

TRENDING:

Lay it on this fall with lots of layers

The most fashion forward look this season is layering. Layering isn't just about piling everything you own on top of everything else. To not look like a mash-up, you have to take a little care. Proportion is key.

Catherine Hiriart at Catherine H., a stylin' new boutique in Katonah, called layering her "favorite thing." Hiriart, who is the real deal from France, recently opened the boutique after owning another shop by the same name for a decade in Milford, Conn. While overseeing the progress of a client in one of her capacious dressing rooms, Hiriart opined her strongly held views on her favorite topic, layering.

BY
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"To start, you need a great base," she said. She and the client were both wearing what she called the perfect base, which were a pair of Avenue Montaigne trousers that have a bit of stretch. "These trousers fit so well. Anything you layer on top of them would be great," Hiriart said.

The ability to deftly layer is a real necessity in the Northeast, according to Hiriart, who said, "The weather is unpredictable and it can change quickly. Getting dressed in the morning in layers gives you the freedom to be comfortable all day."

Her pet peeve is a primary base that fits poorly. "No matter what you layer on top of a bad base won't look right," she said.

"You must start with a really good base that fits and flatters the body and shows the shape of it," Hiriart said. After establishing a base, the rest is easy and leaves room to be creative. "I like mixing textures. I love leather on top of silk or knits," she said. The leathers she prefers



COURTESY OF GABRIELLA'S EN VOGUE

St. Emile utilizes different tones for this chic outfit available at Gabriella's En Vogue in Scarsdale.

are unlined because they fit the body more closely, and in terms of weight, are more versatile. Layering, Hiriart opined, extends the life of an outfit and makes it season-less. "When you're shopping for clothes, think in terms of can you wear it for three out of four seasons," she said. "That is best."

Hiriart said a primary advantage of layering means you need fewer pieces because every piece multitasks. "Think in terms of combinations," she said. "Invest in key pieces that can be dressed up or dressed down."

The easiest way to change the mood of any outfit base is to accessorize. Shoes and jewelry, for example, can take any base whether it's a dress or a skirt or trousers from day to night. Hiriart cautioned against over-accessorizing: "A tall woman can wear a very long necklace, while a smaller woman might choose one spectacular chunky belt." Hiriart also recommended buying base pieces in one of the

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new neutrals, like blush or smoky gray. The next layer might be something in a jewel tone, something red or blue or green.

Elaine Andriotis of Beginnings Boutique in Scarsdale and Beginnings Bleu in Armonk loves a layer look that can be created by signature pieces by the brands Vince, Theory, J Brand, Joie and Current Elliot.

“Leather is the most important layering piece this fall,” Andriotis said. “Try a leather jacket over a sleeveless top or dress. Or a fleecy sweatshirt with the collar of a button down shirt sticking out. We just got some faux fur in. But leather is bigger than any fur this season.” She also loves button down shirts worn with a thermal on top, and hoodies worn under denim.

Layering isn’t just about clothes, Andriotis said. It’s also about accessories: “We like mixing bangles with wrap bracelets. Beaded necklaces — and you can’t have too many — are also in style this season.” Andriotis said you definitely can wear a scarf and a necklace. “We love the new very long necklaces where the pendant hits your belly button,” she said.

At Great Stuff in Scarsdale and Chap-paqua, Lori Friedman said she’s been dressing women in layers for about 30 years.

“Our fall and winter business begins with the sweater,” Friedman said. “We also love vests that can be layered over sweaters, or a lighter weight sweater vest layered over a long sleeve blouse or T-shirt.”

Underneath that sweater, she recommends a slim cut tank top. “Especially for winter we do tanks that are thinner and take up less space under sweaters,” Friedman said.

She’s had a long love affair with vests, which layer nicely over sweaters or even a lighter weight vest, or a button down shirt or long-sleeved T-shirt. Her favorite vest this year comes from the company Montcler from France.

“In the past we’ve done them in reds and royal blues which go great with jeans,” Friedman said. “This season for resort I’m thinking dusty pink and pale blue.”

In her stores she had a dusty pink and pale blue sweater that she said is beautiful with any jean. The sweater was so popular it already sold out. Can’t find the right sweater? Try a vest. She likes Herno, an Italian line.

“It’s a very soft, quilted vest,” Friedman said. “Vests are great for the erratic weather when it’s warm one minute and cold the next.”

Friedman loves scarves, which she said remain an important layering piece. “I’ve seen women in restaurants check their coat, but keep their scarf,” she said.

The scarf pulls together their outfit, and also is a precaution against any chill or too much air conditioning. Her favorite scarf this season is a pretty cashmere one that goes over the head: “Scarves are smaller this season. And the palette is softer than in years before. My customer doesn’t love brown, so we’re doing blues, reds and raspberries.”

Great Stuff has scarves in every price range from \$48-\$900. That rather expensive scarf is an antique Hermes design scarf sewn on to a piece of cashmere knit. “It’s reversible from cashmere knit to the Hermes silk on the other side. It’s a real statement piece,” Friedman said. “It’s not for everyone, but certainly is beautiful. It’s great stuff at any price.”

Friedman is also sold on the white button down shirt which she recommends be layered with a vest or a piece of jewelry that hangs to the waist. “A white shirt is a canvas for anything,” she said.

Speaking of jewelry, she is showing a lot of crystal: “We have long crystal pieces meant to be worn alone or in conjunction with another long piece.” Right now she is loving Chan Luu worn with pearls or a gold piece with little hanging bits that reflect the wearer’s lifestyle. “Our big push this year is tassels,” Friedman said. “Tassels are big.”

At Lola in Rye, Caroline Schneider’s position on layering is classic with a twist.

“Layering is the new black,” Schneider said. “It makes old items look new and new look even more modern.” She also believes layering makes transitioning from one season to another seamless.

“Traditionally we had summer ward-

robes and winter wardrobes,” Schneider said. “Today our seasons are so much more about the transitional. We don’t go right from summer into fall. There’s no smooth transition from winter into spring and summer. But if you layer properly, you’re able to bring items forward into the next season.”

Hosiery, Schneider said, can help make that transition. “At Lola we sell traditional heavy opaque tights, as well as lighter weight tights with interesting patterns and colors.” These tights layered under more summery clothes (and a cool pair of booties really helps) will transition a summer garment into a fall one. Leggings worn under a tunic bring that tunic forward into fall. And tunics are flattering on all body types.

How you wear your clothes is also important. “Nobody’s tucking,” Schneider said. Longer shirt lengths peeking out under a shorter jacket or sweater is an on-trend look right now. “Different lengths add interest to the clothes,” Schneider said.

A tried and true layering trend is scarves, which are still a big story this fall. “We love scarves at Lola,” Schneider said. “We think they’re a nice way to bring color to the face. Right now everyone is still tan from their summer vacation, but in a couple of weeks, that won’t be the case. A beautiful scarf is a way to add color and extend the summer season.”

Speaking of adding color, one of Schneider’s favorites is plum: “Plums are nice because they play well with other colors.” She said she absolutely has customers who still stick to basic black, but said that she’s finding that other customers feel a little black-saturated. “We always do well here with all shades of blue, everything from lighter blues into cobalt and navy,” Schneider said. She’s also including some brighter colors for the fall, including reds and greens.

However you choose to layer, know that a strategic piling on of fashion essentials are the building blocks to a great fall wardrobe.