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Shopping 101: the Planned Outing

by Michael C. Sherrin
 EDGE Style Contributor
 Saturday Apr 23, 2005



Neiman Marcus, Union Square: San Francisco

The summer collections are in. The spring collections are marked down and often, acceptable summer wear. What does this mean? It's a great time to plan a shopping trip!

A planned shopping trip is much different than just going shopping. A planned shopping trip has the specific expectation of purchasing instead of just window-shopping. And, that makes a planned shopping trip all the more rewarding.

To begin, have a good idea of what you're looking for before you leave. This will help structure your route; the more planning, the less walking. On planned trips, avoid thrift stores and most outlets like the Garment District and Marshals. These stores are an adventure unto their own and require large time commitments. This planned trip is for those times when you get your paycheck and want to blow it all.

Next, collect your fashion advisors. These can be the two or three girls or gay guys whose opinions you value. Shopping is more efficient in single sex groups because everyone is concentrated in the same area and/or stores, but women have been known to be less than honest with each other (I saw Mean Girls). Although I guess it can be said that gay men have been known to sleep with each other (yes, it's true). Do not have your secret crush go shopping with you. That will surely damage your credibility.

Ok, so now you have your financial advisors, your plan (and made a compromise to suffer through Tellos in order to spend extra time at DKNY), and the day has come. You must get dressed.

It's true; you must dress fabulously to go shopping. If you're shopping for casual clothes, dress casually. If you want to buy formal wear, dress up, (but not all the way in a suit and tie). If you look fashionable going into the store, sales reps are more likely to give you more respect. Plus, you never know whom you might run into (Express is the daytime gay pick-up joint).

If you know exactly what you want to buy, wear the outfit your new clothing will go with. If you want a variety of items, your outfit should have the maximum matching potential. Blue jeans that are still blue will go with most everything. If you expect to try on pants, be sure to wear tight underwear. Loose boxers can screw up the fit of fitted pants.



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A button down shirt will be easy to remove without messing up your hair. Simple and comfortable black shoes might not enhance or be your first choice for the new tweed jacket you're trying on, but they'll detract less than those neon shoes from Aldo. If you want to look for new shoes, bring an extra pair of socks with a different thickness than those you're wearing. Your black dress socks will be much thinner than white tube socks and your shoe will fit differently.

Finally, remember that you're shopping. Most of the difficult, prep work has been done. Now, it's up to you and your fashion advisors to find the best clothes that you can.

If you run into trouble (like you can't picture if a certain belt will go with the pants and shirt at home), find similar items in the store and test out your creation. This also works if your blue jeans are too blue for your new blue shirt; find a pair of white pants just to test things out. Finally, be sure to keep receipts just in case something doesn't match like you'd hoped once you get home.

A freelance writer and editor, Michael can be contacted at MikeCS83@yahoo.com or through his website at <http://mikecs.95mb.com/>.

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