

# 66 *She Says...* Dude, Shop Like A Lady

*Sure, men buy, but only women really shop. While her man is on a mission to get in and out of the mall as quickly as possible, Aoife Stuart-Madge thinks he's missing out on the joys of retail therapy*

**M** my man and I hit the mall last week to update our s/s wardrobes. For him, this meant a five-minute trip into Diesel where he purchased three t-shirts, two pairs of shorts and a pair of flip flops. The rest of the day he followed me around Dubai Mall, rolling his eyes as I touched every item in Zara before leaving the store an hour and half later with just one silk blouse. I then repeated the process in Topshop (where I bought one pair of coloured jeans). Then New Look (brogues). Then Massimo Dutti (a peplum skirt)... Six hours and 2,456 items-stroked later, I'd added four key pieces to my seasonal wardrobe, and my man had added four years to his life (or so he kept insisting). You see, what most men fail to grasp is the *art* of shopping. It's not about the destination, fellas; it's the journey.

We girls like to meander through the mall, without agenda, stopping for a complimentary spritz of perfume here, or a free cookie sample there... Men approach shopping like a contract killer: identify the target, hit, then retreat as fast as possible.

## See Prey, Buy

This shopping behaviour dates back to prehistoric times, apparently, when women spent their days sniffing out the healthiest nuts, seeds and berries – wary that the wrong pickings could kill their offspring – while men just spotted their prey and killed it. It's the same with shopping – women know a badly chosen fashion item can kill (okay, maybe not *literally*, but it can seriously wound your street cred, not to mention the damage it can do to the soul).

But it seems my man is genetically programmed to see shopping as a chore, whereas I see it as an event. Take our conflicting attitudes to mall attire: he once tried to accompany me to the mall

in a football shirt, when I was decked out in a suitably stylish, yet practical playsuit. While I was initially appalled by his attempt to worship at the altar of fashion in 100 per cent polyester, I've since realised, his fashion faux pas demonstrates a deeper chasm between the sexes. A man will throw on any old thing to hit the mall because he has no intention of spending the day there. Women, on the other hand, will dress for the mall like they're preparing for a 24-hour sit-in (flats for long-distance mall striding; a button-down top to protect hair through numerous trying on sessions and a cross-body bag to keep both hands free).

Not that I can really blame my guy. It's been scientifically proven that shopping makes men anxious. No wonder his flight or fight mechanism kicks in. And more often than not, he'll choose flight. I've lost count of the amount of times I've seen my man bull charge for the mall exit, while my desperate cry of, "Let me just check out Miss Selfridge..." hangs in his wake.

## Bargain Benefits

But shopping the female way is so much more *fun*. When you find an almost identical item in a second shop for half the price it was in the first, those lovely, buzzy endorphins are released in the brain (*so* worth visiting 20 stores to find). Ergo, shopping the female way makes you happier. Fact. Secondly, shopping like a girl can improve your relationship. I'm not saying you can buy affection necessarily, but if my man was paying attention on our last shopping trip, instead off stomping off in a huff to listen to CDs in Virgin, he could have garnered hints for present ideas for my birthday, our anniversary and even next Christmas. Major brownie point-scoring opportunity missed.

Then there's the serious long-term side-effects associated with doing it like a dude. If a guy's apathy to mall trips goes unchecked for too long, sooner or later even the four-times-a-year trek to Diesel eventually becomes a mission, and he'll be content with popping into M&S every ten years to buy the Official Man Uniform (slacks and a sensible round-neck jumper). Before you know it, he's dressing like your dad.

So next time your guy rolls his eyes when you suggest a mall trip, gently explain to him that shopping makes you happier, and makes him look hotter. Chances are he'll stick around the mall long enough to let you check out Miss Selfridge... ■



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