

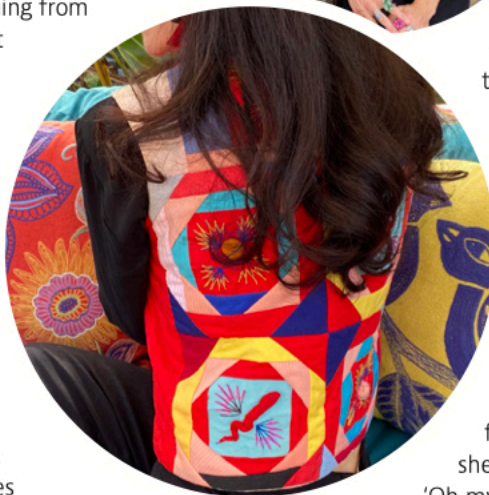


healthy eating, where 80 percent of what you consume is dedicated to wholesome food and 20 percent is reserved for treats. Accordingly, Damata is working towards 80 percent of her clothes coming from second-hand or vintage stores and just 20 percent bought new. She estimates that currently about 65 percent of her closet is pre-loved.

She may be onto something. According to America's Research Group, approximately 16 to 18 percent of Americans will shop at a thrift store during a given year.

In addition to being more affordable, shopping second-hand is good for the environment. The fashion industry is responsible for 10 percent of global carbon emissions, another reason that Damata advocates buying second-hand. "You're not adding more waste to the world," she said. "Plus, many of the products that are made currently are made from petroleum, so they're essentially plastic, chemically made."

Damata's interest in vintage and second-hand shopping began in the '80s when she accompanied her mom to artsy antique stores to shop for things for their house. Dressing for high school, Damata borrowed her dad's oversized sweaters and her mom's scarves and jewelry. During college, she began thrifting a lot and still remembers "a super funky little red dress," that she wished she had saved.



"You know, it becomes more of a treasure hunt," she said, "as opposed to when you're going to the mall and everyone is looking at the exact same sweaters and the exact same shoes."

One of her more recent "treasure finds" was in Paris, where she visited for her birthday over the summer. While at Les Puces de Saint-Ouen (touted as the largest antique and second-hand market in the world) she came upon "this unbelievable cape that was from the '70s, and it had all these great colors that I love."

She's drawn to things that have a story. "I still have some pieces of my mom's from the '70s that were totally fabulous. I love them, first and foremost, because they belonged to my mom."

She noted that another advantage of shopping vintage is that while stores selling new clothes may only offer styles and colors that are currently en vogue, "you can find almost anything that fits your preferences when you're thrifting. When you know what you are looking for, it becomes very easy."

She said that this applies to in-person as well as online thrifting. "What's great about online thrifting, at stores like thredUP, Depop, and Poshmark, is that there are filters you can apply, which help you find what you want 10 times faster than before."

Perhaps one of the best parts about buying second-hand, though, is the fun factor. "It's one of my very, very favorite things to do," said Damata. "I have a dear friend and when we've gone vintage shopping, it's like, 'Oh my gosh, come look!' My best colors and style are very different from hers. It's even more fun because she always finds stuff for me and she'll say, 'Oh my gosh, this is so you!' That's really fun."

➔ Young Writers Series

Elle Schuchman will take Goodwill over Nordstrom (most) any day. The 14-year-old Bainbridge High School freshman, like many Bainbridge teens, has a fashion aesthetic that leans more bargain basement than haute couture. In the first of a series of articles from young island writers, Schuchman interviewed stylist Heidi Damata to learn a little more about the seduction of second-hand style.