



Belts from Details Boutique

Boutiques on a BUDGET

Atlanta's best bargain buys

By Jennifer A. Morrell
Photos by Joseph Aczel

Atlanta is full of fantastic venues, diverse restaurants, exciting sports teams and a rich mix of cultural flavors, from the High Museum of Art to the King Center. This you know. But many Atlantans forget that our city is also home to a wide variety of places where women can do what Wilma Flintstone felt every female should: Chaaaarge it! That's right, shopping in Atlanta is alive and kicking, and is surprisingly affordable.

Atlanta Life combed the Atlanta area for boutiques with the hottest trends priced at less than \$100. We found a handful of boutiques that

offer the best of both worlds: affordability and friendly service. This Tour de Boutiques stretches from Marietta to Alpharetta by way of Sandy Springs and Roswell. Your most difficult task? Practicing restraint with your wallet.

The great thing about boutiques is that many times they are located in charming places. The Marietta Square has an atmosphere alive with families and usually with live entertainment in the square's courtyard. The selection of boutiques caters to an age group ranging from young teens to mature women. L.Michelle has a trendy and funky selection for shoppers ages 15 to 50. The store, which opened in 2003, has a hearty



Wedge shoes
from Status



Shoes at
L.Michelle

selection of stylish threads as well as accessories like handbags, jewelry and Crocs. The ballet Croc is a feminine alternative to the traditional closed-toe model, and L.Michelle carries thong and sandal styles as well.

L.Michelle is unique in that it is connected to another boutique. Opened by the same owner, Lisa Jackson, a year ago, Status serves a more mature, contemporary customer and has a wide selection of dresses, tops and shoes.

Diagonally across the square is Pendleton, which carries fashions targeted for women ages 30 and up. Known for “seasonless” wool, Pendleton also has fashions for men and petite women. Personal shopping is also available, and, in addition to Pendleton merchandise, the store carries products from offshore vendors such as Brighton.

The staff at Pendleton (known for the big stuffed sheep in the front store window) exudes a hospitality one expects to find in the capital of the South. “Every customer’s shopping experience is personal,” store manager Penny Pilkinton says. “It’s not unusual for an associate to be in the dressing room (at the customer’s request), helping the customer obtain the perfect ensemble and fit.”

East and south of Marietta are the scattered boutiques of the Sandy Springs/North Buckhead area. Fox’s, located on Roswell Road near Piedmont Road, has a phenomenal selection of shoes, in addition to swimwear, accessories, athletic wear and dressy-casual clothing. Store manager Suzannah Stefansky describes the store as having “designer off-price” merchandise, which is different from discount or off-season. The fashions are in concert with Fox’s location in New York and are a mere four to six weeks behind regular release dates. Also, the fashions are affordably priced and available in a wide range of sizes, from zero to 16.

Nestled in Sandy Springs Circle, Fab’rik is truly the place where mom and daughter can shop together and leave with the latest and greatest fashions. Manager Lisa Burns explains the store’s three-pronged approach to the shopping concept: clothing, art and the water bar. The clothes, priced under \$100, are vibrant and sexy, and local artists’ designs can be purchased, with proceeds going to charity. Upstairs is the men’s merchandise as well as the water bar, which offers beer, juice and water. Guys apparently have no problem with a sweet, pretty girl help-



Photo by Jennifer A. Monell

Fabrik



Status

A Festa-val of Tees at Sage

When the subject of affordable boutiques is raised, the experienced Atlanta shopper will automatically think "Sage." Sage opened in January 1997 in Dunwoody, followed by a Buckhead location in spring 2001. In May 2003, Sage moved from its Dunwoody location to a more central Midtown address. The store promises "couture looks minus the cost." With all items under \$100, customers can find the trends they want without the intimidating price tags.

A fabulously unique item that has caught the eye of many Atlanta boutique flies is the Chicago-based Festa Stuff tee. Sage carries the tees bearing catchy region- or city-promoting messages. Festa Stuff owner Chris Festa says he appreciates the unique and quirky aspects of different localities and tries to reflect those characteristics on the tees.

"We started out with just the Southern Girl shirt, which is one of our top five sellers," he continues. "Then we drilled down to focus on Atlanta in particular. The current Atlanta girl tee simply distills how I think Atlantans feel: that they're 'pretty much the center of the universe.' There's a lot of pride, and the tee says, 'Do I look like I grew up on a peach farm?'"

In the last two years, his company has grown from being carried in a handful of Chicago stores to more than 400 stores nationwide. You can see more Festa Stuff tees at www.FestaStuff.com, or pick one up when you visit Sage.



Festa Stuff
www.festastuff.com
 Chicago
 773.755.FESTA

Sage (Buckhead)
 37 W. Paces Ferry Road
 Atlanta
 404.233.8280
www.sageclothing.com

Sage (Midtown)
 1745 Peachtree St. NE
 Atlanta
 404.815.0555
www.sageclothing.com

ing them shop as they sip a cold beer. A great selection of vintage-looking jeans and tees, along with fashion-forward tops and accessories, keeps customers coming back.

Roswell has long been known for its romantic cottage-style antique shops and boutiques for home décor as well as women and children's clothing. One boutique, in particular, promises to carry fashions that cannot be found in department stores. Capricious, "where fashion is art," is handbag heaven. Storeowner Carmen Cruz Thompson travels to Europe four times each year to view European designs and buy merchandise from countries such as Italy, France and Spain. "If you want to look like everyone else, this store is not for you," says Thompson, who says her clients consist of long-time shoppers and customers ages 20 to 50.

It's all in the details, and Alpharetta's hidden treasure is Details, a boutique that has been in business for 10 years. Customers in their early 20s to more mature ages can find separates in their favorite cuts and colors, along with unique tees,



Details

super-wide belts and plentiful sales racks. Known for unique jewelry either purchased in New York or made locally by area jewelry designers, Details seems to have a little of everything. Most importantly, it's all unique; there's nothing vanilla in here.

There was a time when "boutique" and "bargain" couldn't be used in the same sentence, but the scope of retail seems to be changing. People want seasonable fashions that won't break the bank, and Atlanta's boutiques are responding with affordable selections that include irresistible accessories.

Happy shopping! ❖

Capricious

977 Canton St.
Roswell
770.645.2929

Details

3000 Old Alabama Rd.
Alpharetta
770.645.4711

Fab'rik

227 Sandy Springs Pl.
Atlanta
404.252.2202
www.fabrikstyle.com

Fox's

3804 Roswell Road NE
Atlanta
404.814.9292
www.foxs.com

L.Michelle and Status

35/39 N. Park Square
Marietta
770.422.4255
www.shoponthesquare.com/lmichelle.php

Pendleton

128 S. Park Square
Marietta
678.354.0338
www.pendletonusa.com

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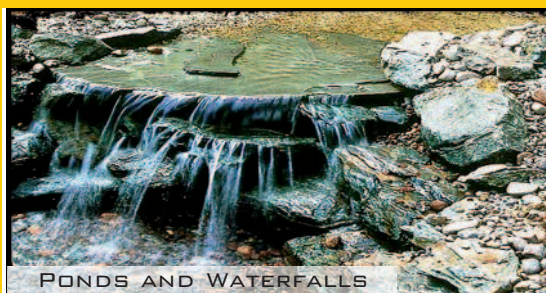
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