



*S*OMETHING
TO **WINE**
ABOUT

By Diana Jarett

Every year, lifestyle experts in the fields of jewelry, fashion, interior design and more anticipate the pronouncement of Pantone Color Institute's Color of the Year. Since 2000, this analyst has been designating specific colors which express a sort of global zeitgeist; colors that are resonating around the world and reflect what people are looking for. But which came first, the prediction or the trend? While the jury still debates those finer points, jewelry manufacturers and retailers are particularly keen to convert this annual forecast into an inventory that sells.

For 2015, the color to watch is Marsala, a deeply robust wine hue that brings an appealing accompaniment to wearable art in both fashion and accessories. Since manufacturers and retailers buy out for the next season, it's critical to know where the color trend winds are blowing. No retailer wants to get caught with customers looking for goods they cannot deliver.

INTERPRET THE TRENDS

As retailers, how do we interpret the Marsala hue that Pantone praises? According to the institute, Marsala is "a naturally robust and earthy wine red . . . enriching our minds, bodies and souls." That's a great place to start since there's a strong emotional component to jewelry we sell. After all, jewelry was created to connect the wearer to the piece, even the giver to the fortunate recipient. We like to say that a piece of jewelry or even a gemstone 'speaks' to someone; creating a highly mesmerizing attraction between a jewelry item and the consumer.

Casting a broad glance around the natural world, we discover countless instances where a version of the Marsala color creates a potent draw for people. Besides the rich fortified wine bearing the Marsala moniker, we see pomegranates, deep-toned berries, roses, warm spices and so on. According to Leatrice Eiseman, executive director, Pantone Color Institute, "Marsala is a

subtly seductive shade, one that draws us in to its embracing warmth."

EXPERT VIEWPOINT

Gem cutters, designers and retailers have actually been offering a range of intense deep-toned wine red colors for years. So they have a cultivated sensibility on why Marsala resonates with their customers. Experts believe some of the reasons the Marsala-hued stones have continued to garner fans over time is due to their flattering versatility. Most skin tones are complemented by this deep burgundy. According to award-winning custom gemstone cutter Lisa Elser, "I've found that the rich, dark Marsala tones can be underwhelming in the case, but for many clients it comes alive on their skin. If I can get them to





try it, they often fall in love.”

Elser’s prowess in cutting similar wine-red stones has landed her in good company. In 2013, her 3rd Place winner in AGTA’s Cutting Edge competition, a 14.24 carat deep red tourmaline ended up in the Smithsonian National Gem and Mineral Collection alongside such luminaries as the Hope Diamond.

Imaginative designers consider 2015’s Color of the Year as a launching point for creativity. Niveet Nagpal, president and head designer of Omi Privé is celebrated for creating timeless designs using a variety of well thought out colors. “I don’t like to be boxed in by one “Color of the Year” when creating my designs. I prefer to craft pieces with bold and vibrant greens, blues and pinks set in warmer metals including yellow and rose gold. Not only do they stand on their own, but they complement the 2015 Color of the Year as well.”

Allen Dolberg, principal at Zoma Color, views Marsala as a fashion forward choice well suited to other popular colored stones. “Continuing the earth-tone trend that features morganite and peach sapphire, our design palette is shifting to a richer and more robust hue of reddish brown, in line with Pantone’s Color of the Year - Marsala.” So retailers like

Zoma Color believe Marsala’s hue supports other good sellers that their customers already favor. “Marsala is a pleasant complement to the peachy tones we have focused on these last few seasons,” he reveals.

A SEASONLESS CHOICE

Complex and charismatic, the Marsala vibe is not a one-season wonder. Your customers can experience its versatility by pairing it with white, off white, cream and many pastels for year-round enjoyment. The unifying Marsala tone finds its place as a natural earthy color seen in the most casual of styles. But its bold full-bodied tint also creates a sophisticated vibe with designer wear. Omi Privé president Nagpal elaborates. “Because Marsala can be considered almost a “neutral” like grey or black, it pairs well with any bright color year for round utility. For example, we see it as the perfect complement to bright blues in the summer or intense pinks and reds in fall.”

Don’t overlook the compatibility this color provides for the re-emergence of yellow gold as a favored metal choice, and the white-hot trend for rose gold. “Our focus is on deep, scarlet-red spinel and rusty-rose zircons in rose gold in our newest collection,” explained Dolberg.

Your gemstone choices are legion with this elegant color. Tourmaline, spinel, jasper, garnet, zircon, and saturated sunstone provide exciting options for your style conscious clientele. Let the cultivated taste for deep wine colors known as Marsala find their way into your customers’ collection in 2015. Cheers!



Award winning journalist Diana Jarrett has been delivering critical gemstone news to the industry for over a decade. Arguably the most branded voice in the jewelry trade, graduate gemologist-appraiser (GIA) Jarrett’s distinct writing style is evident whether she’s preparing laboratory analyses for world-class grading facilities or for luxury lifestyle consumer publications like *Life in Naples* or *Montage Magazine*. A friend to miners and gem dealers the world over, Jarrett has unparalleled access to deliver valuable insight to her audience at trade shows and consumer events where she’s a popular speaker. Jarrett coauthored and revised the classic reference guide “*Cameos Old & New 4th Edition*, by Gemstone Press. Her work has also appeared in *Rapaport Diamond Report*, *Texas Jewelers*, *Jewellery Business*, *New York Mineralogical Club Bulletin*, and a long running column for *Southern Jewelry News* and *Mid-America Jewelry News*; *The Story Behind the Stone*. Her popular blog *Color-n-Ice* is followed by prominent gemstone associations and other outlets.