

Dark Romance

The FF – flexible floral – will see you through this season says
PENNY McCORMICK

Velvet floral coat,
Dries Van Noten,
€1,900 at Brown Thomas

The late Kenzo Takada, the designer behind eponymous label Kenzo, who died of Covid-19 in Paris last month, could arguably take credit for the winter floral trend. His trippy, gothic florals combining Japanese influences first came to prominence in the 1970s. Unintentionally, this season's flower

powered catwalks are a worthy tribute to Takada.

It seems as if the winter floral is just what we need right now: it's instantly *glasual* – combining glamour and casual elegance. On the catwalk, exquisitely embroidered floral cardies were part of Laura Kim and Fernando Garcia's Oscar De La Renta "Party" collection (follow @loubrennandesign for tips on how to upcycle an old knit with pretty needlepoint). At Prada, nipped-in waists and colour pops combined with big blowsy flower prints (make your own using fabric from Texture, Monkstown), while Dries Van Noten's nostalgic blooms and floral suits in luxe tones of purple and green velvet are top of my wishlist. I'm wondering if appliquéd flower patches will create the same impression on an old velvet coat? Erdem Moralioglu, of course, has been making florals look chic for most of his career, as has Irish designer Richard Quinn, aka the Monet of fashion. His cheerful daisy prints were part of Perry Ogden's evocative film for Brown Thomas's AW20 collection.

As Kenzo so rightly said, "Fashion is like eating. You shouldn't stick with the same menu." In this spirit, let's swap quotidian black for a dark romantic floral – a grown-up version of the florals-for-spring cliché. Essential Antwerp's houndstooth-floral mashup "Wurich" midi, Rixo's "Kristen" "midaxi" in hibiscus, or Justine Tabak's "Woodstock" dress are all what I call "FFFs" – flexible floral frocks. The bonus: they don't look like curtains either.

Irish designers including Caroline Kilkenny, Monica Walsh (of Cobbler's Lane), Fiona Heaney (of Fee G) and Carol McHugh (of Joe Noe) are also making fabulous versions. Style with trainers or boots (swap white for snakeskin), wear with a leather bomber jacket, a corduroy or velvet blazer, and layer over a skinny-rib polo-neck sweater to winterise the floral dress or add lace tights and a chunky wool cardigan. Don't forget a black cherry nail varnish and a spritz of Chanel Coco Noir – a dark but luminous scent with tonka bean, sandalwood, patchouli and vanilla made brilliant with bright citrus and a heart of rose and jasmine. The rule of thumb for wearing a floral dress is to allow the dress the spotlight it deserves, ditching the distracting accessories. ■

Interiors Accents



Kenzo Mah Jong modular seating, from €1,360, at Roche Bobois; Lemongrass & Cedarwood candle, €15.95, The Handmade Soap Co; *Décors Barbares, The Enchanting Interiors of Nathalie Farman-Farma*, Vendome, £50; silk hand-tufted Amaryllis rug, €3,470, at Roche Bobois; "At Sea" acrylic by Katherine Boucher Beug, at Oliver Sears Gallery, Dublin 2.



Accessorise With



Tom Ford Black Orchid eau de parfum, €116, at Brown Thomas; crocus turband, €50; www.emily-jean.com; crushed velour Elbury insulated jacket, €80, at Regatta Great Outdoors; www.regatta.ie; Letitia earrings, €125; www.shrimps.com; Bobbi Brown Crushed Liquid Lip in Cool Beets, €23.12, at counters nationwide.

3. Mira dress, Caroline Kilkenny, €285, at Arnotts. 4. Liselotte Dress, Fabienne Chapot, €189.95, at Avoca. 5. Gucci Liberty floral ballet flats, £610; www.gucci.com. 6. Cressida dress, £315; www.rixo.co.uk. 7. Bowsman mini-dress, part of the Prairie Collection, €299; www.cobblerslane.com. 8. Embroidered organza top, Fee G, €221.33, at Arnotts. 9. Stevie wildflower print top, €190; www.joenoec.co.