

# toronto's bargains

THE CITY IS SURPRISINGLY STYLISH AND, GIVEN THE EXCHANGE RATE, REMARKABLY INEXPENSIVE. HERE, THE BEST PLACES FOR TABLETOP BUYS.

NEXT TO CHIC MONTREAL, TORONTO long seemed drab—"New York run by the Swiss," as actor Peter Ustinov once described it. But with a growing film community and boutique-friendly rents, the city is now a great place to shop, especially because the exchange rate makes everything 20 percent cheaper for Americans. We asked three Toronto tastemakers to pick their favorite design stores.



Caban sells stylish basics on fashionable Queen Street.

## caban

The flagship of this home store (which is owned by Ralph Lauren) juts out like the prow of a cruise liner over the street. Here you can stock up, inexpensively, on stylish basics—hand-woven wool rugs, Japanese-influenced green glazed-ceramic outdoor furniture, lush bed linens. Pieces from Caban's own line, which includes simple, platinum-banded white dinnerware (\$23 for a five-piece place setting) and linen tablecloths (\$44), sit on the shelf alongside brands like Waterford and Royal Doulton. One fan of the place is Bruce Mau, the design guru who collaborates often with the architect Frank Gehry. "Caban's tableware is classic and clean," Mau says. "It sets the stage but doesn't dominate the conversation" (262 Queen St. W.; 888-580-5084 or [www.caban.com](http://www.caban.com)).

## william ashley

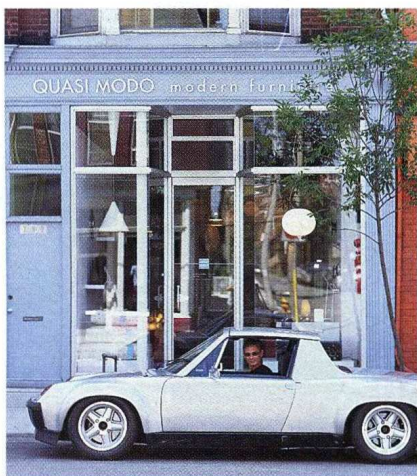
With room upon room of accoutrements for eating and entertaining, Ashley's is like the ultimate bridal registry. The top china, crystal and silverware brands are here, from Bernardaud and Spode to Lalique and Philippe Deshoulières—for less than in the United States. For example, Puiforcat's "Cardinal" is \$258 for a five-piece silver-plated place setting; it's usually \$410 in the U.S. "Ashley's has almost everything," says Karim Rashid, the Toronto product designer who's best known for his Umbra "Garbo" trash can. "It's a bit all over the place, but I prefer to think of it as having these different vignettes. And it has excellent service" (55 Bloor St. W.; 800-268-1122 or [www.williamashley.com](http://www.williamashley.com)).

BY SANDY M. FERNANDEZ

PHOTOGRAPHS BY GEORGE WHITESIDE

## goodman's china and gifts

Located in a suburban strip mall 30 minutes from downtown, Goodman's doesn't put on airs: Shelves of china are slapped with neon-colored discount signs. But price, not decor, is the draw. A five-piece set of Wedgwood's "St. Moritz" goes for \$67 (full price is \$116). Older, discontinued patterns are the best buys (1136 Centre St., Thornhill, Ontario; 800-665-8187 or [www.goodmanschina.com](http://www.goodmanschina.com)).



## quasi modo modern furniture

Its three cantilevered rooms mix innovative works, like Arabia's "Storybirds" pitchers (\$335 for a set), ABOVE, with reissued midcentury modern classics. Another object of desire: Paola Lenti's gem-colored felt rugs, ABOVE RIGHT (from \$960) (789 Queen St. W.; 888-676-3222 or [www.quasimodomodern.com](http://www.quasimodomodern.com)).

## french country

This two-room shop feels like a tree-shaded café, with iron bistro tables outside the door. Inside, arranged on wooden farm tables and in cupboards, owner Viola Jull sells the items she finds on her biannual trips to Provence and Paris: vintage, monogrammed tablecloths in cheery butter-yellow and light raspberry (from \$142, including six napkins) and items exclusive to the store, such as hand-painted blue-and-white-checked bowls created by an artisan in Venasque (\$28) and whimsical hand-painted trays made in Valbonne, featuring Coco Chanel rebuffing various suitors (\$93) (6 Roxborough St. W.; 416-944-2204).



## walker's antiques and silver exchange

Down the hall from Cynthia Findlay, Walker's carries over 400 patterns of antique and discontinued sterling-silver and silver-plate flatware—the largest collection in Canada, they claim. It's the perfect place to fill in gaps in a favorite pattern: "I went in there because I was missing a few pieces of my Georg Jensen 'Acorn,'" Caban's Berthold says. Prices range from about \$47 to \$63 for a five-piece place setting of silver plate and \$173 to \$220 for sterling silver. The shop also offers collectibles like a set of six French oyster forks, circa 1900 (\$189), and a rare Samuel de Champlain sterling silver pie server (\$189) (390 Queens Quay W.; 800-387-9740 or [www.walkersantiquesandsilverware.com](http://www.walkersantiquesandsilverware.com)).

## cynthia findlay antiques

"Toronto was filled with good English families who did things the right way," says Cynthia Findlay, explaining how her stall at the Toronto Harbourfront Antique Market came to be stacked, floor to ceiling, with great deals in British tableware. "She has a stock of everything," says Eric Berthold, vice president at Caban. "Silver chests? They're piled up on the floor. Chintz? She has a ton." Findlay has a strong collection of Clarice Cliff, a pre-World War II British pottery designer, including a rare, orange-and-yellow "Football" vase (\$1,280). Other highlights are coronation commemorative ware—from Queen Victoria to Elizabeth II (\$30 and up)—and midcentury coffee sets by Susie Cooper (\$400 to \$800) (390 Queens Quay W.; 416-260-9057).