

in the bag



Bag by Versace, scarf by Louis Vuitton

If there's one holiday souvenir that will be cherished for years to come, it's a must-have designer handbag. But where do you go for the best range in Abu Dhabi and what are the latest looks this season?

WORDS BY **GEORGINA WILSON-POWELL**

Diamonds may be a girl's best friend, but her most useful companion is the handbag. Whether big and bulky, bright and colourful, or minimal and monochrome, the right handbag is a fundamental part of any woman's outfit. Let's get this straight; you can never, ever have too many handbags.

Fashion houses have responded to the recent economic downturn with glam. Over-the-top shows, clothes full of sparkle and sequins, and bright bags are back. An understated way to jazz up a suit or a useful anchor to dress up some cheap chic, a designer bag is a must-have.

Balenciaga has grabbed the bright lights with its new Raffia shoulder bag that channels a vivid road sign yellow with black for some attention, or how about the new Bottega Veneta Lizard Oxydised silver knot clutch, which is a small oblong-shaped hard clutch bag in a range of neon crystal colours that scream for attention.

Mulberry has launched a soft charcoal grey leopard print range of its classic Bayswater bags and clutches called the Leopard Smudge, which can currently be seen hanging

off the arm of every trend-savvy celebrity. The brand has also launched a new slouchy bag called the Daria, which features pared-down silhouettes with a signature super-sized cutaway logo in a high-shine finish for understated chic.

EXPERT ADVICE

Ivana Mazic is one of the UAE's top stylists and personal shoppers. A self-confessed 'connoisseur' of handbags, there isn't anything she doesn't know about bags or designers.

"Lanvin is going to be one of the biggest for next spring/summer. They have an amazing collection for 2010. Fendi is back after launching the 'peekaboo' bag this winter. Then for clutches you have Marchesa's new range, which is fabulous, and Alexander Wang's new collection is really great," she enthuses.

Ivana believes that handbags should be an investment purchase for your wardrobe. A bag is not just for a season, she advises. It is for life.

"Remember that season must-have bags are only for one season. But a Chanel 2.55 or any Hermès is worth every dirham. ▶

MALL YOU NEED TO KNOW

Marina Mall 02 6454858
www.marinamall.ae

Abu Dhabi Mall 02 6454858
www.abudhabi-mall.com

Al Wahda Mall 02 4437070
www.alwahda-mall.com

Al Muhairy Centre 02 6322228
www.almuhairycentre.com

Bags and scarf by Louis Vuitton



Givenchy

“When it comes to handbags I am always for the investment purchase – a great handbag and nice pair of shoes make any outfit classy. For me handbags and shoes are the most important part of the wardrobe. I always suggest to my clients to splurge on a good, but not must-have handbag. It should be a must-keep one that they would wear again and again every season. Chanel is my favourite – it’s always classy and wearable forever. Same with Hermès – it always looks great. For an investment handbag from Chanel or Hermès, you would need to spend at least AED8,000 to AED10,000. But it’s worth it.”

Chanel’s latest collection has been inspired by our growing love of rustic chic and was presented in innovative style by Karl Lagerfeld in a barn, as he explains, “You hear a lot about the environment and organic products at the moment. So I thought it would be fun to give it a fashion twist.” One of the reasons Chanel remains eternally popular is that its bags are timeless and therefore tend not to change much between seasons. ▶

PHOTOGRAPHY: ADHAM SNEEH, WITH THANKS TO VERSACE BOUTIQUE AT EMIRATES PALACE, LOUIS VUITTON AT MARINA MALL AND EMIRATES PALACE

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CAPITAL OF FASHION

So what’s on offer in Abu Dhabi? While there are many activities to pack into your stay here, there’s always time to fit in a touch of shopping and the capital has a range of options for you to scratch that retail therapy itch. From city-centre glam malls full of flagship boutiques to out-of-town sprawling centres, why not make a day of it. Just be sure to slip on some walking shoes!

“Marina Mall is the best place for shopping in Abu Dhabi. Some of the most popular handbag designers have their shops there – Burberry, Versace, Gucci, Chanel, YSL, Louis Vuitton...” says Ivana. If you can’t decide where to go, why not visit a department store which will have a wide range of designer labels for you to pick and choose from. Paris Gallery has a fantastic selection of bags from Dior, Moschino, Guess, Valentino, Escada and Fendi.

As Ivana mentioned, Fendi has always been a hot label to watch when it comes to designer arm candy. Its 2010 collection is a hopeful, optimistic range featuring bright floral patterns, circles and bubbles, and the bags have a sense of fun even when featuring the label’s own pattern based around its logo.

Other great places to go to find that must-have bag include Abu Dhabi Mall which houses Balmain, Kenneth Cole, Paris Gallery and Mont Blanc stores, which sell the ultimate in briefcases and man-bags for guys.

Men can also indulge their need for bags at the Hugo Boss store in the Al Muhairy Centre.

At Al Wadha Mall, interested shoppers can find lesser-priced bags at the chain stores of Bata and Dumond, which are perfect for picking up a tote inspired by the latest seasonal trends that won’t break the bank. Why not pick up a few?

And for Ivana, what is the latest addition to her handbag collection? “My last purchase was a Miu Miu in white leather with crystals. The leather is amazing and it’s great because I can wear it with a summer dress as well as jeans and a t-shirt. And it looks good for day as well as an evening out.” ■



THINK LOCAL

Grafika is one of Abu Dhabi’s premier independent boutiques and stocks exquisite international brands from unusual sources, one-of-a-kind designer wear. It has been capturing the hearts of Abu Dhabi’s women since 2004 and is always on trend with its choice of pieces from all over the world.

The store stocks Mahin Hussain, a Pakistani designer who uses bright geometric patterns in her beautiful leather bags. Her range includes massive beach bags that would make carrying the kitchen sink look easy, to delicate rouged clutches. Owner, Sumayyah Al Suwaidi has her own recommendations for next year’s handbags. “We’ll be stocking some beautiful collections from Alter Ego, RK Collection, Sharad Diwan and Nadia Minkoff.”

Grafika, Al Wahda Mall, 02 443 7111, www.grafikauae.com