



Vintage clothing, like this fashionable black dress from Bygones in Carytown, is not just for costume parties.

Distinctive with Quality: Vintage and Consignment Clothing

by Liz Jewett

Ultra-feminine sundresses are in this season, as if you needed reminding. Yellow is too, as are shirtdresses. Simply walk past any major retail outlet, or better yet, walk past several and try to distinguish the front display of one store from another. The monotony alone can be enough to make anyone want to seek alternatives. That's not even to mention the inevitable moment one of those cute little shirtdress buttons pops right off, or the day that charming shade of chartreuse yellow fades into something more aptly called mustard.

For many shoppers, the answer to the lack of variety and the sometimes poor quality of modern clothing can be found in the world of consignment and vintage clothing. The sheer number of vintage and consignment stores in Richmond speaks to their popularity, and with such a diverse array of second-hand options, it seems there really is something out there for everyone.

For the traditional shopper who enjoys modernity in clothing as well as today's top brands, consignment offers a welcome alternative to first-hand retail. Within the cozy confines of Clementine in Carytown, you might find a black Prada purse for \$149 or a Marc Jacobs' skirt for \$49. Lesley Glotzl, owner of Clementine, says, "Most of my customers say that their favorite thing about the shop is that they can buy labels they can't normally afford."

Other high-end consignment stores like Funky Threads in the Stony Point

Shopping Center and the Butterfly Consignment Boutique offer a selection of well-known brands at affordable prices. One recent shopper to Funky Threads came away with three skirts, including Ann Taylor Loft and Liz Claiborne, for about \$60. Her style-conscious teenage daughter even approved of her purchases—a rarity.

Yet for other, more adventurous shoppers, the best alternative to standard retail is vintage. For those who love vintage shopping, their reasons for choosing it are endless. According to Elsa Lindberg, whose father Laurence Lindberg owns the store Luxor Vintage in Carytown, shoppers often choose vintage because, "It offers something a little bit different that's nicer and better quality." She sees college students come in to the store for 1960s button-up shirts, items whose quality and distinctiveness are difficult to find elsewhere. One of the strongest advantages of shopping vintage is the individuality and spontaneity of the clothes. At Luxor alone, you can find a 1950s bubblegum pink prom dress made from nylon and tulle on one rack, a silk and velvet plum coat from 1905 on another, and a turquoise bowling shirt with the name "Willie" emblazoned on it from 1968 just across the aisle. Cross the street to Bygones Vintage Clothing and you'll find the same kind of variety, everything from a man's two-piece grey suit from the 70s to a 20s era women's negligee in the most delicate of baby pink silks.

Variety aside, vintage offers customers a different way of shopping, a quiet



reprieve from the bustling and nondescript aisles of a traditional store. Nowhere could better exemplify this than Halcyon Vintage Clothing in the Fan. Owner Connie Carroll has been at Halcyon for 24 years, and her passion for vintage clothing is contagious. For Carroll, Halcyon is a way of preserving "the kind of clothes that were architecture," as opposed to "today's assembly-line fashion." Carroll calls her customers "fantastic," points out that they are "from all walks of life," and maintains that while the popularity of specific eras of vintage clothing may rise and fall, vintage is here to stay because people will always respond to "the pride and workmanship and quality present in the clothing."

A frequent Halcyon customer seconds that opinion. "I shop vintage because the clothes are generally made of higher quality materials than modern clothes. You can get materials like wool

Fashion Stylist: Chris Wilmer, **V** Fashion Editor
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