

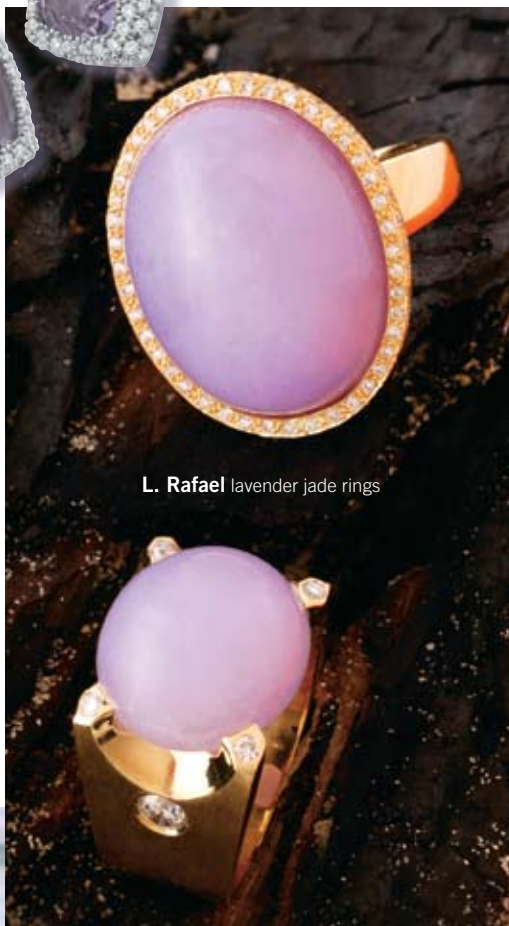
# SOFT focus

SAY HELLO TO SOFT, BID FAREWELL TO BRIGHT. Glaring, in-your-face shades are so yesterday, while delicate, quiet colors are today and tomorrow. This, according to Ellen Sideri, founder of ESP Trendlab in New York City, a forecasting and consulting firm, which specializes in color, trend, and consumer research for fashion, beauty, home, and consumer products.

**Schoeffel** cultured pearls hand-embroidered on silk chiffon dress



**Manoel Bernardes**  
kunzite earrings



**L. Rafael** lavender jade rings



**J. Mendel**. Photo: Reuters



**Susan Helmich** one-of-a-kind ring

**Kosta Boda** "Chicko" bowl

**Valente** "Aquarium" necklace



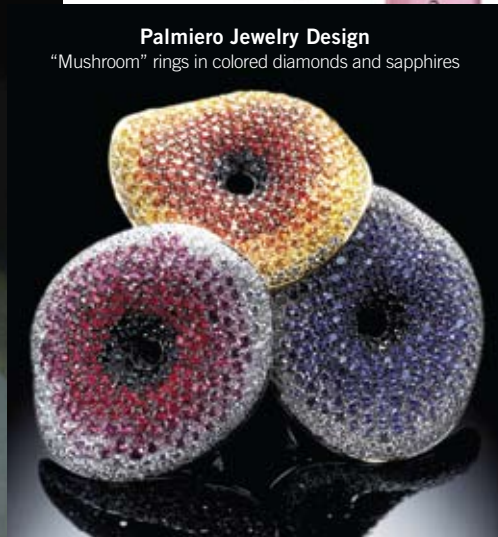
**Color Story** earrings



**Carmen Marc Valvo.** Photo: Reuters



**Philip Stein Teslar** watches



**Palmiero Jewelry Design**

"Mushroom" rings in colored diamonds and sapphires



**Leslie Greene**  
"Shaded Series"  
jewelry with citrines



**Wolford** lingerie

"From the beginning of the year 2000, we had a lot of bright, optimistic color because we needed the lift, due to the recession and then 9/11. Color is a driver at the retail level, so it drove sales," says Sideri. "But for the next five years, color is going to be much more refined, subtle, and discreet. The brights will be perhaps less clear. There is a kind of quieting of the color palette—and it starts this fall."

Jewelers who are selling lots of color, take a memo: Sideri notes that there are a number of ways to make the color palette more refined, not the least of which is to choose colors that are almost whitened.

"Choose gems that take a little of the chroma down," she says. "The colors won't be as bright, but yet, still fresh. The colors are more washed—slightly dusted, but not dirty."

So, with all the pink stone jewelry we saw at the recent Las Vegas trade shows, the question to Sideri becomes: What's up with pink?

"Pinks continue this fall and well into spring,

but again, not as bright, girly, or childlike. We're getting out of the more tween-y look and into more grownup and refined. More subtle peach or mauve cast. Pink leaning toward violet, but violet gems that are deeper rather than brighter. What's coming, too, is a new appreciation for pink gold, because there's this new regard for elegance and style."

This fall, she says the grays return and, in spring, the blues will be here in a big way commercially. "But they will pull the plums and lavenders with them. The colors are more vintage, looking like they've been aged. It's a Victorian influence."

But perhaps one of the most significant color-combining trends is the new monotone combination. It's something that the most fashion-forward jewelry designers showed in their new collections in Vegas. Sideri explains, "Going forward, colors will be used more in monotone combinations and families, because this is one way you can create something more refined. For example, three or four plum tones in one pal-

ette. The color will look much more blended, so you end up with something more subtle."

Many directional jewelry designers in Las Vegas premiered drop earrings, extra-long necklaces, or big rings with three and four different shades of the same stone, for example, three shades of pink tourmaline or four shades of citrine. This is modern color gradation, with a single item using a gem of several different shades, showing the gradual passing from one tint to another.

Gradationally speaking, Sideri says this will be very crucial for spring, as it will give fashion an overall feeling of much more toned down. If, however, a jeweler or fashion designer doesn't use different shades of the same color, then they'll work in color families, for example, orange-pink-red or brown-yellow-orange.

On a final note, Sideri says that high-polished jewelry now looks a bit too obvious: "I think we're going toward more patinated and aged-looking finishes. Because, generally, we're moving out of that bling period of 'look at me.'"