

# attention to retail

Shopping across the globe is a US\$9 trillion business, and at times it's overwhelming. In an effort to enhance that experience, the Peninsula Academy Chicago is delighted to introduce two individuals with an abundance of flair, style and character who will reinterpret the idea of retail therapy.



“a couple of years ago, my best friend was celebrating her 40th birthday. Her husband had rented her a limo and they wanted to do a spa day,” remarks impresario Bonnie Kaplan, who thought this was such a passé idea. Instead, she set about creating a fantasy day for the birthday girl. “She loved shopping with me, so what I did was compile a list of her favourite places to shop and snack that I wanted to bring her to,” recalls Kaplan with a knowing grin. They subsequently filled up the limousine with family and friends and embarked on a dawn ‘til dusk expedition during which they hit a variety of retail outlets. And at every stop, she had arranged for other people to pick up the tab on items that she expressed interest in. At conclusion of the day, the birthday girl deemed it the “greatest day of her life!”

It transpires that this was the inspiration behind the “Shop Party” concept masterminded by Kaplan. A former television producer for a number of hit talk shows, including Geraldo, Kaplan has always embraced her passions with the heat of a nova. “I’ve always believed that if you do something you love, then you’ll never have to work another day in your life!” Indeed, when she gave birth to her daughter and elected to cut back on the travelling required for her job, the idea of making people’s retail dreams come true began to percolate. A connoisseur of the finer things in life, she only wanted to collaborate with the very best and sought out the collaboration of The Peninsula Chicago, thus embarking on yet another chapter of her multifaceted career.

The fact that shopping is the number one pastime of travellers is an undisputed fact. “Every single poll tells you that,” she exclaims, betraying her roots in television. “Besides,” she adds, “it’s a great way to see a city.” However, as every frequent traveller will realise, getting the best out of a city as a visitor is sometimes no easy feat, which is why concierges and a local who knows of the ins and outs of a city are so useful.

Today, Kaplan is packaging her local expertise, her electrifying personality and her passion for retail therapy, to offer an unsurpassed shopping experience. Whether you’re in the market for all your favourite items, say lingerie or shoes, or are looking to luxuriate in private, before or after hours in the stores of your picking, Kaplan is in the business of fulfilling these desires.

The entire experience begins with a “get to know you” chat beforehand, during which Kaplan will ascertain all your shopping desires. The walking-talking shopping encyclopedia will then layout an itinerary of specialty neighbourhood shops, new designer workrooms, and private dressing rooms with special treats on offer at every stop, be it a discount, or canapés, wine or champagne. On the day, expect to spend a high-energy, fun-filled day, dipping in and out of shops, so heed this warning, “You had better go to the bathroom before you jump in the limo!”