

Sample this!

Out and keep guide

Consume

It's 21 years since a listing in *Time Out* launched the Designer Warehouse Sale, prompting a new consumer trend in London. **Maggie Davis** looks at how it all began and explains why sample sales should be on every savvy shopper's agenda; **Rochelle Norman** rounds up the best sample sales for the year ahead

When it comes to buying designer clothes, nothing – not even the last day of the January sales – beats the sample sale for bargains. You might have to cart yourself off to a studio in a King's Cross back street, rifle through rails of weird leather vests to unearth that amazing John Galliano frock and tussle with other other bargain-hunters for that perfectly cut macintosh. But it's worth it.

Currently there are more than a dozen regular sample sales from the chi-chi Billion Dollar Babes sale, run by Aussie expats Kate Nobelius and Shelli-Anne Couch (required: razor sharp elbows) to cutting-edge east London Secret Sample, run by ex-club promoter Mark Carter, where you'll trip upon de luxe labels like Missoni and Celine alongside hot London names such as Louis de Gama and Jens Laugesen. There's even a sample sale for kids. Romaine Coonghe's Junior Style sale, where you can pick up mini Ralph Lauren and D&G clothes at Primark prices. 'There was a time when everyone had to be a DJ or start a T-shirt line. Now everyone is holding sample sales,' Carter says.

What makes sample sales so enticing to us as consumers is the mammoth discounts



Go Westwood Anita's Vintage Fashion Fair

on designer wear – usually between 70 and 90 per cent off. And contrary to common belief, it's not just showroom samples made for size-zero models.

'Often it's surplus stock: extra production to make up factory quantities, dead stock from shops and occasionally same-season stock when factories have mistakenly made garments for Japan in a European cut, for example,' says Carter. In other words: it's not just dodgy gear that won't sell because it's completely unwearable.

The sample sale was born in 1987 when then-menswear designer Roger Walker Dack, a charismatic figure who chaired the English Menswear Designer Collections and had worked on the launch of Topman, decided he wanted to make some money out of the surplus fashion samples he came across. He gathered a clutch of menswear labels and threw a small sale in an Old Street photographic studio. It gained a speedy word-of-mouth reputation and he quickly branched out into womenswear, selling key British designers including John Galliano, Stephen Linnard and Wendy Dagworthy and gaining a small mention in *Time Out*. 'That's when suddenly it went big time,' he recalls. 'The next sale was flooded with *Time Out* readers – I could see a stream of people

walking up the road clutching *Time Out* in one hand and 'A-Z's in the other.'

In the early 1990s, due to increased demand, Walker-Dack decided to put the Designer Warehouse Sales (DWS) on more frequently and they now run 12 times a year over three days. DWS is still the king of all London sample sales, with a string of the best labels – including this month See by Chloé, Prada and Ann Louise Roswald – and waiting lists for designers wanting to sell their cast-offs. 'Roger is a much-respected figure in the fashion industry and has a reputation for helping young up-and-coming British designers in an industry that is becoming increasingly tough for them. Long live his sales!' says Dagworthy, designer and professor at the Royal College of Art.

So, when Walker Dack raises a glass of bubbly to celebrate the sale's twenty-first birthday (and his 60th) next week, we will too. Without him our wardrobes would be a lot less glamorous.

Reader offer

Designer Warehouse Sale twenty-first anniversary shopping evening



Roger Walker-Dack invites *Time Out* readers to the special twenty-first anniversary sale. Readers carrying this copy of *Time Out* will gain free access to the exclusive preview evening from 6-9pm on April 10 (women's) and April 17 (men's). Wine will be served and all attendees will be entered into a draw to win £250 vouchers to spend at a future sale as well as a weekend at luxurious Jurys Clifton Ford Hotel & Health Club, 47 Welbeck Street, W1 (020 7486 6600/jurysdoyle.com/cliftonford) to

coincide with the next Designer Warehouse Sale (DWS) sale dates. Attendees will also receive a DWS memento to take away and goody bags containing a complementary can of Magners Lite (women) and original Magners (men) to take away.

Designer Warehouse Sales: Women's April 11-13 and Men's April 18-20, 45 Balfe St, N1 (020 7837 3322/designerwarehouse.com) King's Cross tube/rail. Sales Fri 10am-8pm, Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 10am-5pm. Adm £2. Readers' preview evenings April 10, 6-9pm and April 17, 6-9pm, where Time Out readers holding this edition of the magazine will be granted free entry.

Dates for your diary

April

2nd-3rd Ted Baker

This sale will have menswear, womenswear and children's clothing all with up to 70 per cent off. *The Camden Centre, Bidborough St, WC1 (020 7255 4800/camden.gov.uk/camdencentre) King's Cross tube/rail. Wed 8am-8pm, Thur 8am-7pm.*

4th-6th Secret Sample sale

The sale, held six times a year, has a host of brands including Belstaff, Blumarine, Missoni, Celine and Carolyn Massey reduced by up to 80 per cent. *T2, F Block, Old Truman Brewery, 87 Brick Lane, EC1 (secretsamplesale.co.uk) Liverpool St tube/rail or Aldgate East tube. Fri (members only, register online) Sat, Sun 12noon-7pm. Adm £1.*

13th Frock Me Vintage Fashion

Launched five years ago by Matthew Adams, this is now one of London's best vintage fashion fairs. *Chelsea Town Hall, Kings Rd, SW3 (020 7254 4054/frockmevintagefashion.com) Sloane Square tube. Sun 11am-5.30pm. Adm £3, students with ID £1.50, accompanied under-16s free.*

16th-18th Paul & Joe

French designer Sophie Albou is renowned for adding a twist to classic French tailoring. The sample sale has a range of designers – names include J Brand and True Religion alongside her Paul & Joe label. *Paul & Joe, 33 Floral St, WC2 (020 7221 2866) Covent Garden tube. Wed-Fri 11am-7pm.*

17th-20th Ghost sample sale

Look out for huge discounts off this



Paul & Joe

feminine clothing line, which has a soft silhouette and delicate colours.
20th Century Theatre, 291 Westbourne Grove, W11. Thur, Sat 11am-7pm, Sun 11am-5pm.

24th-27th Designer Sales UK

Discounts of 60-90 per cent on labels Vivienne Westwood, Valentino, Stella McCartney and more.
The Old Truman Brewery, 85 Brick Lane, E1 (01273 470880/designer sales.co.uk) Liverpool St tube/rail or Aldgate East tube. Thur (preview day, featuring catwalk shows at 2pm, 4pm and 5.30pm) 12noon-10pm, Fri 11am-9pm, Sat 11am-8pm, Sun 11am-5pm. Adm £2, concs £1.

27th Anita's Vintage Fashion Fair

The fair has been running for five years and has grown into the one of London's best vintage fairs. Attended by fashion editors and designers, this is a great place to pick up vintage designer brands like Biba and Westwood.
Battersea Arts Centre Grand Hall, Lavender Hill, SW11 (020 8325 5789/vintagefashionfairs.com) Clapham Junction rail. Sun 10am-4.30pm. Adm £5, concs £2.50.

May

14th-17th Junior Style sale

Started five years ago by Romaine Coonghe, a wide range of children's clothes can be found at the sale, including designer brands like Ralph Lauren and D&G, with up to 70 per cent off.
Chelsea Town Hall, Kings Rd, SW3 (020 7689 3925) Sloane Square tube. Wed 10am-6pm, Thur 10am-6pm, Fri 10am-5pm, Sat 10am-4pm. Adm £1.

18th Anita's Vintage Fashion Fair

Selection of vintage designer names from Biba to Westwood.
20th Century Theatre, 291 Westbourne Grove, W11 (020 8325 5789/vintagefashionfairs.com) Notting Hill Gate tube. Sun 10am-4.30pm. Adm £5, concs £2.50.

30th-31st Secret Sample sale

20th Century Theatre, 291 Westbourne Grove, W11 (secretsample sale.co.uk) Fri (members only, register online), Sat, Sun 12noon-7pm. Adm £1.

June

6th-7th Designer Sales UK

The Music Room, 26 South Molton Lane, W1 (01273 470880/designersales.co.uk) Bond St tube. Fri (preview day) 12noon-10pm, Sat 10am-5pm. Adm £2, concs £1.

13th-15th Designer Warehouse Sale (women's)

At a new location from June. 5-6 Islington Studios, N7 (020 7697 9888/designerwarehousesales.com).

15th Anita's Vintage Fashion Fair

Battersea Arts Centre Grand Hall, Lavender Hill, SW11 (020 8325 5789/vintagefashionfairs.com) Clapham Junction rail. Sun 10am-4.30pm. Adm £5, concs £2.50.

18th Frock Me

Chelsea Town Hall, Kings Rd, SW3 (020 7254 4054/frockmevintage fashion.com) Sloane Square tube. Sun 11am-5.30pm. Adm £3, students with ID £1.50, accompanied under-16s free.

20th-22nd Designer Warehouse Sale (men's)

5-6 Islington Studios, N7 (020 7697 9888/designerwarehousesales.com) Holloway Rd tube or Drayton Park rail.

July

11th-12th Billion Dollar Babes

Each two-day sale has more than 40 designer labels sold at up to 80 per cent off.
Chelsea Town Hall, Kings Rd, SW3 (020 7361 2220) Sloane Square tube. Fri, Sat 9am-6pm. Adm £2.

13th Anita's Vintage Fashion Fair

20th Century Theatre, 291 Westbourne Grove, W11 (020 8325 5789/vintage fashionfairs.com) Notting Hill Gate tube. Sun 10am-4.30pm. Adm £5, concs £2.50.



Designer Warehouse Sales



Pick me up Designer Sales UK

18th-19th DSUK Biba

Exclusive current-season samples and stock available with 60-80 per cent off.
The Music Room, South Molton Lane, W1 (01273 470880/designersales.co.uk) Bond St tube. Fri 11am-9pm, Sat 11am-5pm. Adm £2, concs £1.

September

4th-7th Designer Sales UK

Stock and samples at 80-90 per cent off retail prices on famous labels for men and women.
The Old Truman Brewery, 85 Brick Lane, E1 (01273 470 880/designer sales.co.uk) Liverpool St tube/rail or Aldgate East tube. Thur 12noon-9pm (preview day), Fri 11am-8pm, Sat 11am-5pm. Adm £2, concs £1.

7th Frock Me

Chelsea Town Hall, Kings Rd, SW3 (020 7254 4054/frockmevintage fashion.com) Sloane Square tube. Sun 11am-5.30pm. Adm £3, students with ID £1.50, accompanied under-16s free.

19th-21st Designer Warehouse Sale (women's)

5-6 Islington Studios, N7 (020 7697 9888/designerwarehousesales.com) Holloway Rd tube or Drayton Park rail.

21st Anita's Vintage Fashion Fair

Another opportunity to pick up fabulous vintage fashion.
Battersea Arts Centre Grand Hall, Lavender Hill, SW11 (020 8325 5789/vintagefashionfairs.com) Clapham Junction rail. Sun 10am-4.30pm. Adm £5, concs £2.50.

26th-28th Designer Warehouse Sale (men's)

5-6 Islington Studios, N7 (020 7697 9888/designerwarehousesales.com) Holloway Rd tube or Drayton Park rail.

October

2nd-5th Designer Sales UK

The Old Truman Brewery, 85 Brick Lane, E1 (01273 470880/designer sales.co.uk) Liverpool St tube/rail or

Aldgate East tube. Thur 12noon-9pm (preview day), Fri 11am-8pm, Sat 11am-5pm. Adm £2, concs £1.

10th-12th Nicole Farhi

At a new location from June. Please check the website from May onwards for details (designerwarehousesales.com).

12th Anita's Vintage Fashion Fair

20th Century Theatre, 291 Westbourne Grove, W11 (020 8325 5789/vintage fashionfairs.com) Notting Hill Gate tube. Sun 10am-4.30pm. Adm £5, concs £2.50.

26th Frock Me

Chelsea Town Hall, Kings Rd, SW3 (020 7254 4054/frockmevintage fashion.com) Sloane Square tube. Sun 11am-5.30pm. Adm £3, students with ID £1.50, accompanied under-16s free.

30th-Nov 2nd Designer Sales UK

The Old Truman Brewery, 85 Brick Lane, E1 (01273 470880/designer sales.co.uk) Liverpool St tube/rail or Aldgate East tube. Thur 12noon-9pm (preview day), Fri 11am-8pm, Sat 11am-5pm. Adm £2, concs £1.

November

7th-8th Billion Dollar Babes

Each two-day sale has more than 40 designer labels sold at up to 80 per cent off.
Lindley Hall, 80 Vincent Square, SW1 Victoria tube/rail (020 7384 1110/billiondollarbabes.com). Adm £2.

19th-21st Paul & Joe

Paul & Joe, Floral Street, WC2 (020 7221 2866) Covent Garden tube. Wed-Fri 11am-7pm.

30th Anita's Vintage Fashion Fair

Battersea Arts Centre Grand Hall, Lavender Hill, SW11 (020 8325 5789/vintagefashionfairs.com) Clapham Junction rail. Sun 10am-4.30pm. Adm £5, concs £2.50.

December

5th-7th Designer Warehouse Sales (women's)

5-6 Islington Studios, N7 (020 7697 9888/designerwarehousesales.com) Holloway Rd tube or Drayton Park rail.

7th Anita's Vintage Fashion Fair

20th Century Theatre, 291 Westbourne Grove, W11 (020 8325 5789/vintagefashionfairs.com) Notting Hill Gate tube. Sun 10am-4.30pm. Adm £5, concs £2.50.

11th-13th DSUK Biba

The Music Room, South Molton Lane, E1 (01273 470880/designersales.co.uk) Bond St tube. Thur 11am-9pm, Fri 11am-8pm, Sat 11am-5pm. Adm £2, concs £1.

12th-14th Designer Warehouse Sale (men's)

5-6 Islington Studios, N7 (020 7697 9888/designerwarehousesales.com) Holloway Rd tube or Drayton Park rail.