



Although it's D.C. Fashion Week, the largest and most buzzed about fashion event this week was the completely unaffiliated District Sample Sale. The sale brought together dozens of stores and restaurants for a shopping extravaganza with hundreds of stylish young ladies at the Sphinx Club. Shoppers bought general admission and VIP tickets, with proceeds benefiting N Street Village.



A bar stocked with Skinnygirl wines and specialty cocktails was the first thing shoppers saw upon entering the space. After grabbing a glass, it was time to embark on a ballroom full of \$20 blouses and \$50 cocktail dresses. Though there were three levels and multiple rooms of clothes and food to explore, it was almost not enough room. The diving and browsing for great deals on racks essentially became a sport once the doors opened at 6:30 for general admission ticket holders (VIPs were allowed in to the event one hour early).

"I have elbows," one shopper joked.



[Shopper Brittany Prime tries on a fur coat]

Sassanova co-owner Sassy Jacobs watched as \$40 Badgley Mischka heels and \$30 Pour la Victoire flats disappeared from her shop's stand. "It's as maddening as ever, especially when the gates opened at 6:30. I wasn't sure about the space but I think it'll be a good evening." Though she is **in the process of closing the Georgetown site**--"a relief" she said--she hinted that they may open several new locations next year.

"We founded the sale in 2006 with two goals in mind. First, to help the local boutiques in the area to liquidate their end-of-season wares. When you're a small retailer, you're left with few options at the end of each season," said DSS co-founder Barbara Martin. "Our second goal was to help local charities: there are a lot of amazing yet under-the-radar causes here that need help, both financially and with exposure, both of which we have been able to provide."

Young Washington socialites, grad students, government employees and other well-dressed ladies quickly thumbed through the racks of clothes and tables of discounted baubles over the course of the evening.

"It's extremely well attended," said Sherman Pickey owner Ethan Drath, who spent most of the night behind his table of neatly folded button-down shirts. "They obviously tapped into the right network."

In another corner, a display of thousands of beaded necklaces, earrings, and bracelets from Queen Bee Designs' Allison Priebe Brooks. "It's new vibe, and it's easy to navigate," she said.

Brooks is a veteran of the sale, having attended almost all of them. "There are a lot of new people I have never seen before. It's always a great way to kick off fall and get new customers."



Upstairs, shoppers rebooted their energy with pumpkin spice soup from Del Frisco's Grille, shrimp salad burgers from P.J. Clarke's, mushroom gnocchi from Teddy & The Bully Bar, cupcakes from Georgetown Cupcakes and others. Hunky Olympic rower-turned-foodie Giuseppe Lanzone was on hand to disperse samples from his Peruvian Brothers food truck.

VIPs grabbed their swag bags on their way out the door. A black District Sample Sale umbrella, gourmet snacks, a hardback Martha Stewart journal, and gift cards to Shobha--the new waxing salon near Farragut square--were among the goodies inside.

The sale happens once, sometimes twice a year. **Stay connected to the sale via Facebook** so you don't miss the next one!