



What I bought this week

New year, new patterned knit

Things that are tempting to write about but probably best avoided in an early January column, given that they will have been done to death: a New You for the New Year (yawn); resolutions (yawn); style tips for 2011 (yawn); tactful ways of asking if your aunt has a receipt for that waistcoat (yawn); being broke (depressing). Which leaves – well, not a great deal. Socks? No. Jumpers? Perhaps. The Sales? Might have to be. Jumpers in the sales? Yes.

The trap that I fall into every year without fail is the trap labelled “50% off”. Half-price! If it’s half-price, it doesn’t matter that I don’t really like the garment. Or that it doesn’t fit. Because I’m saving lots of money. This logic is so obviously flawed, but my mind still adheres to it unquestioningly. This year I’ll do the same. There’s no point fighting it. Sometimes I’ll get such a bargain (the holy grail – 70% off!) that I genuinely feel that I am beating the capitalist system. Sticking it to the man.

On to jumpers then. There is a stigma that surrounds “festive” jumpers – they’re often associated with liver spots, slacks and snoring. But I am a staunch supporter of the patterned knit. Teamed with the right jeans and footwear, it can be a big look. For those who didn’t receive any for Christmas or aren’t convinced by what they did get, now is the time to buy a snazzy bit of knitwear. You’ll still be able to squeeze a good two or three months’ wear out of them and won’t pay full price. And you know how I feel about that.

Fair Isle is a safe starting point – my favourite is by YMC – although I recently wore it at work and my



On my shopping list: (clockwise from top left) **Fair Isle knit** £125, YMC (youmustcreate.com) **Vintage knit** £110, Lyle & Scott (lyleandscott.com) **Fair Isle knit** £200, Lacoste (lacoste.com) **Burgundy American college baseball jacket** £119, Asos (asos.com) **Destroyer varsity jacket** £250, Nike (nikesportswear.com)

colleague Alex was wearing the exact same. How people laughed. I’ve made him promise he will never wear it again. Lacoste has a nice brown one, while Topman has cheaper alternatives. There are a lot of options.

Something else I’ll be hunting down in the sales is a collegiate-style jacket. I have to approach these with caution. This is because I have an American face – the face of a jock. To be clear, this is not a good thing. One group of friends routinely call me “American” and will chant “USA! USA!” when I enter a room. Another group of friends, independently, call me “Chad”*. So while I want one of these varsity jackets, I do run the risk of constantly getting approached by tour guides, or ripped off, or both. *I should confess, another friend insists that I look German and calls me “Germanric”. Clever. Luckily, I am not a fan of lederhosen.

RICK’S STYLE CLINIC

I cycle to work but am struggling to find a bike-suitable bag smart enough to take to meetings. Does such a thing exist? **TIM O’GRADY, CO LIMERICK**

Yes. Messenger bags, which should be the solution, don’t work for me when I’m on my bike – they just slip off my back and start hitting my knee. But I’m sure they work for some people (messengers, for example). So after a long search, via Mulberry and Ally Capellino and Jas MB (all of whom have some lovely but expensive bags), I finally settled on British firm Chapman. Specifically, their Border Rucksack (right, £135, chapmanbags.com). It’s beautifully made, practical and looks the part. Your boss will want one. ■



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