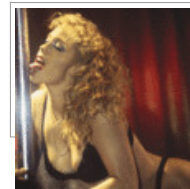


Client Server



Wear For Art Thou, Outfit?

Every Wednesday on *Austinist* we feature one of our multitude of ridiculously talented writers, writing written things for your eyes to consume. The opinions expressed by the writer are strictly their own, and are not necessarily shared by the 1st Network or any of its affiliates. For this week, meet: [Anna Hanks](#). Enjoy! -- Columnist Editor

Have you ever been out at a club or a show and wondered why many of the otherwise adorable fat girls were wearing such wretched outfits? No, it's not because larger gals with cute haircuts, darkly vampy nails and trendy shoes hate themselves. It's because most clothing in larger sizes tends towards cheaply made, painfully dowdy, and unspeakably unattractive. How limited are the choices? Even though I'm vegetarian, I once bought myself a stunning black leather skirt, simply because I found it in my size.

Okay, maybe I'm bitter about this issue because I have a perfect figure, circa 1908. Steam-era siren [Lillian Russell](#) had nothing on me. I have the kind of lushness that makes otherwise respectable old men follow me around. Your grandpa thinks I'm hot. I've had to stop more than one octogenarian from carrying my luggage—mostly because I was worried about giving them the wrong sort of palpations.

This rapt attention from the older set makes it clear that I'm a pin-up girl; I'm just a pin-up girl from a pre-Twiggy era. And this pin-up is totally pissed that she can't find anything truly fetching to wear. Even though it's often been reported that the "average" American woman is something like a size 14.



Photo of Lillian Russell courtesy of Judgement of Paris, by way of Wikipedia

That's why I was initially so pleased when I read in **The Austin Chronicle's** [After A Fashion](#) that [Torrid](#) will be opening at Lakeline Mall on Thursday, February 28. Torrid is sort of like Lane Bryant for the Converse-clad cutie, selling things like Hello Kitty T-shirts in a 3X. Torrid is owned by [Hot Topic](#), the mall retailer of fine anti-establishment gear, like [Vans Iron Maiden High Tops](#).

But the more I thought about it, the more troubled I became about the fact that I had initially been so excited about a store opening. After all, as brilliant philosopher [MC Lars](#) reminds us, "Hot Topic is Not Punk Rock." Well, obviously. Their stock ticker symbol is HOTT, and, at press time, shares closed at 5.49 on a volume of 374,368.

While I'm certainly happy [Torrid](#) is coming--you know, in case I need one of their prom dresses-- I want more than they are offering me. I deserve more than mass-market mall clothing that's part of a nationwide sales campaign.

I spend very little of my time or money in corporate America, preferring to shop mostly at independent merchants. I also try to only buy things made in countries where it wouldn't be horrible to be a worker, like, say, France or Sweden. This means not only going to independent merchants like [Toy Joy](#), or [Karavel Shoes](#) but looking at where the things they sell are made. It's actually kinda exhausting. It's the kind of retail therapy that might send you into therapy.

While I'll certainly be shopping at [Torrid](#), it isn't what I'm looking for in a long-term retail relationship. I want a mythical shop where I can go and cover my vintage pin-up girl derriere with style and panache, hopefully in locally made things. While I love [Parts and Labour](#) on South Congress, it isn't often that they stock something in my size. If I had the skill set, I'd sew something groovy for myself—just like [Rob Sheffield](#) talks about his late wife Renée doing in the awesome book *Love is a Mix Tape*. (Sheffield details how Renée started sewing mod mini-dresses for herself when she was unable to find fashions to fit her fuller figure in the stores of Charlottesville, VA.)

So while lots of naysayers complain about Austin getting bigger, I think it's fab that you now can find things in Austin that you couldn't find before. I'm just totally ready for someone to open a shop where I can get some hip locally made clothing for my vintage pin-up self. After all, being eye-candy for the seriously senior set is my way of giving back to the world, one eyeball at a time.

Contact the author of this article or email tips@austinist.com with further questions, comments or tips.



Photo of Iron Maiden Vans courtesy of [Hott Topic website](#)

By [annainAustin](#) in [Other](#) on February 27, 2008 1:00 PM [3 Comments](#) [14 Likes](#)

[ANNA HANKS](#) [ANNA HANKS](#) [AUSTINIST](#) [COLUMNIST](#) [EVERY WEDNESDAY](#) [FASHION](#) [HOT TOPIC](#) [LILLIAN RUSSELL](#) [PARIS](#) [PIN-UP GIRL](#)
[THIS WEEK](#) [TORRID](#) [WEDNESDAY](#)

EMAIL THIS ENTRY

To: From:
Message (not required):

SHARE THIS ENTRY

OTHER INTERESTING STORIES



[ACL Live Launches New Site, Announces Austin-Friendly Lineup](#)
[Austinist](#)



[Why We Don't Like You: Wyoming Cowboys](#)
[Austinist](#)



[Paid Distribution: Steve Martin Would 'Rather Have Died Onstage' Than Taken 'Predictable Questions'](#)
[Vulture](#)



[Food: We All Scream For The Austin Ice Cream Festival](#)
[Austinist](#)



[Facebook Sues Austin's Lamebook for Trademark Infringement](#)
[Austinist](#)

[?]

SHOWING 3 COMMENTS

Sort by [Subscribe by email](#) [Subscribe by RSS](#)



Laura Hensley 2 years ago

From one "average sized" woman to another, Torrid is open at Barton Creek Square Mall now.

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



misssteak 2 years ago

Torrid blows, as does Lane Bryant. What would be nice is for a designer/company to realize that women over size 12 do not necessarily like to be draped in cheap, shitty polyester loud prints or crappy hot topic clothing. Boutique wear for fatties? Yes please! (Like [Leelees](#) in NYC)

I'm on the high end (size wise) of designer clothing (14-16) -- but I still try to work it. I tend to get lots of things at Nordstroms (they've got a new line that goes up to XL), Anthropologie (16 and XL), GAP (up to 20), H&M (XL), and Macys.

If you haven't discovered [Fatshionista](#) yet, I'm sorry to just be telling you about it now. -- they have excellent reviews on almost all the plus sized fashion around plus lots of folks talking about fashion for the size 14+ set.

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



Laura Hensley 2 years ago

I actually haven't set foot in Torrid yet. I just peer in and see giant tube tops teetering on small hangers and that frightens me away.

I'm sort of an inbetweener, usually a size 12 will do. But tops are all over the place. Sometimes L are just fine other times XL is the only option. Large chest, smaller waist sounds great but its actually a sizing nightmare.

[Like](#) [Reply](#)

Real-time updating is **enabled**. ([Pause](#))

ADD NEW COMMENT

Required: Please login below to comment.



Type your comment here.

Post as ...

[blog comments powered by DISQUS](#)