

Sent: Sunday, June 23, 2002 8:00 PM

This is what I have saved from Pamtoo's posts:

My biggest tip is to go with "fitted jackets that can be worn buttoned up w/o a top, and to always get all of the "core" pieces in the group Collection (all same exact color) available: jacket, pant, skirt. With those 3 pieces + 1 other colored/(patterned or solid)top, you have 6 outfits (just by adding jewelry or other accessories...if you like scarves, etc):

1-jacket+top+pant

2-jacket+top+skirt

3-jacket+pant - no top +great jewelry(necklace or cuff bracelet or FAB earrings, etc) (dressier, sleeker look)

4-jacket+skirt - no top +great jewelry (necklace or cuff bracelet or FAB earrings, etc (dressier, sleeker look)

5-top+pant (business casual)

6-top+skirt (business casual)

For EVERY additional TOP you add...you automatically have 6 MORE outfit combos! Throw in a scarf...you have more looks. Or change shoes/belt color...and you have 6 more outfits (this is great with Charcoal Grey and with Camel colored core pieces. Both colors look FAB with either Black or Dark Choc Brown shoes/belts/handbags! Of course...if you can find Grey Suede (for Winter) or Camel Leather (for Spring!) you have 6 MORE outfits!

or "actual suit suits"as in matching jacket and skirt, I LOVE Herbert Grossman. You can find these at Saks 5th Ave. Now.....I tend to ...uh..."re-design" a lot of "suits"! Namely the "skirts"! I like them..... "SHORT"! And I like my jackets "fitted". MY FAVORITE Designer is Chanel! One day ...I WILL own one! ...but so far, I just try to "emulate" the look! So, with the Grossmans, I look for rich fabrics in boucle (for winter), or light weight wools for Spring/Summer. I usually "nip" in the waist....and "slim" and "shorten" the skirts. These suits usually run \$500+, so....I wait for SALES! Go to Saks, and make FRIENDS of the SA's! I ONLY buy jackets that "button up". So, I have many that are "jewel necked/Chanel style" with GREAT buttons! I LOVE buttons! And if the jacket has "yucky, plain buttons", I try to "envision the possibilities" and, yank them off!...and REPLACE the buttons quickly! Go to a fabric store! They have GORGEOUS buttons available! You wouldn't believe how many people think that my \$500 suits (which maybe cost me \$265-340 with alterations incl!) are REAL Chanel suits (\$7500+)! It's so funny! But "buttons" can SCREAM either "expensive" or "CHEAP!!!!" So, don't skimp on buttons!

For "Sportswear" Collections (meaning collections that have jackets, skirts, pants, tops) I LOVE:

*AKII! Expensive?....yes. BUT VERY WORTH IT! Wait for sales, or go to her outlets.

*Tahari LOVE IT! Very FITTED jackets, and the skirts are ALREADY short!!!

*Andrea Jovine ...but I cannot find them anymore! She had KILLER knits! Gorgeous!, and PERFECT for travel!

*DKNYvery high priced for a BRIDGE Designer...BUT they FIT me to a "T"! LOVE her jackets...and the quality is WORTH it. Just watch for SALES!

*Cathy Hardwick – Gorgeous quality. Wait for sales. Jackets are \$600+

*St. John – I do a LOT of alteration here! otherwise it can be too "old lady-ish"! I chop the skirts almost in

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half!...but the jackets are "to die for"!...if you like the Chanehook!

Shop the "private label" areas of Saks 5th Ave! They have the BEST private label division! Great quality AND prices!

For non-core pieces...like tops, sweaters, body suits, etc...I LOVE Emanuel Ungaro! GREAT GREAT tops! and pants and jackets. BUT, I don't like any silks...so, I will stick to Rayon or wools. His Rayons are GREAT quality!

For high-end designers....I LOVE Valentino and Ungaro. OF course, Anne Klein, and Calvin Klein (but I don't care for CK that much! I only like his "designer" line), and I love Armani!

I always "window shop". Even if I do NOT intend on buying. I make a list before I go out, and list items I "need" to fill in my wardrobe. I have another list of things I'd "like to have...but don't need". And I even have a "WISH LIST" of "things I don't need....but wish I could have!!!!!" I walk around with this notebook EVERY TIME I go out. If I see something...I jot down what it is, what store I saw it in, the SA who helped me, the ticket # info (dept #, class, house, and Style #), and what size and color I liked. I write down the date, and when the SA thought it MIGHT get marked down.

FYI: I only buy things at RETAIL that I desperately need: like hosiery! Or a "ballgown" for a last minute invite, etc! Or hair stuff and cosmetics. Everything else...I wait for!...because my wardrobe is ALREADY built. BUT, when I was "starting"...that was not always possible. So, you need to prioritize. Get your BASIC CORE pieces, first (jkt, pants, skirt)...all from the SAME collection. So that all the dye lots match. Then pick up the "extras" slowly.

I have a few crazy designer pieces: Moschino (what was I thinking?????? LOL!), Versace, Dolce & Gabbana, Prada, etc. All were on SALE. But you know what? They are sooooo "out there",...that I can't wear them that much! One time...and EVERYONE I know remembers the piece! I don't know THAT many people! haha!so, I see the same few friends over and over. My "classic" pieces have carried me forever!

I love "natural fabrics": wools (especially Cashmere in the winter!), and heavy cottons (khakis, etc), and wool knits. I like linens in the summer....but they are NOT practical! So, don't buy them when "just starting to build your wardrobe". I don't care for "silks", but that is just my preference. I like more "tailored" clothing. Silk to me is "flimsy". Just Not me. But it is nice. And today RAYONS can be really nice! Just look for "quality". Tahari does Rayon the best!

I also LOVE Anne Taylors! Great tailored jackets, pants, skirts, and tops.

I stick to SOLIDS in my core pieces. No stripes, or checks, etc. They are "marked"...as in "remembered easily". It's hard to "change" them. Save patterns for "add ons" later: sport jackets, etc.

Use patterns in your tops! I love striped sweaters or florals, etc mixed with solid core pieces.

Stay away from BRIGHT anything! I LOVE color. BUT "color" is almost impossible to do "elegantly" without spending MAJOR BUCKS! It can look very CHEAP. For ex: Escada is the BEST at doing COLOR (next to Chanel!). But, I don't WANT to spend \$900 for a BLOUSE!...and \$1800 for a jacket! But to do "color", I'd do it from head to toe...the SAME color! Jacket, skirt, shoes, bag....all in pretty pink or yellow or whatever! But, try finding Pink shoes that match! You'd need to do Escada or Chanel from head to toe...and I don't personally have \$10,000 to spend on ONE outfit... So, stay with MUTED shades/tones for "color". And stick to Neutrals for core basics. They are "understated, elegant, and lend themselves to "mixing" more easily than do BRIGHT colors". You can find cool, or warm colors in muted shades. So it works on any complexion.

Another TIP: if you don't already...and I am sure you do...ALWAYS DRESS THE PART when you shop! I know it may not be "politically correct" to be judged by "what you wear", but (trust me!) that is how a lot of SA's "qualify their customers". Yes, true....VERY WEALTHY people are "understated", can be in "jeans", etc.....BUT SA's are on "commission" most of the time. "Old money customes" are not always the BEST customers! They usually are pretty "frugal" based on my own experience! They shop the SALES! So, what the SA's are usually on the watch for...is someone with "disposable income" who is willing to part with it! They are looking for someone who looks "put together". Who has "fashion sense". That doesn't mean you have to be wearing a Rolex. That's not what I mean. But if you go to a store like Saks, or Neimans...and your hair is a mess, or you are in jeans, etc.....you are NOT going to get the SAME treatment as the person who walks in wearing a "pulled together look". Whether it be a business suit, or DKNY, Ralph Lauren Polo, or Versace, or just a nice pair of pants and a nice coordinated top,etc. It doesn't matter that you might have \$1000 in your purse....the SA will qualify you. It may be wrong...but

it's a fact.

Again, I am NOT saying you do the above.... I am sure you don't. But there were posts the other day talking about the reaction of MAC SA's to certain people, and it made me wonder if maybe the customer was "too dressed down". If you go into a GAP store in jeans and a t-shirt....that's cool. But, unless your jeans and t-shirt have a HUGE DKNY label showing, I DOUBT that same person would be greeted quickly at a Neiman's.

Ok, let me know if I can help you in any other way with this. I will tell you that I have built my wardrobe over the last 15 years. I have cashmeres that look BRAND NEW, as well as jackets, skirts, pants, dresses, suits, etc. It's an "investment" of sorts. Or at least, that is how I treat my clothing. Buy great quality, and take care of them (go to a high end Dry Cleaners ONLY!), and you will have a gorgeous wardrobe that will take you through MANY years. Always think in terms of "what you own" and "what you need to complete your wardrobe". Try to resist any trendy items....unless you get a REAL BARGAIN. But put the major bucks in your core pieces.

EDITED: Oh! I forgot BEBE!!!! I LOVE Bebe's! They have some really cute pieces (jackets, pants, tops) if you are YOUNG. But I only pick from their "tops". The rest is TOO TOO YOUNG for me, and their suit pieces are not the same high quality that they once were (they used to be a lot more tailored when they first started!). They have some good Rayon/Wool blends at VERY affordable prices! And the tops are great "add ons" that have a "funky" look -- without my shelling out BIG BUCKS for a designer rendition of the "look". So, when I want "edgy designs"...I run to Bebe!

Another GREAT place to look for "edgy" add on pieces is Cache. I LOVE that store. But, I only shop the sales there.