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**Southern Company GAS**



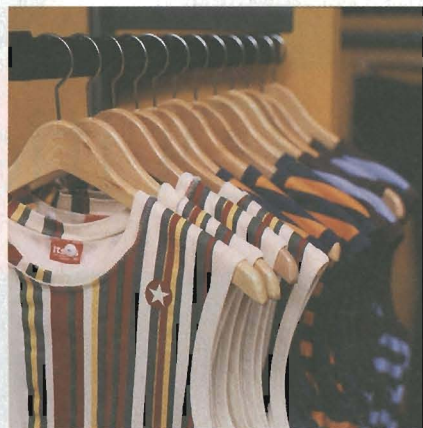
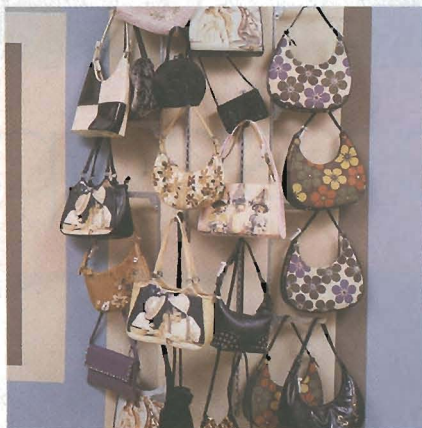
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clubwear for women sizes 2 to 24 and men's sizes small to 3X.

The young, slim owner, who does all of his own buying, shops the fashion showrooms until he finds "quality, fresh-looking" clothing in bigger sizes. He looks for comfortable, well-cut, tailored clothes with good angles that are styled for full figures. "I don't set boundaries, though," Payseur says. "Some women dress flashy, some demure." For instance, there are plus-size customers who would never consider baring their arms, and others who love the look of a halter. "Everyone has

different needs and tolerances," says Payseur, who's riding the wave of the future.

Big-name designers are beginning to see the light, and the realization that they are missing out on market share from a significant slice of the buying public has many beginning to push the size envelope. Hope is on the horizon for a strong showing of fashionable looks for bigger women, but for now, Payseur proudly presides over his boutique, where he can happily say that no one is ever left bravely standing on the sidelines trying on sunglasses and hats. ❖



## SHOPPER'S NOTEBOOK

### GETTING THE GOOD STUFF

SAMPLE SALE BARGAINS ARE UP FOR GRABS

THE DOORS OPENED AT 9 A.M. WOMEN GRABBED AS MANY SWEATERS as possible from the "Everything \$10" boxes. Size and style didn't seem to matter; the weeding out would come later.

"People get here early to get the good stuff," says Chloé Jo Berman of Girlie Girl Events, who holds sales like this six to seven times a year in New York City and is bringing her events to Atlanta. She and the Ladies of Resonate public relations firm were hosting the third Girlie Girl private sample sale in Atlanta. For those in the know, sample sales are a way for designers, stores and manufacturers to unload samples—items worn once by a model or hung on a mannequin—and end-of-season overstock. "This is a way for them to get rid of these clothes in a profitable way," explains Berman.

In a no-frills meeting room, tables are piled with cotton blouses, lace and linen tank tops, trim little cardigan knits and jeans at a promised 50 to 90 percent off retail. Rolling racks offer skirts, dresses and slacks, and Berman says she includes items for divas, tomboys, funky grandmas, sophisticated teens, buttoned-up executives and hard-working moms.

The room is lit with the unflattering white light of overhead fluorescents and an occasional full-length mirror is propped against the wall. No dressing rooms here. Bargain hunters are advised to wear tank tops and bike shorts so they can maintain some semblance of modesty as they strip down in the open to try on selections.

By 10 a.m. the crowd has thinned. A woman with a tattoo on her shoulder and a punk "don't mess with me" vibe heads for yet another table to fold and sort stock left in disarray by the masses. She slyly grins and quips that the repetitive work appeals to her OCD tendencies. A nearby shopper, part of a group of five women who work together says, "Some of the stuff that women grabbed that didn't fit is getting returned to the tables, so it's actually better now. It's not as crazy and there's still plenty to choose from." And so it seems everyone is happy at the sample sale, and Berman says she plans to do it again.

To experience the mania and get on the GirlieGirl mailing list, send a note to [GirlieGirlevents@aol.com](mailto:GirlieGirlevents@aol.com).

