

New discoveries  
in some of our  
favorite familiar  
places  
↓



### Treasure Hunt

## Pleasantly Surprised

A strand of **Mikimoto** white South Sea pearls starts at \$10,000. These new hoops with Akoya pearls (top left) are \$4,000 ([mikimoto-america.com](http://mikimoto-america.com)). At **Tiffany & Co.**, Paloma Picasso created a line in resin, including this necklace for \$500 (800-526-0649). **Cartier's** Ballon Bleu watch has been done for the first time in stainless steel (\$4,650; 800-227-8437), as has **Chopard's** 1000 Miglia Chrono Limited Edition 2009 chronograph (\$4,670; 800-246-7273). **Stephen Webster's** Superstud ring, below, is gold plate and \$385 (877-551-7257). And to anyone who says the only place at Bergdorf Goodman to spend less than \$100 is the lipstick counter: Go to seven for **Timothy Liles** Crayon rings (bottom left, set of eight, \$58; 800-558-1855).

### True Confessions

## OBSCENELY INEXPENSIVE

Sometimes a deal is so good, it's almost vulgar—almost. According to Paco Underhill, founder of the retail research firm Envirosell and author of *Why We Buy: The Science of Shopping*, "Right now people are celebrating how little they're spending on something, not how much. It's not seen as a compromise but as being smart." Judging from what we've seen and heard lately, he's on to something.

**SPOTTED** From **Gift Groupe**, an invitation-only Web site with 36-hour designer sales: a Carolina Herrera fishtail skirt for \$400 (it retailed for \$2,990); a Malo men's cashmere blazer down from \$2,300 to \$700; and reports of Christian Louboutins for \$175! **DEPARTURES** readers can join at [gift.com/departures](http://gift.com/departures). Other invitation-only auction sites we love: **Yoox.com**, for vintage couture (join at [yoox.com/departures](http://yoox.com/departures)); **RueLaLa.com**, for deals on everything from weekends in Nantucket to men's watches (join at [ruelala.com/departures](http://ruelala.com/departures)). On the non-invitation **HauteLook.com**, we saw a Hervé Léger knit dress for \$557 (65 percent off).

**POSTCARD FROM L.A.** "Was just at **Decades-two** [designer consignment shop on Melrose]. Saw Alaïa pony-fur boots we loved. \$350!! Didn't they retail for \$1,650??" 323-655-1960

**LIVE FROM NEW YORK** **Century 21** in downtown Manhattan is not where designers will send you, but most of them are here—and deliriously discounted. Where to start? Perhaps with the six pairs of Nike sweat shorts picked up recently, along with Calvin Klein T-shirts, at less than half retail. Italian designer suits that would go for \$1,500 were marked down to—egads!—\$295! Seriously. Cross my heart and hope to...buy at full retail. Menswear is definitely better than women's, but for serious bargain hunters, this is a markdown mecca. 22 Cortland St.; 212-227-9092; [c21stores.com](http://c21stores.com)

**E-MAIL FROM A CONCERNED COLLEAGUE** "Was just at **Talbots**....Don't ask. But they've got red candles (a bit like the ones at Hôtel Costes) by the florist Belle Fleur. For \$24! The Belle Fleur ones are closer to \$50, aren't they? Great for gifts." 800-825-2687; [talbots.com](http://talbots.com)

**SPIED** An undercover assignment to **Ina**, a designer consignment store in SoHo, yielded a Bill Blass bronze lace skirt for \$175 and an Oscar de la Renta black patent-leather clutch for \$575. 101 Thompson St.; 212-941-4757; [inany.com](http://inany.com)

**INFORMED SOURCES TELL US** Jil Sander is doing a collection for **Uniqlo**, and everything is under \$150: \$39.50 for a dress and \$129.50 for a men's cashmere sweater? 917-237-8811; [uniqlo.com](http://uniqlo.com)

**NOTE TO SELF** Smart shopping can pop up in the most unexpected places: At a high-end children's clothing preview, a very fancy lady wore her Verdura watch with a gold link bracelet I thought was vintage Boivin. "No," she said proudly, "**J. Crew**, \$60." Later, in the lobby of the Four Seasons, I spotted an amazing cuff with amethysts and rock crystals: gold plate from **Susan Hanover** and only \$300. [susanhanoverdesigns.com](http://susanhanoverdesigns.com) —SARAH SMITH