

## THE GLOBAL SHOPPER

## **Click Clique**

An array of boutique sites has American women sourcing runway rarities the world over.

ngelique Soave has never darkened the door of Maria, located in a former sixteenth-century monastery in downtown Dubrovnik. She has never lovingly fondled the extravagant merchandise, nor slipped into a sleek fitting room. But that doesn't mean Soave is unfamiliar with its stylish stock. In fact, she shops there all the time, procuring such elusive treasures as her favorite nearimpossible-to-find Lanvin trench.

Soave, who lives in Los Angeles, found the concept store through Farfetch, a site that serves as a sort of chic clearinghouse for an international roster of high-end, multibrand boutiques in locales as disparate and unlikely as Andorra and Romania, handling troublesome details including shipping and translating when needed.

Of course, she's not the only American woman who is at this very minute dancing around the globe via the Internet, in search of captivating brick-and-mortar boutiques. Most of us have been shopping vast Internet-only sites for years, but there's something different about a site that fronts for a store with a real address, even if it is a continent away. Maybe it's the thrill of locavore-gone-global—the heady notion of starting a love affair that can stretch from the pampas to the Pyrenees. It's the joy you feel when you stroll the streets of a foreign city and come upon a unique store firsthand, a place that seems to uncannily reflect your own taste—though now this store can be located virtually anywhere on earth.

When it's done right, there's a sense that lurking behind the screen is a real



human being whose discerning eye has swept over the racks in a Paris or Milan showroom—someone who gets excited, in a way a machine never can, when he or she discovers a new talent or curates well-known names in a distinctive way. And just as you know instantly when you walk into a boutique that the owner's deeply individual, maybe even quirky point of view is in harmony with your own, that shared sensibility can leap off a Web page.

At Matchesfashion.com, whose flagship occupies a spectacular Georgian town house in London and offers brands including Saint VIEW>448 **FOUNDED:** 1987, London. E-commerce launched in 2006.

## BEST SPRING SPLURGE:

Giambattista Valli Haute Couture red floral dress, \$20,100.

... AND STEAL: Delfina Delettrez Infinity ring, \$280.

AMERICANS ARE BUYING: Christopher Kane, Balenciaga, Erdem.

MISSION NOT IMPOSSIBLE: Once, a Los Angeles-based client called on December 20 in a panic—he wanted to buy his girlfriend an entire new wardrobe for Christmas. Matches sourced an array of unbranded boxes, separately shipping

for Christmas. Matches sourced an array of unbranded boxes, separately shipping the pieces to California (so the woman never knew her boyfriend hadn't spent weeks finding each item) by the 24th.

**RETURN POLICY:** Twenty-eight days, refunds or store credit.