

TRENDS

Rose gold blossoms as a top trend

By Lorraine DePasque

THIS SEASON, everything's coming up roses—rose gold, that is.

When it comes to fine jewelry, you're most likely "a yellow" or "a white." You typically choose yellow gold or one of the noble white metals such as white gold, platinum or sterling silver. However, updating with pieces in pink is a must this year. The fact is, it's a fashion faux pas *not* to add pink gold to your jewelry wardrobe. Because it is refreshingly sophisticated and one of the newest looks, many of the biggest names in fine jewelry have added rose gold to their latest lines.

How did this happen? After all, not since its wild popularity in the first half of the 20th century has there been such a renaissance in blush-toned gold jewelry. One reason behind its resurgence is cyclical—the "everything-old-is-new-again" thing. But jewelry insiders suggest there is more to it than that. Experts contend that the current fascination with jewelry in the once-retro metal may actually have begun with the rise of interest in rose gold among numerous watch brands. It's an attraction that started a few years ago, and it just kept getting stronger, especially once celebrities started sporting the timepieces. Comedian and talk show host Ellen DeGeneres, for example, often says proudly, "My watch is a Rolex 'Daytona' in rose gold." Affirming the trend is Duvall O'Steen, Director of Jewelry Public Relations and Promotion for the World Gold Council, who says, "The popularity of rose gold in luxury watches is a huge driver of the rose gold jewelry trend."

Notice that O'Steen and DeGeneres both speak of the metal as rose. But isn't it pink? Or red, maybe? (Designers frequently say that men, when asking about watches, refer to it as red—perhaps thinking that pink and rose sound a bit feminine.) Simply put, rose gold is an alloy of yellow gold combined with copper to give it that pink effect, and it is the amount of copper used that ultimately determines just how pink or red the piece actually is. According to Chris Corti, a consultant to the World Gold Council, "The greater the copper content, the redder the metal. Rose or pink gold is formed in all karatages of gold, up to 22-karat. All colored karat golds are based on a combination gold/silver/copper alloy, possibly with small additions of other metals, such as zinc. So for example,

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Rose in Bloom

Pretty in Pink: Above: Roberto Coin Love Chain necklace and bracelet. Left: Mattioli "Chips" Bombe cuff.

as one increases copper content at the expense of, say, silver or zinc content, the alloy starts to become redder, going through rose/pink to red at high copper content.”

When choosing between tones of pink and red, it's really a matter of personal preference or the preference of your favorite designer (depending on which tone they've decided to work with).

We suggest choosing the design that speaks to you. The good news is that with copper-alloyed gold, all of its shades are universally flattering, with a softness that enhances just about every skin tone. Celebrity makeup artist and medical aesthetician Joanna Rolleczek, owner of the upscale Jadwig European Skin Care Salon in the tony Township of Cedar Grove, New Jersey, explains, “As a rule of thumb, I do think a deeper rose goes better with a darker skin tone but, in general, pink golds are flattering—even more flattering than yellow or white metals.” Rolleczek, who treats clients' skin from the inside out, says rose gold and soft palettes are particularly complementary to women age 40 and above, whose skin tends to grow sallow and more yellow over time because of hormonal changes.

“Over time, the skin becomes much more dehydrated, so the pigment changes,” Rolleczek explains, adding that environment, medication and lifestyle can also play a role. If you are in this age demographic (or buying for someone who is), consider earrings and necklaces in rose gold. Because they're worn close to the face, both will instantly warm up the complexion.

High praise for pink also comes from David Wolfe, Creative Director of The Doneger Group, New York, a leading international authority on fashion, color and trend forecasting, who agrees that rose gold complements just about every skin tone because of the cast it reflects on the wearer. Beyond that, Wolfe says, “Rose gold jewelry is the perfect accessory for fashion's soft new shades that began last fall and winter

and continue into spring and summer '09. These colors are replacing brights, neutrals and black. We certainly haven't had pretty, soft, feminine color in fashion for almost a decade.”

He adds, “Rose gold jewelry lends a nice tone-on-tone look to soft-colored clothing: the pinks, lavenders, mauves, blues and turquoises.” Not incidentally, he says, these colors are calming. “They're a bit like tranquilizers for the current psychological mood of the times: heightened and fragile with worries about the economy, the environment and the war.”

Red Alert

Now that you know what to look for, here are some simple suggestions on how to wear rose gold with fashion flair while expressing your unique style:

- Slip a prominent rose gold medallion or pendant onto a favorite yellow or white gold chain for an updated necklace.
- Hook or clip clusters—one, two, three or more—of pink gold charms onto necklace and bracelet links. Mix it up: A trio of gold metal shades looks great on a single-shade link.
- Stack slim rose and red gold bands altogether (as many as can fit on your fingers) for a ring look that only you will have. Be adventurous and have fun with the stacks. Mix-and-match all three tones of metal, gemstone colors (diamonds, precious and semi-precious) and even enamel shades for a one-of-a-kind, multi-chromatic style that looks like a single large, dramatic band.

Speaking of the clothes, has there been a lot of rose gold jewelry on the runways? Not yet, says O'Steen. “But, remember, it's new and not as prevalent, so designers can't get it as easily as they can get yellow and white gold jewelry.” With rose gold's recent resurrection she expects to see more soon, perhaps at fashion shows later this year.

As a style-conscious consumer, you can begin to build a rose gold jewelry collection right now by layering in new pieces with the yellow and white metals you already own. It will immediately impart a modern and refreshing update on your existing jewelry wardrobe.

Our favorite trick is an ingenious way to spruce up a white gold wedding band.

Place a slender rose-colored stacking ring on either side of the band. It's such an easy way to make a fashion statement and, at the same time, add versatility to the ring that you wear every day (hopefully for the rest of your life). If your husband is like most, he won't even notice that now and then, you alter the look of your precious betrothal band. But not to worry: The fact that he doesn't notice just means that unlike you, his focus isn't fashion—“the bloom isn't off the rose” in your marriage! ♦

Deadly Red: Roberto Coin Cobra bangle in 18K rose and white gold with brown enamel and diamonds.

