

As seen in **Shop Til You Drop August 07**

LOVE ME & LEAVE ME: With a background in product development, buying and design, Melbourne-based Simonne Santana certainly knew her stuff when she founded her accessory-lending business Love Me & Leave Me, lovemeandleaveme.com, in late 2006.

Tired of designer fashion being out of reach to the average consumer, and buoyed by the success of fashion leasing models in the US and UK, Santana set to work developing the Love Me & Leave Me (LM&LM) model. Santana says, "Borrowing gives people access to luxury products when they usually couldn't afford the retail price."

Offering Aussie designs from the likes of Alice McCall and Nicola Finetti, as well as internationals like Prada and Marc Jacobs, LM&LM hires out handbags, shoes, belts and jewellery for a monthly membership fee of \$9.95, plus an item-specific weekly or monthly fee.

Santana says a member may choose to borrow a Chloé Paddington bag (usually retailing between \$1800 to \$2000) for just \$99.95 per week or \$199.95 per month, to match the Gucci Horsebit heels she borrowed (usually retailing for over \$600) for \$74.95 per week or \$129.95 per month.

Members can borrow up to three items at once. "Why wouldn't you want the shoes that match the bag and the earrings?" Santana asks. If you become attached to an item you're able to buy it, and non-members can purchase directly from the site. And if your desired item is out on loan, you can sign up to a wish list.

LM&LM has yet to charge a replacement fee for damaged goods. The request to treat your borrowed item as if it belongs to a friend or family member appears to have resonated with customers.

Santana attributes the appeal of the fashion borrowing concept to numerous factors. While eBay has made people more receptive to 'worn' clothing and accessories, borrowing is a cost-effective way to keep up with rapidly shifting trends and allows you to try before you buy. "It's like having an extra wardrobe, a home away from home," she says.



where to go...



lovemeandleaveme.com