styles. I think that's here to stay forever — we can only hope."



Japanese Weekend
photo by:
Marcy Maloy

Over the Shoulder Chic

When it comes to diaper bags, it's not just what's inside that counts.

For Mia Bossi, the Maria Collection is their best-selling model. "It's a large, square bag, it's easy to carry, very stylish and unique," said Janet Lee, co-founder. "Plus, it has lots of pockets in and out."

According to Texidor of A New View, the satchel is "what's happening at the moment."

Herringbone tweed is featured on a number of diaper bags, Texidor added. "Black and white houndstooth is also becoming popular again."

At Mia Bossi, the brand's signature polka dot print is a best-seller, but the company also notes that snake skin and metallic are hot for spring.



Mia Bossi

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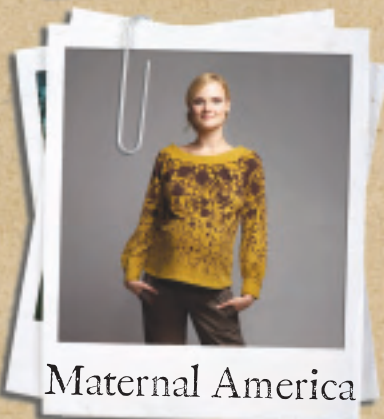
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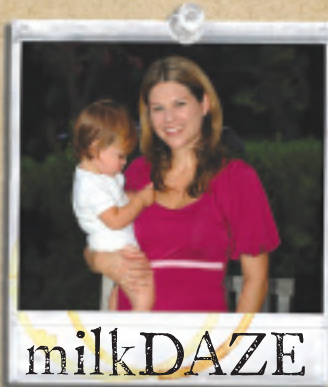
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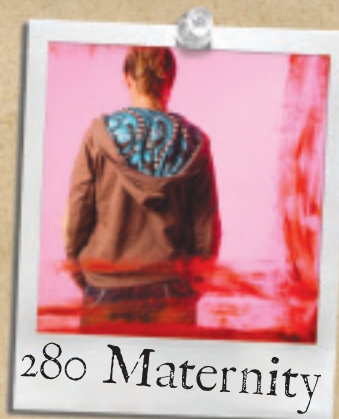
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Maternity's New Look

a healthy outlook *on Style*

The nursing category continues to grow as breastfeeding has become an even hotter topic for moms and the media.

"Breast feeding has gotten more and more widespread," said Meryl Kutzin, vice president of production for Q-T Intimates. "In fact, New York City hospitals are no longer giving out free formula to new moms when they leave the hospital, so I think people are now more aware of the benefits of nursing."

Q-T Intimates, which has been in business over 65 years producing a full range of bridal, maternity, shape wear and fashion, has realized the importance of breastfeeding and partnered with La Leche League International (LLLI) to produce a line of intimates, daywear and sleepwear.

"La Leche League International is a worldwide organization that has helped millions of women each year enhance their breast feeding experience," Kutzin said. "They've also teamed with the Department of Health and Human Services to develop a breast feeding awareness campaign. We decided to partner



Bravado! Designs

with LLLI and share in promoting healthy breastfeeding."

La Leche League International Intimates offers a high-impact sports bra, a hands-free pump bra which also converts to a nursing bra, a contoured deep-plunge nursing bra and a strapless nursing bra with an inside nursing frame. Sizes range from an A cup to a triple D or F cup and the brand is expanding into G and H cups. La Leche League International Intimates can be found at the specialty retail stores like Upper Breast Side or Real Birth in New York, and online at babycenter.com or motherswear.com.

Nursing bras have always been one of the best-selling items in a maternity store, and now nursing clothing has become more important, according to Cathe Verducco, owner of West Coast Maternity. "Many new lines look like regular clothing, but have hidden access for nursing. Some styles cross over from maternity to nursing, extending the time that consumers can wear their clothing. One of the staples in most stores is Glamourmom®, who introduced the nursing tank several years ago, and continues to show

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strong sales in the nursing wear category.”

Glamourmom® was founded by Line Rothman, who sought out a tank top with a built-in bra after the birth of her first daughter. “The maternity market was booming but when it came to nursing, there was nothing,” she said. “I saw at that point that many women might also need what I needed so I designed and sewed together my first prototype, brought it to the garment district, and the rest is history.”

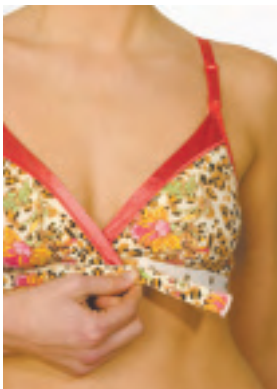
Glamourmom offers their patented nursing bra tanks and tops, maternity nursing bra tanks and tops, nursing bra slip dresses and nursing bra tankini swimsuits. The tanks and tops are also offered in longer lengths and with or without lace.

“At the time I created these items, there was nothing with a built-in nursing bra,” Rothman said. “The last thing I wanted to do was expose my stomach. It makes you feel naked, and in the winter, its cold! Glamourmom provides mom’s the ability to be discreet about breastfeeding. In fact, moms tell us they nurse longer with our tanks!”

Glamourmom is sold in the U.S., Canada, Australia, Europe and South Africa, as well as online at Glamourmom.com. Sizes range from small to XXL in clothing sizes and cup sizes range

from A to G. Retail price for all tanks is \$39.

In addition to a comfortable, supportive and stylish product, consumers are looking for a new feature from their nursing bra brand: environmental awareness.



Q-T Intimates

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- Meryl Kutzin, vice president of production, Q-T Intimates

“There is a big trend toward not only green products, but green companies” said

Kathryn From, ceo and co-owner of Bravado! Designs; founded 15 years ago. “Today, consumers are very aware of the environment and are evaluating how their buying decisions directly and indirectly impact their ecological footprint.”

Bravado! Designs is working hard to deliver superior results for its customers. Not only does the company buy green energy, implement office

recycling and composting programs, and donate all of their product seconds to charities rather than letting them go to waste, they also have a number of new products that are exceptionally green.

For example, the company has recently launched their Essential Nursing Bra Tank in a Bamboo fabric. “Bamboo is a great choice because it’s a sustainable and renewable resource, in addition to having natural moisture-wicking and antibacterial properties — wonderful features for pregnant and nursing moms.”

The Bamboo Nursing Bra Tank is currently selling in a number of Whole Foods stores, and early next year, the company will launch a bamboo version of its Original Nursing Bra.

This fall, Bravado will launch two new lines, the Body Silk Seamless Nursing Bra (which fits 40 bra sizes in just four sizes) with a removable molded foam cup, and the Exquisite Lace Nursing Bra and Boy Short.

Bravado! Designs can be found at specialty shops across North America and the world, with locations listed on their store locator at bravadodesigns.com.

A New View Maternity represents a number of nursing companies, including Bravado!, its leading nursing line; Nummies, which offers an underwire bra with a padded cup in nude, flirtatious red, ebony with pink lace trim and more; Melinda G, a corsetiere, micro-fiber underwire bra; and SPANX, an essential body slimmer.



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Maternity's New Look

Motherhood:

It's in the Bag

As maternity apparel becomes increasingly fashionable, it is only expected that accessories follow suit. Diaper bags are a necessity for all expectant moms and now the selection is hipper than ever.

"Like everything in this market, a diaper bag is technical," said Armanda Texidor, president of A New View Maternity, which represents OiOi, a brand providing versatile, practical and fashionable diaper bags. "The straps are made to go around a stroller, it has to carry a certain amount of weight, it has to be adjustable, there has to be a changing pad and compartments for bottles, diapers and mom's stuff. But despite all this, moms want it to be fashionable."



Mia Bossi

Janet Lee, cofounder of Mia Bossi, understands that moms want a diaper bag that suits their needs but also follows the regular accessories market. In order to accommodate these needs, Mia Bossi follows trends happening in the regular market, traveling to Italy twice a year to purchase hardware and observe the latest trends in leathers and color.

"Moms today are more style conscious and there is more money to be spent," Lee said. "They're looking for a bag that looks good on them and they don't want everyone to know they are carrying a diaper bag."

What makes Mia Bossi unique is that their diaper bags actually can function as computer bags, overnight bags or totebags. "It's three bags in one," Lee said. "The compartments for bottles and diaper pads come out so you can clean the bag easily and it's waterproof. Then, you can zip

in the computer case or handbag insert and use it for another purpose."

Mia Bossi bags can be found at Barneys, Nordstrom, Pea in the Pod and Bloomingdales, to name a few, as well as online. Retail price points range from \$195 to \$1,200.

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