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# Paris

MAGAZINE

**VINTAGE  
FASHION**

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# Vintage Fashion

by Tina Isaac



Didier Ludot Vintage Haute Couture

**W**hat's old is new again: When Julia Roberts made her comeback appearance at the Screen Actor's Guild awards in Los Angeles last January, she wore a short black vintage Yves Saint Laurent dress. It was an object lesson in the essence of style. On a red carpet otherwise teeming with borrowed extravagance, Roberts returned to the public eye wearing not only her own dress, but a piece that conveys an innate understanding of fashion.

At a time when consumers want to connect with the authenticity of what they purchase, vintage seems a logical place to start. On a trip through Paris for the recent haute couture shows, Cameron Silver, the owner of the LA store Decades Inc – a resource for countless boldfaced names – observed that vintage is growing in popularity, both across the age spectrum and in response to global interest. “The financial crisis has made the affluent shopper more open to purchasing vintage as an investment,” he said. Vintage doyenne Françoise Auguet,

## Ragtime

Françoise Auguet is arguably Paris' vintage doyenne, as she has been in the business for over 35 years. A special consultant to the Drouot auction house, she was the first to organize high-end sales of unique pieces and acted as curator for the record-breaking 2005 sale of a group of Poiret dresses. Everything in her Left Bank shop is in mint condition, a magnet for designers and stylists from around the world who come here to confer with Auguet on textures, cuts and prints. Auguet prides herself on having a little of everything, from no-label sixties shifts (160€) to Belle Epoque lace blouses (very popular in summer), fifties-era long evening dresses (300€ and up), gossamer drop-waisted numbers from the 1930s to a 1954 embroidered beige linen suit by Dior Couture (1,500€ and up). Auguet notes that while there is always a clientele for thirties pieces, the younger ones are quick to snap up distinctive pieces from the sixties and seventies.

23 rue de l'Echaudé 75006

01 56 24 00 36

Open Monday to Saturday, 2:30 pm – 7:30 pm

## La Jolie Garde Robe

Costume designers and fashion insiders rub elbows with a well-heeled clientele in this bright little shop, where Marie Rouches offers a sharply-edited if pricey array of vintage clothes and accessories from all eras, with a distinct eighties

the owner of Ragtime on the Left Bank, agrees. While vintage clothes are often less expensive, as well as one-of-a-kind, new clients rarely drop by for that reason alone. “New clients are drawn to vintage because they know what's out there and they are tired of spending so much on something that won't last,” she says. “With vintage, it's already stood the test of time, so you know it will never go out of fashion.”

As the birthplace and capital for illustrious labels past and present – from Poiret and Vionnet in the first half of the 20th century to Yves Saint Laurent and Christian Lacroix in the latter half – Paris offers some of the best vintage shopping in the world. While opinions differ on exactly when clothes become vintage (less than a decade qualifies in some shops, while Auguet, for one, considers that nothing is vintage if it's under 30 years old), the trick, say shop owners, is to think of the clothes as you would a wine – there are good years and lesser ones, and just because it's old doesn't mean it's “vintage”. The rest is a matter of taste. And luck.

slant. If the leather couture space suits by Thierry Mugler or the leather/chainmail minidress by Paco Rabanne seem better suited to a film set or a fashion shoot, there are plenty of colorful and wearable pieces here for those in search of something a bit whimsical and out of the ordinary – think velvet-bibbed green paisley print peasant dress or red velvet bolero by YSL (350€).

15 rue Commines 75003

01 42 72 13 90

Open Tuesday to Saturday, 1 pm – 7:30 pm; mornings by appointment.

## Thanx God I'm a VIP

Before Sylvie Chateigner got into vintage, she had already made a name for herself as a queen of Parisian nightlife. “Vintage is like music – only the good stuff survives over time,” she says, and although her website still features mixes, its comprehensiveness makes it a useful tool for design studios. Her shop is a must for those in search of finds by Yves Saint Laurent – skirts from the late seventies/early eighties are her briskest sellers (90€-130€) Balenciaga, Chanel and Hermès. Chateigner admits to a preference for no-label pieces from the sixties made by local couturières. “They echo what was out there at the time, but they are truly unique,” she says. A younger clientele gravitates to the racks downstairs, where they can score funky blouses and accessories at rock bottom prices (from 5€). And because



Thanx God I'm a VIP

Chateigner hails from Brittany, she devotes a corner to regional items such as marinières (sailor striped shirts) and timeless wool peacoats.

12 rue de Lancry 75010

01 42 03 02 09

Open Tuesday to Sunday, 2 pm – 8 pm; basement only open on weekends.

## La Belle Epoque

La Belle Epoque's days are officially numbered. A pioneer in the neighborhood over a decade ago, long before the Upper Marais morphed from working-class neighborhood into a gallery-hopper's and shopper's paradise, owner Monsieur Philippe is packing up his treasures and heading to Provence (and online) as of May 1st. A passionate, lifelong collector of hats and major labels from 1900 through the seventies, such as Poiret, Vionnet, Fath, Dior and particularly Yves Saint Laurent, he has a loyal following among international clients and fashion editors alike. Gregarious and agreeably opinionated, M. Philippe handpicks items from his personal collection each sea-

son and prepares a selection for those who share his enthusiasm for great design at unbelievably reasonable prices: Silk scarves start at 5€, suede jackets at 50€, a 1900-vintage silk top hat costs 80€, a black couture ensemble by Balmain is 150€ and black Pierre Cardin mini-dress, 200€. A hot pink, nip-waisted Dior Couture spring dress, circa 1955, will set you back 650€.

10 rue de Poitou 75003

06 80 77 71 32

Open Tuesday to Saturday, 1:30 pm – 6:30 pm; mornings by appointment only.

[www.philippelabellepoque.com](http://www.philippelabellepoque.com)

## Chezel

Vintage is a family affair at **Chezel**, where mother and daughter team Dalila Azzouz and Rim Trabelsi sell affordable clothes from the late 20th century through the early 2000s essentially to a clientele that is young, hip and slim (many of them are students at the nearby lycée). Labels such as YSL, Rive Gauche, Burberry, Marni, Marc Jacobs and Lanvin are mixed in with attractive, no-name cashmere sweaters (60€),