

# High-end handbags on the cheap

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 that vary by style, designer and price. "You go on line, sign up for your membership. You select a bag, it comes to you in the mail, you carry it as long as you want, you send it back, you pick your next bag," explained Kauffman.

Members "borrow" from a week, to a year, as long as their membership is in good standing. There is also the option to "steal" if you've gotten attached to it.

BBOS launched a Couture Collection in November 2005 that allows Divas to borrow the most sought after

designs, such as Chloe and Balenciaga, at a supplemental fee. However, this design did not allow for access by other membership levels, unless upgraded.

"The new membership is just \$9.95 a month for everyone, and you just pay per bag," explained Kauffman. "You just pay for what ever bag you have for as long as you have it out."

"There are no late fees, there's no time frame of having to return it for a certain date, just keeping it as long as you want it."

Renting for a week, is the

monthly \$9.95 plus \$5 for the week, for a month, it's \$15. "That's something our customers were really asking for," said Kauffman. "More flexibility, the ability to pick bags at all different membership levels...to have multiple bags out at a time."

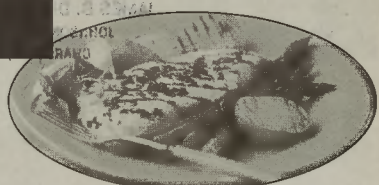
The bags offered on the site retail between \$200, and \$2500. "We get the most requests for Coach, Louis Vitton, Gucci, Dooney & Burke, the "Pattington" from Chloe, and the Fendi "B-bag," said Kauffman, a former analyst and merchandise planner for Nordstrom.

"Styles are updated almost everyday, to keep up with the latest and greatest trends."

Should you fall in love with a bag, just go back on the website and request a "steal it" price, and a price will be given by a representative.

"We find that those people don't just want that one bag, and then they cancel their membership and they're done," said Kauffman. "They are bag collectors... a combination of purchasers and borrowers."

To find out more, log onto [www.bagborroworsteal.com](http://www.bagborroworsteal.com).



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# Etiquette rules don't relax with season change

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 of children, women of color had a real place in society. "You had to look, speak, and style yourself, in a certain way, wear the appropriate attire," said Carter. The rules on etiquette in those days were made by affluent individuals. "Etiquette was driven by the golden rule, those who have the gold rule."

Although he is not speaking as an etiquette expert, Carter continues to represent his mother's vision, after 60 years, despite more relaxed trends. Carter explained change is most evident visually, in what people wear to concerts, the theater, to church, and business functions.

"Casual Fridays had something to do with it, in terms of the business environment, but people became more relaxed about formality," said Carter.

have stated that you are expecting an important phone call, the rule in social and business events for cell phones, is turn it off, said Beauty and Style journalist Jenyne Raines. "Nobody wants to hear the ringing of the phone, and nobody wants to hear your conversation. Raised by wolves, it's just rude."

She compared the action to customer service protocol. "You deal with who is in front of you...before you take the customers on the phone. And that's the way it should be. The phone should be off at dinner. Besides, most people have voicemail."

Though Raines as well, admits she does not profess to be an etiquette authority, the author of the book, "Beautylicious: The Black Girl's Guide to the Fabulous Life," and the former associate beauty editor at Essence, does speak with over 10 years experience in writing about beauty, style, and trends.

action, it also encompasses dress. When attending a funeral, try more low-key attire. "Something not too flamboyant, not too many pastels or vibrant colors that draw more attention to you than the situation at hand," said Carter.

Another formal event that requires specific etiquette is a

wedding. "The electronic age has changed a number of things," said Carter.

"Job offers are made electronically now. Terminations are made electronically. But a wedding announcement just historically tends to be...where people want something visual to hold onto as a keepsake."

A relaxation in formality, in terms of respect, can be attributed to the age of technology, where there is such a focus on the individual, and not on how your actions may affect others. One of the best examples is cell phone usage. Cell phones began as a status symbol that only the very wealthy could afford. With changes in the cost of usage and phones, more people own them, with more public usage. Today, it's hard to walk down the street, or take a bus without being a part of someone else's conversation. "People are disregarding the rights of others. This addresses a lot of the me opinion, where people tend to focus on it's about me, versus on what are good socialization skills that serve the whole much better than just serving the individual," said Carter.

Cell phones can also be a nuisance in social settings. Unless you are a doctor or

It goes without saying that phones should definitely be turned off when attending a funeral. Yet, is there a proper etiquette for funerals? We've all attending a "home going" that included wailing (not crying) and someone throwing themselves on the coffin. Is this just a cultural thing? "I've seen certain funerals where I don't think blacks are more emotionally demonstrative than some European, or Far Eastern cultures," said Carter. "However, behavior should always be where it creates comfort to those who have organized, and been gracious enough to ask us to attend it."

In short, don't make a spectacle at someone else's event. "Have the good judgment and respect to know we are there not to be the center of attention, but to offer support." Etiquette is not always

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