



SHOP

Fabric du Jour

Velvet, in all its permutations, is the hottest fabric this season. You'll run into it in clothing stores during January sales, and keep your eyes open for accessories like velvet bags and shoes, too. Here are some of the places to find the look:

» **NORDSTROM** (San Francisco Centre, 865 Market St., 415-243-8500): Cynthia Steffe's super-soft, satin-trimmed fuchsia velvet blazer, with a rounded collar and sweet bows on the front patch pockets, is a girly take on a classic, as is Steffe's velvet trim coat (below).

» **MARC JACOBS** (125 Maiden Lane, 362-6500): The designer's trend-setting fall/winter collection features a metallic tweed blazer in ivory, brown and tan, with a chocolate velvet collar and cuffs.

» **THE GAP** (100 Post St., 989-1266, and several other locations): Try pairing modern flare velvet trousers, in Douglas fir or charcoal brown, with a velvet blazer in pale pink or sycamore green. A tailored, pulled-together daytime style, but at Gap prices!

» **BETSY JOHNSON'S CLOTHING** (160 Geary St., 398-2516, and 2031 Fillmore St., 415-567-2726): A body-hugging washed velvet dress in teal blue is Betsy Johnson's contribution to the fashion trend. Lavender lace crisscrosses the bodice and edges the flirty, above-the-knee hem. A great nighttime dress-up piece.

» **BIRKENSTOCK** (42 Stockton St., 415-989-2475): Velvet doesn't get any groovier than Birkenstock velvet clogs in black, royal blue, burgundy and emerald, with a rhinestone buckle to boot.

» **BEBE** (21 Grant Ave., 415-781-2323, and other locations): Bebe's velvet stole, with soft gathers in front, has satiny ties that keep it fastened. Drape this sexy little accessory—which comes in toast, teal and sangria—over bare shoulders for a dressy, after-hours look.

—Linda Weber



Concierge Corner

An insider's look at the city



Andreas Rippel
Hotel Concierge
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BACKGROUND: I grew up in southern Austria. I spent two years at a private school in Vienna studying economics, but it was too dry for me. I switched to a tourism college and, after graduating, I moved to the U.S. to study English. I spent nearly two years in San Francisco, working at the Four Seasons

Clift Hotel in food and beverage. I returned to Europe and worked on a Cunard cruise ship and then several small five-star hotels in Germany and Austria before opening the Four Seasons Berlin in 1996. I was there three years as assistant restaurant manager and a year as restaurant manager before I transferred to the concierge desk in 1999. I moved to San Francisco for the opening of the Four Seasons San Francisco.

FAVORITE RESTAURANT: I couldn't pick just one. For a special occasion, I'd go to **Gary Danko** (800 North Point, 749-2060). For a relaxing but romantic dinner, I like **Blue Plate** (3218 Mission St., 282-6777) in the Mission District. It's tiny, but very cozy, and with good food. I like **Isa** (3324 Steiner St., 567-9588) for French tapas. The restaurant opens to an ivy-covered courtyard. I also like **Ozumo** (161 Steuart St., 882-1333) and **Frisson** (244 Jackson St., 956-3000). Frisson is very clubby and trendy, and it attracts a great crowd.

FAVORITE SHOPPING: Hayes Valley, especially **Nida** (544 Hayes St., 552-4670) and **Alabaster** (597 Hayes St., 558-0482).

FAVORITE ATTRACTION: Walking down the Vulcan stairway. It's below Buena Vista Park (Haight and Baker streets) and has beautiful hidden gardens and homes. I also like hiking Corona Heights, which has wonderful city views. It isn't as crowded as Twin Peaks.

FAVORITE LEISURE ACTIVITIES: Walking Baker Beach on a sunny day, or sailing on the Bay and stopping for a picnic at Angel Island and then sailing back under the Golden Gate Bridge. I do this six to eight times a year. I also love horseback riding and have access to private stables in Woodside. One of my favorite gardens is **Filoli** (650-364-8300) in Woodside. I love walking through the grounds.

MY PERFECT DAY: I'd start at the farmers' market (Tuesday and Saturday) at the **Ferry Building** (Embarcadero at Market), where I'd have Peet's coffee and a snack. Then I'd go along the coast to the **Legion of Honor** (34th and Clement streets, 863-3330) to see the new exhibit. This is my favorite museum, and it has beautiful views. I like going through Sealiff on the way. I'd head to upper Sacramento Street near the antiques shops for lunch at **Social** (3665 Sacramento St., 921-3200), a little Italian restaurant with a lovely hidden courtyard. I'd stroll upper Sacramento Street and its antiques shops. **Urban Chateau** (3228 Sacramento St., 673-8026) is one of my favorites. After that, I'd head to **Tartine Bakery** (800 Guerrero St., 487-2600) for a pastry and coffee. They have the best French pastries. They're homemade, and you can watch them making them in back. I'd have an early dinner on Hayes Street at **Absinthe** (398 Hayes St., 551-1590) or **Hayes Street Grille** (320 Hayes St., 863-5545) and then take in a performance of the Opera or Symphony or Ballet, whichever is in town. My final destination would be a nightcap at **Lime** (2247 Market St., 621-5256), a very trendy hotspot.

—Kristine M. Carber