

## Summer sales: It's not all about price

It's not a good deal if it's too trendy or doesn't fit

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CanWest News Service; The Province

*Wednesday, July 25, 2007*

It's here, it's there, it's everywhere:  
the summer sale.

And since you can't avoid the lure unless you actually never leave your house, the best thing is to restrain yourself and strategize, says Vancouver image consultant Denisa Nica of [www.theimagebuilders.com](http://www.theimagebuilders.com).

"Don't go into a store just because it has a big 'sale' sign," says Nica.

"Understand what your personal style is before you go out, and only go into stores that reflect who you are."

### FOCUS

Sale shoppers who are focused are more likely to make better choices, says Emily Salsbury, stylist and owner of Pure Style Productions fashion-consulting company.

The best rule of thumb is to have a goal -- try to figure out what you're looking to add to your wardrobe before you go.

Buy classics, not trendy pieces, says Nica -- and be warned that most pieces on sale now will be the trendy ones people didn't buy into in the first place.

Salsbury recommends staying away from anything nautical (including stripes and gold accents) as nautical is about to drop right off the fashion map. Chunky jewelry and big bags are better investments.

Still, summer is a great time to pick up wardrobe basics, such as a tank



CREDIT: Wayne Leidenfrost, The Province

You can't go wrong with white trousers and a tunic top for summer, says image consultant Denisa Nica, so if you spot them on sale, go for it.

top in every colour or a basic white blouse.

"Summer classics include white trousers or capris and a tunic," says Nica. "These will work for this summer and next."

Salsbury says clothes are no bargain if they don't fit properly, or are not in keeping with the rest of the stuff in your closet.

Nica agrees: "At this time of year, most sale fashions will be small or large. Don't feel you have to squeeze into something just because it's on sale. And only buy items that go with at least two pieces already in your wardrobe."

#### THINK AHEAD

July is the perfect month for scoring a deal on transitional outfits, things that will get you through the uneven weather of fall.

Salsbury suggests looking for linen, which is heavier than summer cotton, but still breathes on a hot September day. Look for tweedy linen cropped pants, which can be tucked into boots when it gets colder. And linen cropped jackets work well for women of all ages. "They're easy to pair with denim or dress pants, and there are lots of dark brown or cream linens," she says. "Some people say they don't like how linen wrinkles . . . but it's easy to wear and comfortable."

#### STEP UP

Fashion expert Claude Laframboise, executive editor of the shopping magazine *Loulou*, says shoes are a good deal right now, particularly because it has become fashionable to wear open toes and slingbacks in winter. He suggests doing a bit of homework by logging onto hot fashion sites such as [vogue.com](http://vogue.com) to see what's coming for fall. He cautions really pointy shoes are not as hot any more and fall will see a slightly rounded toe.

"If you look for a rounded toe in a summer shoe on sale, you'll know you're OK for fall," he says.

#### EXPERIMENT

Laframboise says summer sales are a chance to indulge in clothes by big-name designers that are normally too pricey for the average person. Summer discounts also give shoppers the chance to play with clothes that feel too scary at full price.

"Say you haven't tried any skinny, narrow pants yet," he says. "If you

haven't tried them, why not spend some money on a pair of narrow pants you can wear into the fall?"

Now is the time to purchase an item you might not wear as often, such as a fancy dress. Laframboise says Le Chateau has great dresses geared to graduations and summer weddings that will be well-priced by this time of the year. If you get a slightly impractical frock on sale, you won't feel guilty if you don't wear it a lot.

#### LOVE IT OR LEAVE IT

Laframboise doesn't worry about fashions being outdated by the time next summer rolls around. He says while designers may turn things upside down season to season, chain and department stores tend to be more conservative and clothing in general is becoming less seasonal. But he warns that shoppers must be true to themselves.

"You have to know you're not buying something that has nothing to do with your wardrobe and nothing to do with your personal style," he says. "Sometimes you're buying for the fantasy version of yourself."

Nica suggests never buying anything you wouldn't buy at full price, and Laframboise recommends hiding the price tag on a sale item, and then deciding what you would be willing to pay for the item on its own merit. If the sale price is a lot less -- bonus.

Salsbury and Nica echo Laframboise's advice.

"No matter what, make sure you love it," Salsbury says. "Make sure you can't wait to wear it."

"Make sure it makes you feel great," says Nica.