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1 word: mia moretti

do something good for a change: shop. And then shop some more. Each year Preloved, an über-chic boutique you can find in Toronto,

Montreal and Vancouver, recycles over 50,000 pieces of vintage clothing to create unique one-of-a-kind items for the fashion- and environment-conscious. Although the owners admit Preloved is a "love baby" brought into the world by the pure admiration of fashion and all things fashion, it doesn't hurt that they are doing something positive for the typically "material-obsessed, greedy and consumptuous" fashion industry. You see, being an international model was a lot of work for owner Julia Grieve, who found herself redesigning her clothes from one casting call to the next in order to keep up with the pressures of looking good.

Somewhere between fashion shoots and castings, Julia joined forces with designer Peter Friesen to bring Canadians the same fun, stylish and impromptu recycled pieces she enjoyed. They opened their first store in Toronto on Queen Street West, running the production out of the back room. Ten years later, they have a giant production site, two more stores of their own and at least 65 retail locations around the world. Peter designs two collections a year, each with 40 to 50 different styles, all one-of-a-kind and made almost entirely of vintage. The best part is the price, which is comparable to something churned out at the Gap or Banana Republic, but the clothing is as individual as shoppers' moods. The fabrics are handpicked from only the softest, prettiest and most luxurious "preloved" vintage, paired with matching counterparts, and brought back to life by selfless hands. So next time you're in a rut, go to the mall and recycle.

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preloved

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With run-of-the-mill mall market saturation, independent designer sale events pique the interest of shoppers who want something that stands out from the typical fare. These events flash signs that read "unique designs," "new lines" and sometimes "one-of-a-kind." The draw is obvious: Be one of the first to wear an emerging designer and know that not many others will have what you have.

Latching onto this concept, Magda Sayeg began organizing the monthly Dunlavy Market shortly after she started designing an eponymous line of bold and whimsical scarves. About 20 other talented local designers also participated, and Sayeg's Houston-based shop events became a success—and since she attracted a following on a monthly basis, there seemed a need for a permanent store to satisfy Houston's fashion urges.

That was a few years ago. So now Sayeg has Raye, her own boutique located in the Houston's Museum District, to showcase her scarves and other favorite lines like Hengst, Clu, Trovata, Grey Ant and Rittenhouse. Concrete floors and a white brick wall anchor the backdrop for colorful clothing, a fluorescent pink wall, a vibrant, flock wallpapered wall and artfully displayed bits. "It is surprisingly girly and chic considering it was converted from an old garage apartment," notes Sayeg.

And the neighborhood couldn't be better. Sayeg explains: "It's the best place in Houston to be because it's the only place where you can get around without a car, most of the homes were built in the '40s and the businesses in the area are all small and independent."

Raye has a charming shine to it, much like Sayeg's now-quarterly markets. Her boutique specializes in lines that cannot be found elsewhere in Houston. She also offers each designer's bio and press so that her clients' purchases become personal. As Sayeg puts it, "We actively work to educate our customers about the designers they like, to make it more than just a purchase—to show them a name and face. We want the things people get from us to be as special to them as they are to us."

That's now quite an easy task at Raye. Better yet, Houston no longer needs to wait to get its fashion fill.

1 word: steph carmore



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raye

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