



Saint Laurent Spring 2026: As YSL as Possible

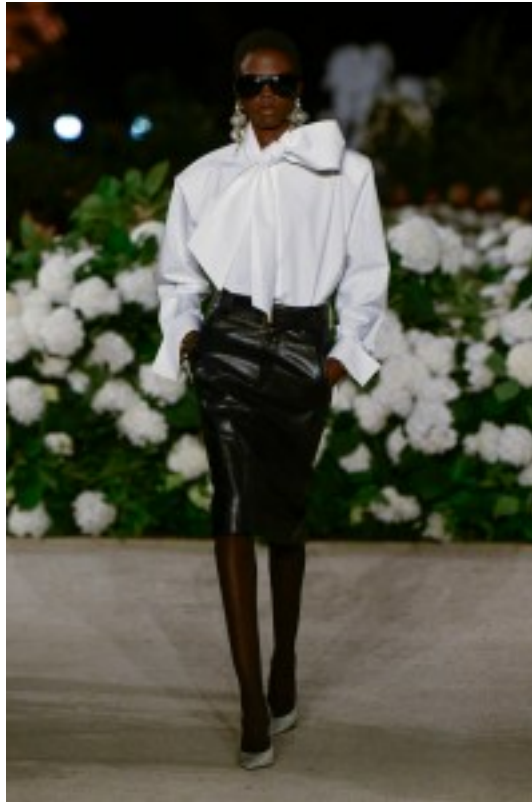


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Saint Laurent Spring 2026 Ready-to-Wear Collection at Paris Fashion Week Giovanni Giannoni/WWD

Anthony Vaccarello, creative director of Saint Laurent since 2016, is well aware of the exceptional context of this European fashion season, bulging with a dozen or so big designer debuts that are bound to win the attention sweepstakes.

Or maybe not.

"It's my 30th show," he noted backstage, going on to explain that his approach was to be as YSL as possible — in ways subtle and grandiose.

His dusk-hour show, which unfurled across a vast French garden set erected at the foot of a scintillating Eiffel Tower, pulsed with the essence of Saint Laurent, which has always stood for provocative femininity, here expressed by a gang of leather-clad female Mapplethorpes weaving through the hedges, a troupe of sleek Robert Palmer girls nearly naked under their filmy trenchcoats, and finally, a gaggle of duchesses in distress, racing by in ruffled, puff-sleeved gowns.

YSL's iconic Opium perfume wafted over the winding rows of white hydrangeas, incidentally not the favorite flower of front-row guest Madonna (Google it). The presence of Betty Catroux and Catherine Deneuve, who arrived on the arm of Jean Paul Gaultier, also heightened the feeling of YSL, a witness and bellwether of societal changes since the '60s.

Drone images of the set revealed that the hedges were arranged in the shape of a giant Cassandre logo. Wow.

"I think it's good to hammer home the point that, 'Oh là là, you are at Saint Laurent,' and you leave this show knowing you couldn't have been anywhere else," Vaccarello said.

This spectacular show will also be remembered for its meaty leather jackets, its equally



meaty white cotton poplin blouses with low-slung pussy bows, and for the vaporous nylons Vaccarello employed for his high-neck trenchcoats, filmy safari dresses and those theatrical Belle Époque gowns. He said they could be rolled up and tucked into a zippered pouch like a windbreaker.

Vaccarello said he recently came across a interview with Françoise Giroud, France's minister of culture in the '70s, in which she described the YSL woman as louche by day, countess by night. It stuck in his head.

Hence his interpretation of '80s leather daddies cruising for sex in the Tuileries after dark as an extreme form of tough chic, expressed via strict leather pencil skirts, killer biker jackets and balloon-sleeved blousons.

Another recent Vaccarello discovery was the costumes the legendary founder designed for the likes of Nan Kempner, Hélène Rochas and Jane Birkin for the Proust ball in 1971, organized by Marie-Hélène de Rothschild.

His mind also went to "Queen Margo," one of his favorite Isabel Adjani films, set in 16th-century France.

He said this was the first time he had tackled the historical side of the Saint Laurent archive, which he feels is inexhaustible.

"I feel like I still want to tell stories," he mused. "It's a house where there's so much to say."

