

Fashion Fling

Moguls, Megastars, and the Ladies Who Lunch Hit the Town for Spring Wardrobes

Just in time to get inspired to shop for fall fashion, New York Fashion Week turned out the most inspiring, uplifting, and colorful collections for next spring. Don't ask me why that makes me want to shop *now*, but it does.

Maybe if we get on with shopping and wearing now, next season's things will come sooner?

I don't know, but just when the frilly, feminine, soft, girly, and flowy silhouettes shimmied down the runway, I went out and bought off-the-shoulder sweaters and tight mod tops for now. It's probably a Pavlovian thing or hormonal. You feel happy when you see clothes, ergo, you go buy clothes.

Not that I wouldn't pass up on wearing the gorgeous satin and ribbon concoctions in Easter-egg colors



(why should those few ladies get all the handmade designer goods while the rest wait for the influences to trickle down to affordable mass brands?! Hmph!), there is a kind of justice here (at least within the minuscule, pathetically small-minded hierarchy of seating at fashion shows).

Do celebrities deserve to sit front row at a fashion show?

Not if they are in the music business and their stylists call in most of their wardrobe. No way.

But the lunching ladies who cut checks to keep the designer engines moving? Well, there is a sort of justice here in that you get what you pay for, so they deserve the seats.

Of course, celebrities in clothes in photos in magazines help sell them too. And so does the approval of fashion editors, who sit cheek by jowl with the ladies and the celebs. This leaves only the buyers vying for position.

Let's face it. You don't want to alienate the evening-wear buyer from Saks or your frocks won't end up on their racks.

And so back to shopping. I've snapped up the last of the sale-rack bargains (after all, it's still warm enough for T-shirts if worn with the seasonal corduroys) and am about to dig out the shearling I bought in August (yes, back then, from Henri Bendel, while they had my small size), but I'm ready now to go down with my annual shoe disease (boots are pointy and round, long and short).

The fall's nod to mod styling will mean many a trip for women to the hosiery department (legs are out, as in out from under very short skirts, hence the need for opaque, creative hose) and, well, anything else that takes my fancy. It's a comfortable time of the year to stroll on Madison and weave around the East Village or SoHo seeking out fashion finds.

I say bring your plastic and keep the wheels of fashion turning. ■



Front-Row Fashion: Beyoncé shows her stuff

of the flirty looks from my favorite shows: Luca Luca, Vasseur-Esquivel, and Douglas Hannant. The only folks who get to wear their fashion pre-season, as it were, are a few select celebrities who are close to a particular designer — or close enough to a publicist — for a front-row seat.

A-listers in town for the week included heavyweights Salma Hayek, Robert Redford, Britney, and Beyoncé, among others. More important (and creating many column inches in the daily press) was the huge attendance of the ladies who lunch — and buy the clothes in real life.

The funny thing is that even though fashion budgets are unfair