

Ben Ladner's Years of Living Lavishly
+ Clothes Shopping Made Easy

**DIRT-CHEAP
EATS**

*Our 70 Favorite
Dining Deals*

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Great Places to Live

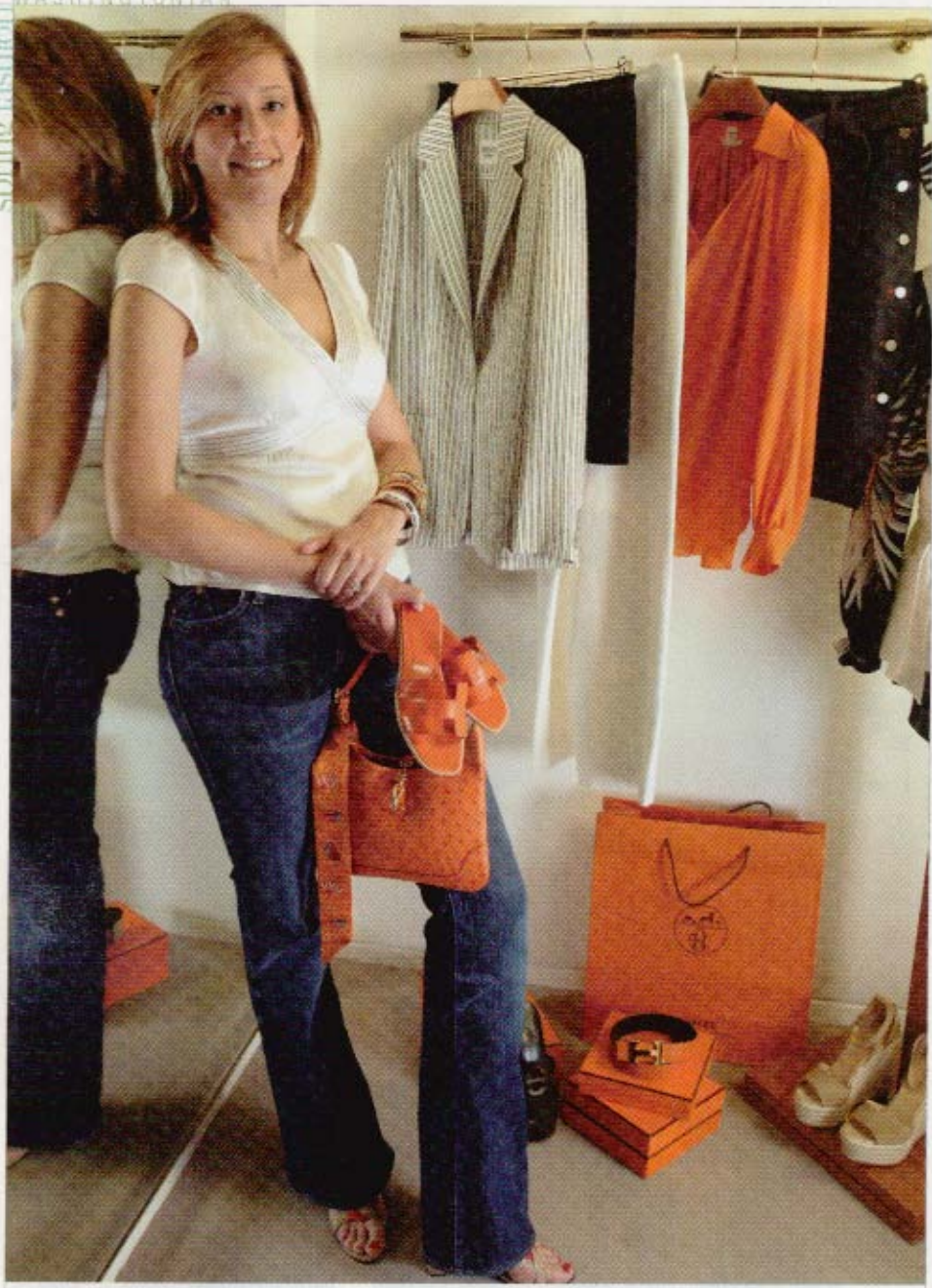
60 TOP NEIGHBORHOODS
FROM CITY FUN TO
SMALL-TOWN CHARM,
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WALKING EVERYWHERE.
PLUS THE GOLDEN ZIP
CODES WHERE PRICES
ARE GOING UP FAST.



\$3.95



Sports columnist
Mike Wilbon and
his wife, Sheryl, found their
perfect home in Bethesda's
Wildwood Estates



Personal stylist Alison Lukes comes highly recommended for both men and women.

Nordstrom, Tysons Corner Center, 703-761-1121; Montgomery Mall, 301-365-4111; Fashion Centre at Pentagon City, 703-415-1121; the Mall in Columbia, 410-715-2222; Annapolis Mall, 410-573-1121; nordstrom.com.

Nordstrom has many experienced personal shoppers in this area, but one is especially popular with powerful women. For more than ten years, DeeDee McPhaul has been dressing news anchors, White House officials, and top executives. You don't have to be a local celebrity to hire her; Nordstrom's free Personal Touch service offers anyone private shopping appointments. McPhaul works out of Tysons. After-hours appointments are available.

Saks Fifth Avenue, 5555 Wisconsin Ave., Chevy Chase, 301-657-9000; the Men's Store, Mazza Gallerie, 202-363-2059; Tysons Galleria, 703-761-0700; saksfifthavenue.com.

The Fifth Avenue Club in Chevy Chase is a team of 16 people. Katie Jagers, who's worked at Saks for 20 years and is adored by clients like *The Charlie Rose Show* producer Jackie Duberstein, leads this group. Jagers doesn't work with new clients; after an initial consultation, she pairs a client with a consultant according to style and personality.

The Fifth Avenue Club offers free courier service for purchases. If you can't make it in, an employee will meet with

you at home. They even edit closets. For women who shop at Tysons, WJLA-TV news anchor Alison Starling recommends Heidi Ardestani; other women swear by Michelle Collins. The men's Saks in Mazza has its own personal shopper, Doug Thompson. Fifth Avenue Club services are free.

Saks Jandel, 5510 Wisconsin Ave., Chevy Chase; 301-652-2250.

Many of Washington's best-dressed women adore this upscale store not only for its selection of Valentino and Yves Saint Laurent but also for the outstanding service. The store doesn't have a separate personal-shopping department because the entire sales staff offers clients special attention—they get to know a customer's tastes and needs and often deliver things to the person's home or office. Some associates and customers have been working together for more than a decade. Barbara Bellis is popular.

Independent Stylists
Alison Lukes et Cie, 202-362-9559; alisonlukes.com.

Alison Lukes is one of the city's most recommended personal stylists—who wouldn't want fashion advice from someone who used to work for Michael Kors? Businessmen and social ladies alike love working with her.

Her philosophy for a great wardrobe: Forget trendy; go for pieces that are always in style. The process starts with a closet cleanout to determine what should stay and what should go. Lukes and her staff can show you new ways to wear your clothing and can shop to fill in pieces, either meeting you at stores or presenting clothing in your home. Fee: \$100 an hour.

Intelligent Chic, 202-285-6550; mva-ndongen@link2exchange.com.

Maryann Van Dongen's image-consulting business focuses on women age 40 and up who want a classic, elegant look. In addition to personal shopping, she helps women understand what looks good on them and can recommend hair and makeup experts, too. Clients include Patricia de Stacy Harrison, CEO of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and Carole Brookins, a former executive director to the World Bank. She charges \$150 an hour.

Helen Moody, 202-291-6489; helensttyllee@aol.com.

After more than 20 years in this business,

Photograph by Michael Winkler



Photograph by Michael Ventura

"We've Got Just the Thing"

Nothing to wear?
Tired of your wardrobe?
A personal shopper
can make buying
clothes—and looking
pulled-together—easier.
These are some of
Washington's most
popular helpers.

By ALYCIA KILPATRICK

LOOKING for wardrobe advice? Whether you're up for a fashion makeover or just searching for that perfect dress, a personal shopper can be very helpful.

There are two types: in-store shoppers, who generally don't charge a fee but pull clothing only from their store, and independent consultants, who shop all over but charge a fee for their services.

Most personal shoppers start with a consultation—usually by phone, but often in person—where you give the shopper a sense of your taste, budget, and needs. Independent stylists often combine this get-to-know-you session with a closet clean-out at your home.

Next, it's time to shop. If you've done the groundwork by phone, you usually arrive for that first appointment to find a dressing room full of clothing pulled for you. You're not obligated to buy anything. Personal shoppers who don't work for stores can either take you shopping or bring things to your home.

These consultants were recommended by stylish Washingtonians.

In-store Personal Shoppers

Bloomingdale's, White Flint, 301-984-4600; Tysons Corner Center, 703-556-4600; bloomingdales.com.

Francis Dent, just one of the personal shoppers in Bloomingdale's At Your Service department, has been at the White Flint store only about a year, but he's already built a client list that includes such fashionable women as communications executive Ann Walker Marchant and Cheryl Cooper, executive director of the National Council of Negro Women.

Dent is known for going to great lengths to find the right items. He specializes in classic styles for day, sexy yet sophisticated looks for evening. Bloomingdale's personal-shopping services are complimentary.

Daisy Too, 4940 St. Elmo Ave., Bethesda; 301-656-2280; shopdaisytoo.com.

This Bethesda boutique has a loyal following. Women go not only for the hip clothing (think Diane von Furstenberg dresses, True Religion denim skirts) but