

**MPA-IMAG
Evanston
May 2008**

Notes from the launch of

SHOPSMART;)
NO HYPE+NO ADS+JUST GREAT BUYS!

The Familiar



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ConsumerReports

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The Second Beginning

- Women!
- Major competition
- Expensive production values

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The New

NEW! the Quick & Easy guide from Consumer Reports

SHOPSMART:)

NO HYPE+NO ADS+JUST

NEW! the Quick & Easy guide f

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BEST & V CLOSET

We rate 15 sy

Plus: TIPS ON HOW TO
DEAL WITH TOO MANY
SHOES, SWEATERS,
BAGS & CLOTHES

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ALL SHOP
SHOULD I



POWER SHOPPING 45 ways to save

clothes + cell phones
wine + cameras + c

Plus:
GREAT OUTLET
STORE BARGAINS
10 WEB SITES
ALL SHOPPERS
SHOULD KNOW

NEW! the Quick & Easy guide from Consumer Reports

SHOPSMART:)

NO HYPE+NO ADS+JUST GREAT BUYS!

Best & worst closet organizers

We rate 15 systems

Plus:
TIPS ON HOW TO
DEAL WITH TOO MANY
SHOES, SWEATERS,
BAGS & CLOTHES
10 WEB SITES EVERY
SHOPPER SHOULD KNOW



A feature story “opener”

A woman in a beige suit is walking and carrying several shopping bags. One bag is green with a high-heeled shoe and the text 'Eddie Bauer'. Another bag is yellow with 'L.L.Bean' written on it. There are also green and red bags. The background is white.

10+
TIPS TO FIND
THE HIDDEN
BARGAINS

The ShopSmart guide to **outlet stores**

WHERE TO GO AND WHAT TO BUY THERE

Our survey, hours of shopping, and examination of dozens of labels and garments reveal that great bargains, high-quality merchandise, a wide selection, and a pleasant experience are yours if you shop right. Here's how:

TIME YOUR VISIT.
Crowds can be brutal on weekends. Midweek (Tuesday through Thursday) is usually quietest. Arrive as soon as the mall opens, when the merchandise is neatly arranged and salespeople are perky, says Michele Rothstein, spokeswoman for Chelsea Premium Outlets. Dinnertime is another good time to beat the mobs. Avoid shopping from noon to 3 p.m. Save time by consulting a mall map before shopping.

Inside the feature



Coupon books are usually free by joining a VIP Shopper Club online.

CATCH THE BIGGEST SALES.

Outlets follow the same calendar as regular stores, offering especially sweet deals around Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, July Fourth, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Great deals can also be seasonal. In January, for instance, merchants need to clear out existing inventories to make room for spring arrivals.

USE COUPONS.

The major outlet developer have Web sites full of downloadable coupons good for bonus discounts from selected stores during a given timeframe. There, you can sign up to receive e-mail alerts regarding sales at your favorite mall. Sites for the three biggest developers: Premiumoutlets.com, Primeretail.com, and Tangeroutlet.com. For other outlet centers, try Googling the location—Carlsbad, Calif., for example—and the word "outlets." At many individual stores, you can sign up for exclusive discounts on your favorite brands.

JOIN A FREQUENT-SHOPPER PROGRAM.

By joining Prime's 1Club or Chelsea Premium Outlet's VIP Shopper Club, at the Web sites

above, you'll receive e-mail alerts for upcoming sales, promotions, and special events. Members also can pick up coupon books at the mall's customer-service office. Clubs and coupons are usually free. Tanger imposes a one-time \$10 membership fee and charges about \$3 to \$5 for a coupon book. Others may charge for the booklet if you show up at the office without a voucher. Be sure to make a printout from the Web site before leaving home.

SEEK OTHER DISCOUNTS.

AAA members, for instance, may qualify for an extra 10 percent off at participating stores. Some centers also extend a 10 percent discount to shoppers older than 50 on a weekday, when crowds are thinner. One Chelsea Premium Outlets offers its "senior" discount on Tuesdays.

CONSIDER IRREGULARS.

They are among the most deeply discounted goods. Many flaws are practically unnoticeable and have little bearing on longevity. Bring a magnifying glass to help you identify flaws. If you're not sure about a defect, ask a salesperson to point it out.

The scoop on the stores

	L.L. Bean	Stocks mostly first-quality discontinued products and catalog overstocks. Great deals on returns such as monogrammed luggage and carryalls.
	Lenox	Excellent source of replacement pieces for your china set. Outlets carry current stock and older patterns not readily available at department stores. Discounts of 80 percent or more on slightly blemished five-piece place settings.
	Carter's	Often receive new lines a month before the department stores and discounters. In-season merchandise is priced at 25 to 70 percent off full retail. You'll also find clearance items manufactured for Target and Wal-Mart, typically marked down to \$5 to \$20.
	Nike	If you're patient and don't need to be among the first to have the latest and greatest designs, you can save about 40 percent off regular prices. Sneakers arrive six months to one year after their debut at full-price stores.
	Coach	Seventy-five percent of stock is made just for factory stores; remaining goods are overstocks or discontinued products from the boutiques.

How goods made for outlets measure up

Regular-store vs Outlet-store



Do the tweaks compromise quality?

GLASSES Both versions were made in China and looked equal in quality.

DRESSES The outlet version had less shaping in the body and sleeves. The retail version was softer, with a dressier, more-fitted look.

BELTS Both belts were constructed out of the same leather but the retail's hardware was of better quality.

BRACELETS The outlet version was made of a lighter material but the design was virtually the same.

BAGS The retail version was softer and more supple with more attention to detail in the stitching.

SHOES The retail version used a slightly finer quality leather but not enough to notice.

The verdict:

The outlet versions we examined were well made, but most of the higher-priced goods were a trifle better, exhibiting details that could increase comfort, appearance, or longevity.

Another sample feature

Get it together

Afraid to open your closet for fear of getting hit by

So often, our closets can resemble our life—and that's not necessarily a bad thing. A chaotic, jumbled-together schedule is the sign of a full and happy existence. But a closet that spews clothing and shoes every time you open the door? Time for an intervention.

Don't worry. It'll be painless. The newest closet organizers are fun—honest! They offer extras like shoe compartments, sliding drawers, and matching baskets. And they won't cost you as much as your first car. The catch is that in most cases, you've got to assemble the whole contraption yourself.

That wasn't a problem for our two top picks, at right. They took less than an hour to put together, but many of the 15 other systems we tested took as much as six hours. One set came with more than 100 fasteners, including lots of teeny-tiny screws; others were constructed from shoddy materials that didn't line up straight. A few companies will take the whole mess off your hands and do the installation for you, but you'll pay double or triple the typical DIY price. (Note that the prices listed for the two systems at right are for a base unit with drawers, a pull-out wire bin, two hanger rods, and several shelves.)

To close the door on disarray, check out our two top-rated systems and accessorize according to your "closet personality" (page tk). When you're done with the bedroom, tackle the garage. Our top-rated storage system can free up floor space so you'll have room to actually, um, park the car.



Loaded with extras
Elfa (www.elfa.com)
Our cost: \$550

Why we like it:

- Pre-cut brackets. The Container Store, which sells the Elfa system, customizes brackets to your closet's dimensions.
 - Closet planning services.
 - Clear directions even a novice can understand.
 - Easy shelf assembly: they just snap into slots.
 - Lots of accessories, like sliding doors and shoe bags.
- One bummer:** Wire shelves can leave marks in sweaters.

CREDIT

flying objects? This guide's for you.



Sturdy and basic
Rubbermaid Configurations (www.rubbermaid.com)
Our cost: \$300

Why we like it:

- It's one of the less expensive organizers we tested.
 - Sizing adjusts with sliding tracks—no need to cut to fit.
 - Real simple assembly.
 - Instructions were easy to follow.
- One bummer:** Fewer add-on accessories available.

CREDIT

3 closet shopping tips:

Look online before you buy. Check manufacturer Web sites for accessory options. Add-ons such as shoe storage and extra drawers might be a deciding factor.

Size up your skills. If the only screwdriver you've had experience with is the alcoholic kind, consider a professionally installed system. Two we like are The California Closets Classic (\$1,300) and the Garage Tek system for garages (\$2,500).

Shun shoddy materials. Wire shelves can leave lines in sweaters, so look for systems with solid shelves or thin boards you can put over the wire. For garage systems, avoid unsealed particle board, which can fall apart from use and exposure, and attract mold.

Pssst!

Although California Closets' professionally installed system was top-notch, its DIY unit was one of the worst we tested. The Ikea system was the only one that ranked lower.

Front of book: “ShopTalk” section

shoptalk;) SHOPPING TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS



New washer and dryer pairs look beautiful but they might not be worth the extra costs.

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INSIDE **buyer**

Take it from our secret shoppers

Dozens of shoppers work undercover for us. Each week, they buy thousands of dollars worth of merchandise for our test labs. Here are some of their best tips.

Never call customer service from 9 to noon EST. That's when the lines are ringing off the hook from all time zones. facilisi. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam ci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip ex



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To get a salesperson's attention, call out her name. Most salespeople wear name tags but few shoppers ever read them. facilisi. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam ci tation ullamcorper suscipit lobortis nisl ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis autem

Never order a big appliance online for home delivery. Instead, order the product online but pick it up in the store. facilisi. Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam ci tation ullamcorper suscipit

How much is your caffeine fix costing you?

Probably more than you think—79 percent of U.S. adults drink coffee, gulping down an average of 3.4 cups a day. Here's what that means to your annual budget, whether you're a home brewer, buy at Dunkin' Donuts, or spring for Starbucks.



Note: Average prices are for an 8-ounce cup of home-brewed supermarket coffee, a 10-ounce cup of Dunkin' Donuts coffee, and an 8-ounce cup of Starbucks coffee.

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kitchen

inside

- 40 Countertops
- 42 Cabinets
- 44 Refrigerators
- 46 Dining Game
- 47 Coffeemakers
- 48 Ranges
- 50 Toasters



Opener

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The Guide

kitchen best pod coffeemakers

Inside

Perk up!

10
TESTED

3
SMART
PICKS

For a quicker cup, try one of these new coffeemakers.

All you have to do to get your morning fix with these coffeemakers is pop in a premeasured pod of grinds and push a button. The coffee drips right into your cup. Our super-caffeinated testers—they brewed more than 400 cups with 10 machines—found them super easy to use. They eliminate measuring and counter spills, and cut cleaning time. All you do is toss the pod in the trash and rinse out the spout. The one drawback: That quick morning buzz doesn't come cheap. The pods range from about a quarter to nearly 50 cents each, or about four times what you'd pay per cup with a regular coffeemaker. But that's a fraction of what you'd pay at Starbucks. So drink up!

giant java

The **Mr. Coffee Home Café AT13** can be used with tall mugs, as well as the small one shown here. **Price:** \$80

double the buzz

The **Senseo HD7810** coffeemaker can fill two cups at once—great if you're not the only one in the house who likes a quick cup. **Price:** \$40

easy brewer

The **Black & Decker Home Café One Cup CoffeeHouse GT300** is a snap to turn on—even if you're still hovering in a morning fog. **Price:** \$80



COFFEE talk NOT READY TO LET GO OF YOUR OLD COFFEEMAKER? We can help there too. Premium coffees can cost \$20 or more a pound. Here are some less-expensive beans we like:
For a good jolt: Try Eight O'Clock whole bean, \$5 a pound, or Dunkin' Donuts ground, about \$8 a pound.
If you're trying to cut back on caffeine: Try Eight O'Clock whole-bean decaffeinated, about \$6 a pound.

The Third Beginning

- Launch/Press
- Launch on time and on budget!
- Virtually no sales for the second issue.
- Lose newsstand manager

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The fourth beginning

- Get new newsstand manager.
- 6/year?
- Editorial blows budget
- Circulation
- More investment
- How much longer is this going to take?

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The Rule of 3

- Eliminates personal bias
- Invites arguments
- Tie breaker
- Try for cross-disciplines
- Critical mass builds consensus

The Rule of 13

- Launch as an extra issue of Consumer Reports
- Share a pocket

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ConsumerReports

Advantages of Being Mr. Big

- Resources for innovation
- Research in-house
- Lots of women
- Well-known brand
- Flagship publication with established newsstand history

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ConsumerReports

Disadvantages of being Mr. Big

- Well-known brand typecasts your new product
- Bureaucracy slows momentum
- Matrixed structure means everyone has everything to say about everything all the time.
- Other projects compete for funding.

Questions

- How long?
- What metrics do you use to gauge progress?
- Are advertisers an advantage?