

Do well-heeled fashionistas really get into fights at sample sales? And are the savings truly mind-blowing? (Yes and yes.) Here's our insider's guide to those exclusive gatherings – and how you can shop them

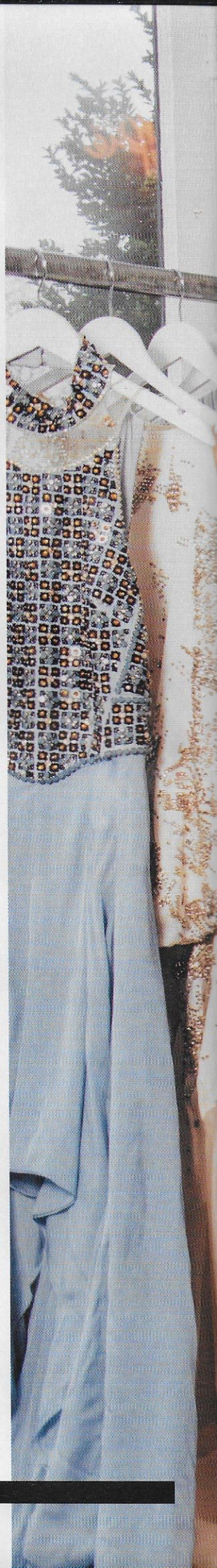
SAMPLE SALES ARE USUALLY

shrouded in secrecy, but what really happens beyond the security guard? They're a level playing field, where magazine editors fight for space alongside interns in curtained-off communal changing rooms, and hawk-eyed women hover, waiting to swoop the minute you put down that J Dubs pierced bag. Sure, you might have to be cut out of a pair of silver leather Loewe trousers, but when the prices are this low, isn't it a risk worth taking? As more sample sales change their editors-only rule and let the public join in, Charlie Gowans-Eglinton breaks the first rule of fashion's fight club, and reveals what really goes on behind closed doors...

**THE MISTRESS
OF CEREMONIES**

Pippa Vosper, owner, RSPV Store

If you're expecting elbows at dawn, you've come to the wrong place. Pippa Vosper has made a business from taking the aggravation out of sample sales. 'I love going to sample sales, but hate the way they're run. I hated the warehouse feel, the clothing being thrown on the floor, the elbows, and I just thought if we can do this in a boutique environment, I could change the face of sample sales. That was two years ago.' But while you can take the shopper out of the scrum, it seems you can't completely take the scrum out of the shopper. 'It's never people you would expect, it's always the women ▶



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