

AUTUMN 'Op Shopping'

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In recent years opportunity-shopping ('op shopping') has become hugely popular and even a necessity given the high prices we pay for clothing in Australia! Op shops are stores where people take their good, second-hand clothing to be sold by the retailer, and the proceeds go directly to charity. Shoppers can literally walk out the door in designer clothes for a fraction of the price, while the money goes to a worthwhile cause.

I found my favourite blazer in an op shop two years ago, and it's still a key piece for my spring/summer wardrobe. At \$5, the cost per wear has been phenomenal!

However, it's still possible to waste time, money and energy in op shops if you don't know what you are looking for. You must only choose clothes that you love and suit you in order to avoid wardrobe clutter.

TIPS FOR OP SHOPPING...

1 FIND AN OP SHOP IN YOUR AREA

There is a fabulous website that lists every op shop in the country - go to www.opshop.org to find one in your suburb or town.

2 CHOOSE THE BEST TIME TO GO OP SHOPPING

Donations of clothes are generally made by members of the public on the weekends and Mondays; therefore, Tuesdays and Wednesdays are the best days to op-shop because they are usually abundant with fresh new stock.

3 MAKE SURE YOU'RE AWARE OF THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF DIFFERENT OP SHOPS

Op shops in outer suburbs and regional areas are the most affordable to shop in and often stock the largest variety of items! These also tend to be the stores where designer labels go unnoticed. Keep in mind that the Salvos have a half-price day every day to move stock on.

The closer an op shop is to the CBD, the more expensive the clothes are as a general rule. These stores have to cover higher rent, wages, rates and general bills. City op shops tend to be more high-end fashion savvy; being familiar with designer labels they price their stock accordingly.

This also means good-quality clothing will be snapped up quickly by experienced 'op shoppers'.

4 BE EXPERIMENTAL WITH YOUR OP SHOPPING

Op shopping is very hit-and-miss, so have some fun and use it as an opportunity to try on pieces you wouldn't normally wear. You can start with a pre-written list of pieces prior to hitting op shops, but don't be disappointed if you come home with pieces that weren't on the list. Op shopping is somewhat like Kinder Surprise!

I recommend trying everything on because you don't want to be disappointed when you get home and it looks wrong on you. Remember, when something fits perfectly, it looks more expensive - as though it's been made specifically for you. You need to really love an item you are considering purchasing as this will ensure that it is very satisfying each and every time you wear it. Be picky!

5 WISE OP SHOP CHOICES

Really assess the garment or accessory that you're considering buying. Leave behind any items that are too long, short, big or small for you. Also leave clothes with stains, holes, tears or excessive wear. However, if something is in excellent condition and only needs minor adjusting or alteration, it still maybe worth buying. Consider having it dry cleaned to make the garment appear brand new again.



2015 AUTUMN LOOKS

So, with autumn not too far off, what are the items you should look for to maintain a modern and up-to-date look while still supporting a charity?

The mood for autumn 2015 will be a sporty verses neat appeal, particularly for outerwear. Look for parkers and oversized warm jackets as the throw-on blanket coat will be huge!

The blanket is most certainly the new coat this season!! If you spot a duffle coat that echoes the 1960s, grab that too as we'll see these in autumn.

As for frocks, be on the lookout for big-bloom print dresses or sixties' style shifts. These should be easy to find in op shops as they're classic. Do some unexpected layering with a soft, loose sweater over a pintucked or embroidered shirt, then add a classic fur jacket or vest over the top.

For a feminine and masculine combo, mix a touch of lace and texture. Blend high and low fashion pieces together for op-shop fashionista bo-ho fun. Long cardigans are also here for autumn, so hunt for one in a neutral colour for easy mixing and matching. Lastly, indulge in anything quirky or unique that you'll love wearing and will make you smile!

LOOK
ONE

LOOK
TWO



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