

THE ARRIVAL OF THIS MONTH'S PRE-COLLECTIONS BRINGS A TASTE OF AUTUMN. TAKE YOUR CUES NOW FOR NEXT SEASON'S KEY TRENDS, SAYS **GEMMA SOAMES**

# Follow the leaders

**W**e are in changeable times – on many levels, not least the shop floor. Because as bikinis, cutaway swimsuits and yet more permutations of the gladiator sandal continue to hit the shelves, there is also a glut of new stuff coming in. New and decidedly wintry stuff, full of wools and camels, leather and lace, and it might not, at first glance, make you feel like whipping out the credit card. It is, after all, July, not normally the month to splurge on a winter coat. But don't panic. These things you're seeing are the pre-collections, and they might just be the best thing that can happen to your wardrobe.

Smart girls shop pre. They shop it because it is their first chance to pick up new trends for next season, they shop it because it delivers a great transitional wardrobe, and they shop it because, just sometimes, it offers a cheaper route to normally unaffordable brands. And this season, pre is worth shopping because it delivers some excellent pieces. We're talking the kind that are fabulous now with a white T-shirt, and will totally rock come October, when you'll be pairing them with a military-detail coat. The kind that seem "now" enough, but not slavishly trend-obsessed, and that create looks that will still work for you next year, and the one after that. And try as you might, you can't say that about a crochet bikini.

So, here's our pick of the key pre pieces to buy now, wear now and still wear later. A bit of smart shopping if ever we saw it. ●



## ACCESSORIES THAT COUNT

The new skinny waist-cincher works as well with a flimsy dress as with a winter knit. £59, from Reiss

A colourful, ladylike and very desirable update. £105, by Meg Mathews, from Liberty

Wear with your LBD now — and your LBD later. £210, from Kurt Geiger

Part tribal, part heirloom, we're loving House of Harlow 1960. £54; oxygenboutique.com

Follow the ladylike theme with a smaller, long-handled bag by Mulberry. £395

We will all be wearing wedge boots, and these, with their shades of Chloé, will do nicely, thanks. £55; asos.com





This skirt will rock as hard now with a white vest as it will do later with a black jacket, tights and pumps. £165, from AllSaints

Pretty blouses are a new wardrobe staple. Inject a bit of colour into yours via Etoile Isabel Marant. £235; net-a-porter.com

Capes are key for next season. Get in on the game early with this one from Topshop. £95

Tucker's silk dress is a great transitional piece. Work it solo in the summer and with a chunky cardie come autumn. £275; net-a-porter.com

Switch your cargoes for cropped, tapered trousers for an instant update — especially when worn with a crisp white shirt and statement heels. £32, from Next

We're all going to be loving lace soon. Get your mitts on this fabulous dress — wear with brown legs now and black tights later. £435, by Irwin & Jordan; irwinandjordan.com

DKNY channels the new trouser vibe. Killer heels, a staple grey tee and last year's blazer are its companions. T-shirt, £69, jacket, £196, trousers, £160, and heels, £253

Full-length is a key silhouette — and we love Acne's pleats. Take note of its flying jacket, too. You'll be wanting one. Jacket, £995, from Liberty. Skirt, £380; matchesfashion.com



