

# bene



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ITALIAN LIFE & STYLE

**5** ITALIAN  
DESIGNS WE LOVE  
*(Including Ravioli)*

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get saucy*

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FASHION:  
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it better*



*plus:* SHOPPING IN MILAN ✦ BIKING IN PONZA ✦ WEDDINGS IN TUSCANY  
WINE TASTING IN ROME ✦ LEATHER IN FLORENCE

around us as we stroll down Via della Spiga, but there's no reason to race through a shopping trip, explains Simona, deftly dodging a delivery truck. "I recommend planning two half-days, rather than one daylong marathon," she says. "Shopping should never be an exhausting trek; it should be a delight."



### SERMONETA GLOVES

VIA DELLA SPIGA 46 • TEL. 02 76318303 • WWW.SERMONETAGLOVES.COM  
AVAILABLE IN NEW YORK AT 611 MADISON AVENUE • TEL. 212 319 5946

1 Simona and Federico head down Via della Spiga to Sermoneta Gloves, where the array of fresh colors—from green to pink to yellow—make it seem more like a flower shop. Simona admits her favorite shopping trips focus on accessories: "We're women," she smiles. "We'll always need that exact pair of gloves or the perfect shoe. It's also easier to be more daring with the extras." While Simona tries on checked scarves and rain hats, Federico peruses the men's section for some practical driving gloves, but ends up falling for a pair of red pigskin cashmere-lined gloves. "Italian businessmen have a serious case of the 'blues.' That is, they never stray from classic, muted colors," he says. "About a year ago, I discovered red. I bought a red car. I have red shoes. It's now my favorite color."

Prices: The price-quality ratio makes Sermoneta a "must" stop; cashmere-lined kid gloves, available in eight colors, start at €39.

### SCAVIA

VIA DELLA SPIGA 9 • TEL. 02 76021610 • WWW.SCAVIA.IT

2 Scavia, a discreet two-floor shop on Via della Spiga, is the apotheosis of Italian luxury jewelry. Many upscale boutiques in Milan open at 9:30 A.M., and early birds are offered a cup of espresso; at Scavia, it arrives in red-and-gold bordered cups almost as soon as Simona and Federico accept the offer. Looking for a gift for his fiancée, Federico carefully examines the window displays and is dazzled by trays of exquisite, one-of-a-kind pieces, including an 11-carat Burmese sapphire ring. He leaves Scavia empty-handed, but full of ideas. That's one of Simona's shopping rules: No impulse buys. "Make rounds one day, and buy the next," she instructs. "You don't want to open up your suitcase to a bunch of expensive mistakes."

Prices: Unique, handmade pieces start at €5,000. Necklace and ring sets range from €200,000 to €300,000. The Burmese sapphire ring is €90,000.



### ARMANDOLA

VIA DELLA SPIGA 50 • TEL. 02 76021657

3 Lunchtime in Italy, even in metropolitan Milan, still shuts down everything but the large department stores. The pausa pranzo, or midday break, should be factored into any shopping trip. At 1:00 P.M., Simona and Federico duck into a small gastronomia, or food store, aromatic with specialties like funghi porcini, prosciutto, balsamic vinegar and fresh cheeses. Lunch in Italy, fast or slow, usually means a well-measured dose of carbohydrates: Simona orders gnocchi in tomato sauce; Federico chooses fagottini with pesto. "Even though it's a fast meal, it's still decent," Federico says. "I could never get used to eating just sandwiches." Despite its big-city feel, the center of Milan is quite small, and before Federico and Simona can make it down the street to Il Cigno Nero for a postprandial espresso, they run into two friends. "When I shop for myself, I always factor in stop-and-chat time," Simona laughs.

### POLOS

CORSO MONFORTE 16 • TEL. 02 76022411 • WWW.POLOS.GOLF.COM

4 Already an avid skier, Federico recently discovered golf. The game on the green is relatively new to Italy. Polos, the first store dedicated to golf gear in Milan, opened its doors in 1982. Of course, because this is Italy, it's not all about the sport. "Not everyone who shops here is a golfer," Federico says. "The idea is to hit on the right casual, sporty look, as if you might be headed to play." Unlike golf stores in the United States, Polos offers no plaid pants, but rather casual wear and golf accoutrements from international and Italian designers including Aspesi, Escada and Sabell. Prices: Polos' own label sweaters in wool blends start at €180; cotton pants €122. Zegna corduroy jackets €559 and Sabell shoes €250.

### STEPHAN JANSON

VIA GOLDONI 21 • TEL. 02 7526171 • WWW.STEPHANJANSON.COM

5 Next, we head to the leafy residential Monforte neighborhood to visit the showroom of French-born designer Stephan Janson. With no big fashion shows or ad campaigns, Janson is a word-of-mouth phenomenon among Milan's best-dressed women. "Knowing his clothes is considered a mark of good taste," says Simona. Celebrated for his deft use of color, clean lines and measured sensuality, Janson is the antidote to the total-noir minimalist look. Known for his round-collared, A-line dresses, Janson is "a favorite with Italian women who want to look great but don't need flashy labels," says Simona. "Spending even half an hour at Janson's can revamp a tired wardrobe." Prices: Silk dresses from €640, silk palazzo pants from €400, printed silk blouses from €325 to €420 and wool suits from €1,000.

### BIFFI

CORSO GENOVA 6 • TEL. 02 8311601

6 We head to Biffi, a fashion institution for men and women in the Navigli neighborhood (Milan's canal district and epicenter of the after-dinner drink scene). "Biffi is the boutique in Milan," says Federico. "They carry a large selection of clothing and accessories from hip foreign labels," including Martin Margiela, Paul Smith and Jean Paul Gaultier, as well as "high-quality classics from Italian designers," such as Bottega Veneta, Gucci, Antonio Fusco and New York Industriale. The store has a loyal following of well-dressed Italians who don't want to





look too trendy; although some of the labels are avant-garde, most pieces at Biffi are conservative and beautifully made. Prices: Silk ties in regimental stripes from €50 to €120, men's striped dress shirts start at €110, Aspesi windbreaker €398, Roda cashmere scarf €240.

### ARISTOLASIA

VICOLO DEI LAVANDAII 2A • TEL. 02 89420540 • WWW.ARISTOLASIA.COM

**7** To find this haven for handbag addicts, look for an old wooden shelter, covering what used to be a communal bathhouse on the street Naviglio Grande. Once you spot the landmark, turn down Vicolo dei Lavandai, a tiny, irregularly shaped alley that is now home to antique dealers, artists' studios and the Aristolasia showroom. For six years, this emerging Milan label has wowed locals with deceptively simple yet well-designed totes, handbags and travel bags. Round leather bags shaped like carnivorous flowers are favorites, as are shoulder bags made from vintage men's suits. The concrete floors and dark interior are on the gloomy side, but what the showroom lacks in warm fuzziness is made up for in quality. Prices: Leather bags from €250 to €1,200. Custom orders available, with delivery to the United States in 2 to 4 weeks. Available this spring: Women's shoes and items for the home.

### DANIELA De MARCHI

VIA DEI PIATTI 6 • TEL. 02 86995040 • WWW.DANIELADEMARCHI.IT

**8** Lastly, Simona leads us through a maze of small, winding streets to Via dei Piatti where Daniela De Marchi greets us outside her small workshop and jewelry store. She is locked out after lunch, she says with a deep laugh, but her assistant will be along in a minute. Simona, who lives in the neighborhood, stumbled across the shop when it first opened and was quickly charmed by De Marchi's high energy and infectious laugh. Her jewelry, in bronze, silver and brass, is inspired by nature; Simona loves her snowflake-inspired rings and the bracelets and chunky rings that vaguely resemble anemones. Here, too, color is key: Clients can pick a style, then choose from a catalog of stone and setting combinations for a custom look. Prices: Bronze rings start at €64, silver and brass rings range from €180 to €300; earrings range from €60 to €238.



## MILAN BY DESIGN

Colorful, brilliantly designed accessories are the calling card of Italian homes and offices. Simona recommends these three Milanese sources for home decor:

### DILMOS

PIAZZA SAN MARCO 1  
TEL. 02 2902437

A perennial favorite for savvy urbanites, this store in the trendy Brera neighborhood offers beautiful pieces for the home, from chairs to mirrors to rugs. This is also the perfect place to shop for unique gifts for friends back home: their lovely silicone vases won't up take too much room in your suitcase. Prices: Gaetano Pesce silicone vases from €120 to €600; Gianni Osnaghi square mirror €125.

### NAVA

VIA DURINI 23 TEL. 02 794599  
WWW.NAVADESIGN.COM

Founded in the 1960s, Nava offers a stunning range of office supplies and accessories such as stationery and computer cases. Sleek appearance and quality materials, including leather and Cordura, make these desk accessories, organizers and briefcases favorites in Milan. Prices: Leather organizers from €60, computer bags from €85 and overnight travel bags from €165.

### DOVETUSAI

VIA SIGIERI 24 TEL. 02 59902432  
WWW.DOVETUSAI.IT

This former paint factory in a courtyard in the Porta Romana neighborhood is where Italian and international designers showcase novel home items, including resin candlesticks and stainless steel spaghetti fasters—long metal hooks that lift a single strand of spaghetti out of the pot to check if it is cooked al dente. Dovetusa's signature items make perfect pensierini, or thoughtful little gifts. Prices: Spaghetti fasters €8; Gran's resin candlestick by Harry Allen €145.