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Fashion

The Reading Glasses Market is Becoming More Focused on Design

Fast-growing and successful entries in the prescription glasses market like Warby Parker have brought designer style within reach of the average consumer. Reading glasses had lagged behind until recently, though designer brands like Clive Somers are now emerging.



Brands like Clive Somers are emerging to fill the increasing demand for designer reading glasses.

To see the full collection, visit: CliveSomers.com

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The emergence of major new players such as Warby Parker in the prescription lens market is an example of the eyeglasses market embracing designer quality at more affordable prices. Until recently, the reading glasses market had been slower to address this trend.

The demand for readers has increased steadily over the past several years, in part due to the aging baby boomer generation. According to a large-scale study by The Vision Council, the number of adults wearing OTC reading glasses grew by 4.6 million from 2009 to 2015 to a total of 30.9 million adults.

Despite this increased demand, many brands of reading glasses are falling short of consumer expectations. Baby boomers are increasingly likely to be fashion-conscious, and to prefer high quality accessories. Bifocals, a perennial standby in this market aren't sophisticated enough for this demographic—they're viewed as a senior citizen's item, while many in their 40s, 50s and beyond are embracing their youth more than ever.

In the current market, reading glasses tend to fall into two categories: very trendy, or very casual. Brands like Eyebobs target stylish consumers, but appear to be targeting a consumer looking for a style that's more "out-there" than classic.

Companies like Solo, which offers casual reading sunglasses styled for the beach, tend to sacrifice fashion for simplicity with a style that can feel inappropriate for everyday workwear.

However, new brands have emerged with an apparent goal of bridging this gap. One example is Clive Somers, which has a collection of designer reading glasses and reading sunglasses.

"The market for readers is becoming more sophisticated. Brands like Clive Somers are emerging to fill the increasing demand for designer reading glasses at moderate prices."

Using the high-quality materials often associated with luxury brands, but without the hefty price tag, this line caters to the consumer who cares about his or her appearance but would prefer not to spend six hundred dollars on a pair of glasses.

Named after—and inspired by—famous international cities, Clive Somers reading glasses are designed for the distinguished consumer who appreciates iconic styles and colors. The brand has also harnessed progressive lens technology in their readers and sunglasses. This is attractive to those concerned with the years added to their appearance by wearing of bifocal readers, because to the casual observer it's not obvious they are wearing reading glasses.

Clive Somers is one of the first designer reading glasses brands to collaborate with a high-fashion photographer. Caesar Lima, an award-winning fashion photographer, orchestrated a recent shoot for the brand in his famous Malibu home. His goal was to convey that reading glasses and progressive lens readers in particular, are a fashion accessory and vehicle for self-expression, not something to be hidden away.

The brand is also the focus of a September editorial spread in Men's Essentials Magazine, which features many of the Caesar Lima images. The fact that reading glasses are featured in a national lifestyle magazine editorial shows that the market for readers is becoming more sophisticated. Brands like Clive Somers are emerging to fill the increasing demand for designer reading glasses at moderate prices.