

How to beat the January sales!

Submitted by: Morris & Company

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A study carried out this year* has shown that women in the UK spend more than £1.6 billion on more than 500 million items of clothing they will never wear, with the average woman hoarding around 22 garments in her wardrobe that will never see the light of day. Furthermore, the vast majority of these crimes against fashion can be blamed on impulse buys, with over 30% of women surveyed admitting that almost all of these items are sales purchases.

With the recession still playing havoc with the purse stings, more consumers than ever are looking to buy investment pieces, viewing items on a 'cost per wear' basis and shunning the disposable 'fast fashion' that many outlets offer.

So, with the January sales looming, how can shoppers avoid wasting their hard earned cash and get sales savvy to find a true fashion investment?

Amanda Wright, founder of exclusive online clothing boutique Hunter Dunn (<http://www.hunterdunn.co.uk>), offers some top tips on how to beat the sales:

- o Take stock of your wardrobe: Before heading out to the sales, take a thorough look through your wardrobe. Note down the items which need replacing or the gaps which need to be filled. Then, whilst shopping, use the list to keep focused, and stop you getting carried away purchasing things you don't need, or won't work with the rest of your wardrobe.

- o Update classic basics with on-trend accessories: When it comes to buying staple sale items such as dresses, jackets and trousers, go for timeless, well cut shapes without any obvious references to current trends. Then, use accessories to bring in transient seasonal trends to create classic looks with a contemporary twist!

- o Think big: It is better to buy something which is slightly large, on the basis that a good tailor can alter it to fit you perfectly, rather than waste money on something slightly small in the belief that one day you will fit into it!

- o Invest in luxury fabrics: The sales are the perfect time to snap up some luxury fabrics, which, with the right care, are guaranteed to outlast inferior materials. Cashmere is highly coveted, and the sales are the perfect time to purchase some high quality essentials which will last from season to season. Silk is also worth investing in - look for simple, well cut blouses in classic colours that can become a year-round wardrobe staple. Also not to be overlooked is pure new wool – this can come in the form of everyday knitwear, traditional woven tweeds or contemporary wool crepes. The feel of the fabric should tell you everything you need to know, and will stand up to the rigors of everyday life without stretching or sagging.

- o Don't be tempted by a price tag: This truly is the golden rule - only ever buy an item if it is a shape and colour which truly flatters you. It may have 50% off, but it is not an investment piece if it languishes in the bottom of the wardrobe never to be worn.

Amanda Wright said: "Shopping the sales is a wonderful opportunity to get beautiful investment pieces at a fraction of the usual cost – but when January comes around it's easy to be tempted by a low price tag and end up with clothes that will probably never be worn. This makes neither financial nor ecological sense, so it's important to become 'sales-smart' and walk away with clothes that will look fabulous season after season by following these few simple rules."

How To Spot an Investment Item

Amanda says: "Our aim at Hunter Dunn is to offer elegant understated fashion which will appeal to women who are more concerned with quality and design than transient trends."

"Buying in the sales is a fantastic opportunity to find investment pieces, and there are a few simple pointers to look out for, to ensure that what is being purchased is of a high quality."

Turning an item inside out can tell you all you need to know about how well made it is and what you are getting for your money:

Lining

People assume lining is a sign of a quality garment, but this is not necessarily the case. Lining can make it easy for a factory to hide the quality of its work because you cannot examine the seams, the stitching or how well the pattern was cut. If your item does have a lining pay close attention to how well it fits, how the seams sit when the item is on and the quality of stitching.

Seams

High quality pieces will generally have flat pressed seams so that the item sits neatly against the body. Also, keep an eye out for bound edges - on a piece of tailoring such as a jacket, the seams will generally be bound along each edge to create a beautifully finished garment, so the inside looks almost as good as the outside.

Stitching

Check for smooth, straight stitching, and that the seams have been sewn accurately, with no bunching or puckering. Small, tight stitches are also a sign of quality workmanship as it takes longer, but ultimately helps the garments to retain their strength and shape over time and reduce the possibility of splitting and tearing.

The Hunter Dunn sale has now begun exclusively online, giving customers a chance to snap up items from DAKS, John Smedley and Mimi Berry at reduced prices.

Visit www.hunterdunn.co.uk.

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For more information, or for high-res images, please contact the Hunter Dunn press office on 01743 234224 or at hunterdunn@seal.uk.com

* Study carried out by shopping channel QVC