

# GARAGE SALES

## Looking For Designer Labels

Pawing through piles of clothing and accessories at garage and estate sales for designer labels can be like looking for a needle in a haystack or, more aptly, a diamond in the rough. Keep reading for tips on how to spot designer labels in the wild and how to know if those labels are real or a fake.

### SPOTTING VINTAGE LABELS

Brands come and go, and you may be faced with a label you've never seen before. Is that a real vintage gem or a knockoff someone found on a Facebook seller site? Here are some clues you may have the real thing:

- A union label. Look for a union tag sewn immediately behind or next to the designer label on a garment. The union tag may feature a scalloped circle with a threaded needle diagonally behind it and the letters ILGWU — International Ladies Garment Workers Union — crossed



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with the AFL-CIO. These labels can come in a variety of colors, so don't be surprised to find red, black, blue and green labels on white tags. Clothing with union tags is almost certainly made before the 1980s and can be

reliably tagged as real vintage.

- A brand of a different font. Remember that brands not only change names, but appearances. Look online to see if the label you've spotted is a knock off or just one from

a bygone era.

- "Made in the USA" tags or tags bearing a geographic location. When clothing production went offshore, a countermovement started to only wear clothing made in the United States. Look for

tags that proclaim "Made in the USA" or are tagged with a city and state of production. These are far less common nowadays and to find them means you probably have a genuine vintage item.

### PICKING OUT THE FAKES

The most important thing while you're looking for designer items is to be realistic. Yes, every once in a great while, someone who has a Hermes bag really doesn't know what it is and sells it for \$10. But that's exceedingly rare and, if you find one at the local garage sale, it's probably a fake.

To spot a fake, check with the brand's website and look where they place their logos. Also check the stitching; knock-offs tend to be poorly made and the stitching will be uneven or even loose. Labels will be stamped onto the letter instead of embossed or missing entirely.

For designer clothing, look for a similar drop in the quality of the stitching. Some designer brands only use certain colors of thread; look into what kinds of thread your favorite designers use to see if you're looking at the real thing or not. Other brands have VIP clubs where you can register your product with the serial number, Investopedia says, ensuring that the product you're buying is real.



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### SELLER'S TIP

#### Examine Labels

If you're cleaning out the estate of your dear clotheshorse of an aunt, pay special attention to the labels on her clothing and accessories. Check online if you find something you think is special and, if it is, sell it at a consignment store that specializes in luxury items rather than at the estate or garage sale.

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