

hindustantimes

■ ■ Sunday, January 13, 2013

Rochelle Pinto, Hindustan Times

Mumbai, October 06, 2011

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First Published: 16:28 IST(6/10/2011)

Last Updated: 16:35 IST(6/10/2011)

Now, a mall that offers styling tips

Parul Shukla shops for a living. But more importantly, her shopping might actually improve your wardrobe. In possibly the first service of its kind offered in Mumbai, Shukla has tied up with a popular city mall to offer her expert styling advice and personal shopper skills to regular Joes for an hourly fee.

According to Nirzar Jain, general manager, Oberoi Mall, the idea was to help shoppers understand what looks best and upgrade their fashion quotient. “We started discussing the concept in April this year, and it was an idea I came up with because it’s popular abroad and recently started in Delhi malls as well,” mentions Shukla, adding, “My experience is technical-knowing what colours, shapes and fabrics suit the client and what clothes are appropriate for the occasion they’re shopping for.”

The service was launched quietly two weeks ago and Shukla has already had about three customers phoning in to arrange meetings. And surprisingly, it’s been a hit among the male customers. “I think it’s because men are becoming more aware of how they dress, but don’t have a natural understanding of colours and fabrics like women do. They like having someone come along.”

While the service costs about Rs 1000 an hour, Shukla insists it’s a healthy investment. “I also help them avoid unnecessary expenses like buying things they don’t need or which don’t suit them. It’s a smarter way to shop. Also, we buy pieces that are versatile and can be mixed and matched to create different looks, rather than buying many different outfits,” she says.

And don’t worry about being tricked into buying clothes from expensive stores. “I have no loyalties to any store and don’t work on commission,” Shukla says, “I don’t want my customers thinking I’m biased.”

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