



# SHOPPING

WITH SUSANNA susanna@suntimes.com

## BLOG BUZZ

Looking for a bargain? Find the latest information about sales around town at [blogs.suntimes.com/shopping](http://blogs.suntimes.com/shopping). Also, tip off other dedicated shoppers about the deals you've found while browsing stores in the Chicago area.

## NET WORTH

The online shopping page that allows women to define their body shape and shop for clothes that fit that the figure profile has updated its site and debuted its fall offerings. To see if you're a body-shape "P" — or maybe a "Y" — visit [MyShape.com](http://MyShape.com) and plug in your measurements.



## WE PROPOSE . . .

That brides-to-be stop by engagement ring source Robbins Bros. for today's grand opening event. Toast the occasion with Champagne, and bridesmaids can sign up at [whatwillyousay.com](http://whatwillyousay.com) for a World's Worst Bridesmaid Dress Bouquet Toss. The toss winner gets a ring — RSVP to [reiff@redchicago.com](mailto:reiff@redchicago.com).



# ESSENTIAL ACCESSORIES

Wide, skinny or metal — belts are in



Leather ruffle belt by Loeffler Randall, \$184, sold at Lissa on Maxwell, 729 W. Maxwell.

Navigating this season's volume trend is a cinch: With trapeze dresses and wide-leg trousers dominating the clothing racks, belts are the ultimate accessory. "For the past year interest has been building in all sorts of belts, but the biggest spike is wide belts," says Constance White, style director of eBay.com. "The '50s and the '80s are big influences right now, and these were both fashion eras where belts were really popular. The number one way to polish a look is to add a belt."

White says more than 3,000 wide belts have been sold on the site in the last three months, making them the best-selling variety. But whether they're wide, skinny, patent or metallic, there's a style — and a price — to suit every woman.

"Belts are a key accessory this fall, and the trend is to wear it up high or on the waist," says Kenny Goldman of Discovery clothing stores. The chain has 21 locations in

Chicagoland and sells belts that cost as little as \$6.99.

"Here's the formula — the higher the jeans or pants, the thicker the belt," he says. "This makes your hips look slimmer. It goes the same for jeans that fall right on your waist: Try a skinnier belt. Tuck in a shirt and the look is complete."

Tom Kolovos, a stylist who operates the Web site [thebestdressedlist.com](http://thebestdressedlist.com), says a 2-inch wide belt is the safest bet for almost any body type. He also suggests metallic belts — especially silver — to offset the charcoal-colored sweater dresses that are going to be popular this fall. "It makes the gray pop," he says. Another favorite look for fall is a patent-leather belt to spruce up the look of an old black coat.



This patent-leather belt from Furla is \$9.

## KOLOVOS' BELT TIPS

- **If you're full-figured:** avoid skinny belts and avoid putting anything through belt loops; instead, put the belt on the thinnest point of your body, which is higher up.
- **If you have a thick waist:** You can wear a belt under a cardigan or jacket and let the buckle poke through.
- **If you're short:** Wear a belt that's in the same color family as your outfit, or try a thin belt with skinny pants.



Club Monaco offers the "Jessie" belt for \$79.



An \$8 belt at meetmark.com.



Suzi Roher belt, \$150, sold at Saks Fifth Avenue.

A \$235 studded belt from Furla, 1211 W. Webster, looks great over a thin cotton tank top and jeans.



Metallic belts are a stylish choice with a gray outfit. This belt is \$6.99 at Discovery.



Patent-leather belt at Tod's, \$445.

## ASK THE EXPERT

MELISSA PAPOCK

Cabana Life founder Melissa Papock was diagnosed with a malignant melanoma at 26. Now 33, she says the five-inch scar on her left arm is a reminder that the sun is dangerous all the time — even when you're driving to work. Two years ago she founded the catalog brand to offer stylish sun-protective gear for kids and adults. Her floppy hats (\$19) and tunics (\$89) are favorites of stars including Madonna and Gwyneth Paltrow, and they're sold locally at Psycho Baby, 1630 N. Damen, and at [cabanalife.com](http://cabanalife.com).



**Q: What should you look for when buying sun-protective clothes?**

**A:** The clothes should have a UPF (ultraviolet protection factor) of 50 or higher, which will be listed on the hang tag. It should also be certified by an independent testing facility.

**Q: Why do you need sun-protective clothes?**

**A:** When I was diagnosed, my dermatologist told me that my cotton t-shirts were the equivalent of an SPF-5, and I was shocked. All along I thought my clothing was enough to protect me.

**Q: Do you still need to wear sunscreen?**

**A:** If you're wearing sun-protective clothing you do not need to put sunscreen under it. But we're realists, so not every single thing we make is long-sleeved. If you're wearing short sleeves you should put sunscreen on your arms.

**Q: How should you care for sun-protective clothes?**

**A:** Before a garment can be certified as UPF 50+ it's washed 40 times and exposed to 100 hours of light. So, you can just wash it as you would any other garment with like colors in the washer or dryer. It doesn't require any special care.

**Q: Will any pieces carry over into the fall?**

**A:** An absolute must-have for the whole year is a sun-protective hat, because there are harmful rays throughout the year. All the small instances of sun exposure really do add up, even when it's cold outside. You should get into the habit of protecting yourself every day.

## SHOPGIRL KRISTIAN ALFONSO

BY CINDY PEARLMAN

Kristian Alfonso is coming out of her closet.

No, it's not her latest plotline as Hope Brady on "Days of Our Lives,"

These days the soap lovely has her own jewelry line called "Hope Faith and Miracles" and now a clothing line called "Hope by Kristian Alfonso," complete with her trademark fleur de lis symbol. You can

find both at [HSN.com](http://HSN.com).

**Sun-Times:** Tell us about your new clothing line.

**Alfonso:** "I'm on cloud nine right now. I just did my third show on HSN and we sold out. . . . For so many years, people asked me about the jewelry I wore on the show. It was my own design. . . . Now I have

a clothing line that makes use of the same fleur de lis. You see it on the buttons on my jeans and the lining inside of my skirts."

**Sun-Times:** Did you design the clothes for all sizes?

**Alfonso:** "Absolutely, I wanted to design for all body types. I know my weight fluctuates.

There have been many seasons where I wasn't able to wear a certain straight skirt because I can be heavier in my hips. My clothing is about being comfortable."

**Sun-Times:** We like you even more knowing your hips won't fit into straight skirts. Any other dressing room challenges?

**Alfonso** (laughing): "Oh, I have a little bit of a belly and I'm not tall enough so Levi jeans are hard. I bulge out."

**Sun-Times:** Any products you're loving this summer?

**Alfonso:** "I love Amino Genesis skin care products. . . . For makeup, I love the base by Chanel. I also love

Lancome and Chanel lip balm. Juicy tubes are also fantastic."

**Sun-Times:** Give us your best beauty tip.

**Alfonso:** "When I'm not working, I wear Sheer Cover Under Eye cream ([www.sheercover.com](http://www.sheercover.com)). It's light and not greasy, but gives you enough moisture."

