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fashion

# bag lady

Handbags as art and collectibles ...

What is the hottest must-have handbag today?

The luxury designer brands are as stylish as ever, but bags with lesser-known labels that capture a unique one-of-a-kind, almost art-like quality, also are in demand. Fashion has gone retro, and what's in vogue are vintage bags or vintage-inspired, recycled or refashioned bags. Even metallic bags are making a strong comeback. Finding a bag that expresses your individual style is as important as the functional purpose it serves. "Our customers love to collect vintage bags, especially the evening bags, which are being worn during the day," said Rebecca Birdwhistell, co-owner of Stefan's in Little 5 Points. "They are like little pieces of art that even look great hanging on a wall." —BY TONI M. LUBLIN

Western-inspired recycled "Levi's" denim satchel, with hand-tooled leather frame and shackle hardware closure. \$75, available at Two Stix.



# fashion



Striking gold metallic hobo bag, with "O" ring leather grommet strap. \$49, available at Bill Hallman Flaunt.



Tarnished copper satchel with tipped gold handle and rhinestone-studded pockets. \$45, available at Forsché Boutique.



Colorful, quirky gumball wristlet bag, by Rising Tide. \$29, available at Squash Blossom.



Atlanta designer Linda Johnson offers vintage-inspired three-in-one handbags with reversible covers under her brand name "Dorothy Valworth." Featured here, a sleek ladylike silver clutch (with optional wrist chain) that converts to a black matte faille. \$250, available at T.



Metallic mania is offered in this modern-shaped calfskin hobo bag with functional hardware strap. By Jophiel Design. \$196, available at Luna.



Dutch brand G-Star Raw offers this raw edged denim satchel, complete with rivet detail and gold topstitching. \$85, available at Bill Hallman Flaunt.



Aqua blue silk satin envelope clutch with metal frame and glass beading, by Moyna. \$196, available at Luna.



Shoulder bag in calfskin with shimmering metallic hand-painted landscape. \$75, available at Envy.



Bamboo handles hold together this ethnic-inspired felt hand-beaded bag, by the Hill Tribe in Northern Thailand. \$75, available at Two Stix.



With heirloom qualities, this vintage cobalt blue glass-beaded bag and handle (circa 1940s) is quite unique. The frame features blue moon-like stones. \$84, available at Stefan's.



Vintage-inspired acorn-shaped beaded bag, good for day or night. \$60, available at René René.



A retro flair is captured in this "asiana" bronze beaded bag with cloisonné dragon. \$132, available at Envy.



One of a kind, this is an Austrian handset crystal bag in pristine condition from the late '50s. Made by L'etoile. \$245, available at Stefan's.



Gently used bags are hand-painted for a one-of-a-kind appeal, by Fraction. \$150, available at Wish.



The retro-romantic vibe is captured in this tweed clutch with strap and corsage details. \$58, available at White House | Black Market.



Eclectic designer Mary Frances created this handbag from various burnout velvets and finished with stones and beads. \$128, available at Squash Blossom.