

Shop the Internet for Mother's Day gifts



Mother's Day comes around every year. So does shopping for a gift. But rather than taking the routine approach - really, why not forgo the flowers or one more robe that mom doesn't need - and log on to the Internet for a gift to give come May 13th.

Just a few mouse clicks away, there are plenty of interesting and more unique finds for mom.

She'll certainly appreciate the thoughtful gift.

You'll experience gift-buying free of the crowds and shopping malls.

And, in the end, mom may even get hip to web shopping.

Here are a few suggested web sites to get you started.

I think www.ashford.com is a perfect source for Mother's Day shopping. The site carries a range of upscale goods, including watches, jewelry, handbags, perfume and writing and desk top accessories. It truly makes decadent gift-giving easy in today's busy world.

Not to mention, the site is offering free-overnight shipping through Mother's Day on orders of \$100 or more. Free gift packaging and a card are included.

Keep an eye out for extra services like these, as well as return policies conducive to gift-giving. Ashford.com, for example, has a 30-day satisfaction guarantee, so mom can return anything she doesn't like or want, no matter where she lives.

I found several great gifts for mom at ashford.com. One of my favorites was a 36-inch silk twill Anne Klein wrap with an antique paisley motif and touches of blue, red and white. Priced at \$58, it would be a perfect addition to any spring wardrobe.

For moms who love floral notes like rosewood, carnation and jasmine, consider Ungaro Diva Eau de Parfum Spray at \$90. It's an amazing summer scent and priced at \$90.

If mom is already computer-savvy, on-the-go or a working professional, consider the stylish Lisa Jenks' laptop computer case, selling for \$285 on the web site. Lightweight and functional, it features a detachable over-the-shoulder strap, Lisa's signature single handle in silver, a front flap closure to secure contents and single front and interior compartments.

For the mom who loves getting her hands dirty in the garden, I suggest surfing to www.bhg.com. It's run by *Better Homes & Gardens* magazine and is packed with gardening gifts for Mother's Day.

Here, my favorite finds included a pair of Wells Lamson deerskin gardening gloves for \$29.99 and copper watering cans inspired by vintage designs, priced \$17-\$39.

But surf the web yourself. You'll find a range of web sites where gift purchases can be made.

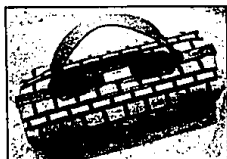
Cari Waldman of West Bloomfield is a stylist and free-lance fashion writer. Please send your Internet shopping questions to Cari at OECYBER-SHOP@aol.com.

Click Pick

www.bath-and-body.com

What it sells: Handmade soaps, bath accessories and products, including bath bombs, body lotions, shower gels, body sprays and scented candles. This site is not connected to the retail chain Bath & Body Works.

Site features: Can't remember if Aunt Rose likes the scent Rustic Rose? Does mom still like vanilla bubble bath? Purchase an on-line gift certificate redeemable for any web site product. On-line gift certificates can be sent by e-mail (handy for out-of-town daughters-in-law) or by regular mail (USPS Priority Mail) for a \$3 charge. They can be purchased in amounts of \$5 or more. I also think these certificates are excellent as small thank you gifts. Really, what else can you buy and send for \$3?



My lady's handbag

It's a matter of style, confidence and faith in femininity



Can't resist: Handbag addict Laurie Sall (right) gets help shopping for her favorite accessory from sales associate Cheryl Koop-Jordan at Tender in Birmingham. Basket weave oblong bag (top of page) by Miu Miu sells for \$460 at Tender.

BY NICOLE STAFFORD
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With a collection of "at least 150" handbags, Laurie Sall admits she's afflicted with an accessory addiction.

She has been collecting purses for 10 years; but it's unlikely she'll drop her habit anytime soon.

If only because, today, there's a more tempting variety of handbags on the market.

No, Sall isn't in search of the perfect handbag.

"I think there are perfect handbags, but I like variety," says Sall, who's 42 and works in finance and investment and runs her own company. "I get bored."

And, boredom, in her case, precipitates the purchase of an average of six new handbags per season.

Though Sall is far from the typical handbag consumer, many women share her affinity for the accessory.

Last year, handbag designers departed from traditional fabrications, but women scooped up an increased number of purses in 2000, putting their stamp of approval on the use of alternative materials like nylon microfiber, canvas, suede, wool, cashmere, silk and snakeskin, as well as handbags decorated with sequins, beads and other embellishments.

According to NPD, a retail information tracking company, dollar sales of handbags in 2000 exceeded the \$1 billion dollar mark, up 3 percent from the year before. Unit sales also

increased by 3 percent with 23.5 million units sold at an average retail price of \$45.51, according to NPD.

That's partly because the post-'80s woman feels more at ease carrying a stylish tote, the sort of bag Grace Kelly or Jackie O had in tow back in the '50s and '60s. Or if not a bag of that persuasion, then one more expressive of individuality.

Confident femininity

Today's woman doesn't circumscribe her lady-like pouches to evening soirees, however. She's carrying her handbags - the epitome of femininity - to the office, as well.

Women's attitudes towards workplace fashion have changed since the '80s when padded shoulders and power business suits were, or at least seemed, mandatory.

Today, women feel more self-assured in the work world, not to mention more confident in their professional abilities.

Consequently, they feel less pressure to dress in a way that commands authority or suggests masculinity and more inclined to use workplace wardrobes to express individuality and femininity.

"I don't wear suits now like I used to," says Sall. "Now, I wear more simple clothes, and if people don't like the way I dress, too bad."

That's not to say Sall and other working women dismiss the idea of looking professional in the workplace. But they do want to wear clothing that's favors the unique, the expres-

sive and the feminine.

Sall's take: Get polish and a professional edge with a handbag. As a focal point and as an element that ties together different clothing components, the handbag has a natural finishing effect, she says.

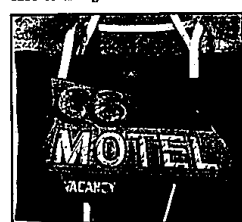
It's not cumbersome like a bulky suit, either. Nor is a purse as costly.

Work it, girl

More important, though, many of today's handbags have purpose.

The selection of what Sall calls "day bags" gets better every day, as designers seek to unite women's lifestyle needs and aesthetic sensibilities.

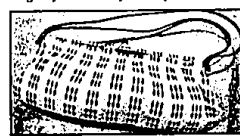
"They're definitely more functional and there's a wider selection of shapes," says Sall. "That's the most important bag for me - the day bag. I do work and I have to have everything organized and I like to be able to carry a bag that works as a briefcase or a bag which holds another bag."



That way, she says, she's always ready to change gears, to drop the briefcase-style, shoulder bag and walk out the door with a compact handbag around her wrist.

Today's woman is busier than ever before, too, says Karen Daskas, co-owner of Tender, a women's clothing boutique in downtown Birmingham where unique purses are a staple. So instead of going home and changing outfits, she saves time by making changes in jewelry, shoes and handbags, says Daskas.

Though today's handbags tend to be more functional than in past decades, purses have resumed their role as declarers of personal style, adds Daskas. "Handbags have turned into a real fashion statement," she says. "Women are building collections of handbags just like they do with sweaters. ... There is no perfect handbag anymore. They're all perfect."



Styles: Anya Hindmarch's 66 Motel tote (left) is \$245. Miu Miu's oblong woven handbag sells for \$320, both at Tender.

Retail, style and special store events are listed in this calendar. Please send information to *Malls & Mainstreets*, c/o *Observer & Eccentric Newspapers*, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009. By fax, (248) 644-1314. E-mail, nstafford@ec.homecomm.net. Deadline for publication is two weeks in advance.

SUNDAY, APRIL 29

KNITTING TRUNK SHOW

The Knitting Room, 251 East Merrill Street in Birmingham, hosts a Berroco yarns trunk show, including new garments and patterns, through May 1, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday and 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday. For details, call (248) 640-3623.

DEBRA DEROO TRUNK SHOW

Fibres, 270 West Maple in downtown Birmingham, welcomes designer Debra DeRoo and her spring trunk show, noon-5 p.m. For more information, call (248) 723-2880.

AIPLANE SHOW

Livonia Mall at 7 Mile and Middlebelt roads hosts an airplane show featuring model airplanes displayed throughout the mall and a demonstration of remote airplanes at 1 p.m. in the parking lot. Call (248) 476-1160.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 2

TRUNK SHOW

Rox & Sherm, 6536 Telegraph Road in Bloomfield Township, hosts an exclusive trunk show of silk and wool crepe designs by Sanasappelle with store owner Ina Sherman through May 4. For a schedule and other details, call (248) 855-8877.

THURSDAY, MAY 3

RESALE EXHIBITION

Nicole's Revival, a Westland resale store that sells gently used men and women's clothing, exhibits and presents runway shows as part of the Michigan

ADDED ATTRACTIONS

International Women's Show at the Novi Expo Center: Shows are slated for 7 p.m., May 3; 5 p.m., May 4; 1 p.m., May 5; and noon May 6. The women's show runs 10 a.m.-8 p.m., Thursday-Saturday and 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Sunday. Admission is \$7 at the door, \$6 in advance and \$4 for children age 6-12. For more information, call (800) 849-0248.

ARTIST APPEARANCE

Jacobson's in downtown Birmingham hosts a personal appearance by metal artist and Waterford resident Tom Myers through May 6, 6-9 p.m. on Thursday and noon-4 p.m. Friday and Saturday. For details, call (248) 644-6900.

FRIDAY, MAY 4

JUDITH LEBER TRUNK SHOW

View the jewelry designer's spring collection through May 11 at Neiman Marcus, the Somerset Collection in Troy, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Accessories, first floor. Call (248) 643-3500.

SATURDAY, MAY 5

PARISIAN CHARITY DAY

Parisian department store at Laurel Park Place in Livonia hosts a private, ticketed charity event to benefit local non-profit groups. Non-profit groups sell tickets for \$5 and retain 100 percent of ticket sales. Ticket holders receive a 20 percent on most store merchandise and have opportunity to win door prizes and \$500 shopping spree. For information and list of participating organizations, call (734) 953-7500.

SUNDAY, MAY 6

MUSICAL PERFORMANCES

Tel-Twelve Mall in Southfield kicks off a week of daily musical performances featuring local school and community groups in center court. Event is free and co-sponsored by the Birmingham Musicale National Federation of Music Club. For a performance schedule, call mall customer service at (248) 353-4111.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 9

PROJECT HEALTHY LIVING

Livonia Mall hosts Botsford Hospital and Project Healthy Living through May 10, featuring free and low-cost health screenings, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. For further information, call (248) 476-1160.

THURSDAY, MAY 10

YARN SHOW

The Knitting Room, 251 East Merrill Street in Birmingham, hosts a Classic Elite Yarns trunk show through May 21, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday and 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday. For details, call (248) 640-3623.

FRIDAY, MAY 11

WINE AUCTION

Neiman Marcus, the Somerset Collection in Troy, hosts silent and live auctions, a champagne reception and four-course gourmet dinner to benefit the Fanchub Foundation for the Arts. Event features Treasures From the Cellar wine auction, 6:30 p.m. with dinner at 8 p.m., third floor. For reservations, call (248) 584-4150.

JEWELRY TRUNK SHOW

Ashdon Jewelers & Gemologists, 103 Townsend Street in downtown Birmingham, present an exclusive showing of jewelry by Sharon Meyer through May 12, 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Call (248) 646-2420.