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DJIA 12390.48 ▼ 12.37 -0.1% NASDAQ 2503.14 ▲ 0.9% NIKKEI 14435.57 ▲ 1.6% DJ STOXX 50 3123.17 ▼ 1.6% 10-YR TREAS ▼ 11/32, yield 3.940% OIL \$122.30 ▼ \$2.01 GOLD \$879.90 ▼ \$1.70 EURO \$1.5485 YEN 105.22

## INS & OUTS

### Concierge Services and Mismatched Socks

**J. Crew Group Inc.**, which has been adding higher-price clothing in recent years, is now upping the ante on service as well.

Last month, it launched its first concierge service, called the "just ask desk," at its Rockefeller Center store in Manhattan. At the desk, customers can make appointments with personal shoppers, arrange private shopping parties, request monogramming, preorder items from its high-end Collection line, look at color swatches for bridesmaid dresses that are sold online, and order clothes, such as those from the kids' line called crewcuts, that aren't carried in most stores. Concierges will also hold coats, packages and umbrellas.

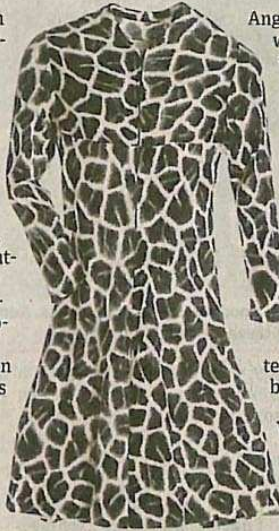
Many of these services can be found online or by calling J. Crew. By promoting them in the store, the company hopes to raise awareness and increase sales. J. Crew plans to add the desks at 30 stores over the next year and eventually roll them out to all 195 of its J. Crew stores.

Like concierges at high-end department stores, J. Crew's concierges also can help shoppers solve problems that aren't related to the store: They've provided directions, made restaurant reservations and given advice on Broadway shows, the company says.

#### A Plus for Large Teens

Come fall, fashion-conscious plus-size teenagers will get some new choices. **Charming Shoppes Inc.** plans to have departments in 500 of its Fashion Bug stores stocking trendy clothes in sizes 14 to 32.

The departments, called the Scene, will feature tops from labels such as Fang, Peachie Keen and Anxiety and jeans from Zana Di, Industrial Cotton and



A vintage Dior dress from the early 1960s, when Yves Saint Laurent designed for Dior.

Angels, among others. Fashion Bug works with the labels to convert their styles into plus sizes that meet its specifications. The Scene departments began appearing in Fashion Bug stores last fall and now number 250.

In targeting plus-size teens, Fashion Bug is taking on **Hot Topic Inc.**'s 154-store Torrid chain, the market leader in this thinly served corner of the retail world. Charming Shoppes previously tested selling plus-size junior clothes online under its Lane Bryant label but found that teens preferred buying labels worn by their peers, not their parents.

#### Vintage Dior

**Yoox.com**, an online boutique, launched a sale of vintage Christian Dior clothes and accessories this week. The items, more than 100 in all, were produced by the French fashion house from the 1940s through the 1980s. Among them are a strapless haute couture evening

gown from the late 1940s that Yoox says was created by Christian Dior himself and a dress from the early 1960s, when Yves Saint Laurent, who died on Sunday, ran the house of Dior. Yoox held a similar sale of vintage Chanel pieces last fall.

#### MissMatched

**MissMatched Inc.**, known for whimsical mismatched polka-dotted and striped socks for girls, is expected to open at least 80 "shop-within-a-shop" boutiques in Macy's stores by September and plans to open a flagship store in New York in the coming year. Its expansion is the result of a \$17.3 million capital infusion from private-equity firm **Catterton Partners**. Sales of the LittleMissMatched brand, now in more than 3,000 retail outlets nationwide including Bed, Bath & Beyond and J.C. Penney, have risen to \$25 million from \$5 million three years ago, and the line has expanded beyond socks into jewelry, furniture and other accessories.

—Jennifer Saranow and Vanessa O'Connell



A Peachie Keen shirt at Fashion Bug

