

HIGH FASHION

Many young fashionistas dream of the day they'll own their first luxury piece, like a classic Chanel handbag or a pair of Christian Louboutin red bottoms. However, high quality designer clothing and accessories come at a steep price.

The same is true for modern street style. Supreme, Yeezy and Off-White are all in high demand and low supply, which leads to their increased value in both original retail and in resale.

Rather than thinking of purchasing luxury items as simply throwing away money on a piece that may not get very much wear, smart buyers and collectors see it as a way to invest in the future of both their lives and the lives of the pieces they acquire.

Jeff Glauser, Penn State alumnus and owner and CEO of Glausangeles, collects and sells the hottest pieces in modern streetwear online and at pop-up shops.

"Streetwear is unique in that almost every item is purposely produced in quantities to create a supply and demand inefficiency," Glauser says. "Due to this supply and demand inefficiency, there is a huge secondary market for used items, to which the value is generally similar to the original cost."

Glauser contrasts this process of buying and selling to purchasing a new car. After a few weeks, a new car may only be worth half its original price tag. On the other hand, these streetwear items gain value over time.

"One common misconception about streetwear is that people only want the newest, hottest item, which would cause the value of last season's items to decrease," Glauser says. "This is generally false, as the older items become more rare and coveted, which causes the prices to increase even higher and continues to pay back on your investment."

Susan Purdum, a supply chain professor at Penn State, acknowledges that fashion can be a valuable investment, but only under specific terms.



"Items only grow in value if there's a market for them over time," Purdum says. "It may not be designer and luxury lines as much as it is a classic piece — it never goes out of style."

Classic items may never go out of style, but what adds most to a piece's value is its physical state.

Most items of clothing and accessories experience wear and tear throughout their life. A reality of investing in designer items is that the closer an item is to mint condition, the higher resale value it holds.

However, it isn't always easy keeping items fresh. People typically purchase clothes and accessories with the intent of wearing them — so how can they maintain their value despite being worn?

"For clothing my best recommendation would be to buy darker colors," Glauser says. "This may seem like common sense, but if you are spending hundreds of dollars on a T-shirt or hoodie, it is a better investment in a color that won't show dirt or stains as easily."

In general, Glauser encourages people to "just be mindful of where you are wearing your item based on the color, style and material."

When buying an expensive piece, it's important to think ahead about whether it is a staple that will become a part of your everyday wardrobe, or if it's a true investment piece that will remain in a box for most of its life.

Once you decide whether or not you want to buy an item to love or to preserve, your next move is to decide which piece is best for you. Choosing your first designer piece can be stressful, but at the end of the day, it's most important to follow your heart and your personal style. While this item is a future investment, it's also a form of self-expression, so pick something that best suits you and your taste. After all, it'll probably be in your wardrobe for a while. ■

HIGH REWARD

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