

The Urge to Splurge: A Social History of Shopping

By Laura Paquet, Laura Byrne Paquet

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People used to haggle in crowded outdoor bazaars. Now we buy collectibles on eBay. Tracing the evolution of shopping from marketplaces to malls, mail order to the Internet, The Urge to Splurge is a chatty, intriguing look at the history and the psychology of one of humankind’s oldest pursuits. With examples from literature and other sources, The Urge to Splurge explores the variety of reasons (and excuses) that have driven the impulse to buy throughout the ages. It uncovers how fashionistas have fought to obtain the most fashionable hemlines and trendiest hats for more than 2000 years, and discusses the age-old phenomenon of compulsive shoppers who shop beyond their means. The Urge to Splurge also looks at the long history of our conflicted attitudes about shopping. Shopping, it seems, has never mixed well with our higher ideals. It has mixed with just about everything else, though. For instance: tourism. These days, every museum has a gift store and every cruise ship offers shopping seminars. But people have been carting home souvenirs from foreign lands since long before Hannibal crossed the Alps. As one bumper sticker puts it: "Veni, vidi, VISA: I came, I saw, I shopped." The drive to spend has been with us ever since we’ve lived in villages and minted coins. The goods may be different now, but has the urge to splurge changed?

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The Urge to Splurge: A Social History of Shopping By Laura Paquet, Laura Byrne Paquet Bibliography

- Rank: #3682510 in Books
- Brand: Brand: ECW Press
- Published on: 2003-10-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.98" h x .80" w x 6.01" l, 1.00 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 256 pages

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Laura Byrne Paquet is a travel journalist. She is the author of *Secret Ottawa*, *Miss Scott Meets Her Match*, and *Lord Langdon's Tutor*. She lives in Ottawa, Ontario.

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Cary Burgess:

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