

"My biggest discovery of the last two and a half years? I'm a size 11 shoe, not a size 10. Changed my life!" So any too-tight shoes? Bye-bye.



# "ARE YOU SURE WE HAVE TO THROW THIS OUT?"

We've all got closet issues—even Oprah. It could be impulse buying. Or a weakness for the pretty but impractical. Or the firm belief that someday—someday!—that jacket from 1993 will be in style again. With the help of O's creative director, Adam Glassman, Oprah says farewell to dozens of old favorites (all being auctioned off soon on eBay to benefit the Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy for Girls in South Africa).  
*By Crystal G. Martin*

**O**PRAH IS FANNING HER face. "I'm having *anx-i-e-ty*," she says, singing that last word so it hangs in the air for a few seconds. She's looking over the dozens of shoes and three racks of clothes that O's creative director, Adam Glassman, has pulled aside and put into the "potential giveaway" pile in her Chicago closet—all deemed inessential because of poor fit, outdated style, or some other imperfection.

"Let's just start with the shoes—they're the easiest," Oprah says. "And I can see that this closet cleanout is going to give me a headache." She spies a pair of chunky-heeled, green suede oxford shoes. "Forget about them! I got those when I used to wear pants." Gone.

Adam holds up a pair of ivory lace knee-

high boots. Oprah quickly comes to their defense. "Those I can't get rid of! They're beautiful. They're like sculpture!"

"Will you ever wear them again?" Adam asks.

"I never wore them ever, but I still can't get rid of them. They're closet jewelry. They make a closet look good." Onto the keeper pile they go.

Ditto a pair of silver lamé Gianfranco Ferré mules with rhinestones (Oprah calls them "amazing"), a beaded Ralph Lauren skirt ("Why would we get rid of *that*?"), a shimmering Calvin Klein top ("I can wear it with jeans and a blazer or dress it up all fancy-dancy").

Next in Adam's sights: a peach chiffon skirt having a froufrou moment among Oprah's unfussy everyday clothes. "When would you ever wear this?" he asks. "I'm going to wear this in the spring, when everything is lovely and gay," Oprah replies. Adam stops mid-organizing to consider that idea. "When you shop, sometimes you have an idealized version of yourself in mind, don't you?" he asks. "Yes. I'm picturing myself in a bonnet in the spring," she says. "Or at a lunchtime garden party." The skirt stays.

Adam pulls out a gold jacket by Ferré, one of Oprah's favorite designers. "I wore that to Quincy Jones's 71st birthday party," she says. "I just walked into the store and picked it up." Adam thinks it still looks stylish. "You could actually wear this

jacket now," he says.

"Oh my God, I'm shocked you want to keep something!" Oprah says, laughing. "There was a time when I had to budget for clothes, and I still do so subconsciously. Early in my career, when I was an anchorwoman, I had a beige suit, a navy suit, and a black suit. Period. And I would just interchange them. Even now, wasting money on clothes makes me crazy."

Adam gets it; he really does. "It's difficult for anyone to toss something they've spent their hard-earned money on," he says. "My suggestion: Some things are classic, and you can keep those. But anything that's trendy? Let it go."

Oprah acquiesces, particularly after Adam suggests that the donated items be auctioned off on eBay. "The money should go to OWLA," Oprah says, referring to the leadership academy she opened for South African girls in 2007. "That sale would make all of this worth it."

With that settled, the process suddenly becomes easier. Flipping through one long rack of everyday dresses, Oprah pronounces: "These are all fine to get rid of." Next up: handbags. Oprah likes them spacious and sturdy, like the roomy tote she carries back and forth to her office. So she has no trouble saying goodbye to a number of tiny leather and crocodile bags acquired during her self-described "ladies who lunch phase." Then she spots a small beige clutch with a gold chain strap. "It's fantastic." She slings it over her arm, walks a few paces—and changes her mind. "It's just so not me." Off to eBay it goes.

By day's end, Oprah has put more than

150 items on the auction list (see page 150 for a sampling), designated a few untouchables (turn the page for her five favorite outfits), and even developed a new perspective on her own style: These days comfortable classics win out over straight-off-the runway looks. "In the past, I've gotten talked into a lot of trends," she says. "But I don't have to be on anyone's best-dressed list. I'm really just trying to become more of myself." **Q**

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# “Wasn’t this just the perfect dress?”

A few items will remain in Oprah’s closet forever. Here are five of her all-time favorite, never-letting-them-go outfits, and the stories behind them.



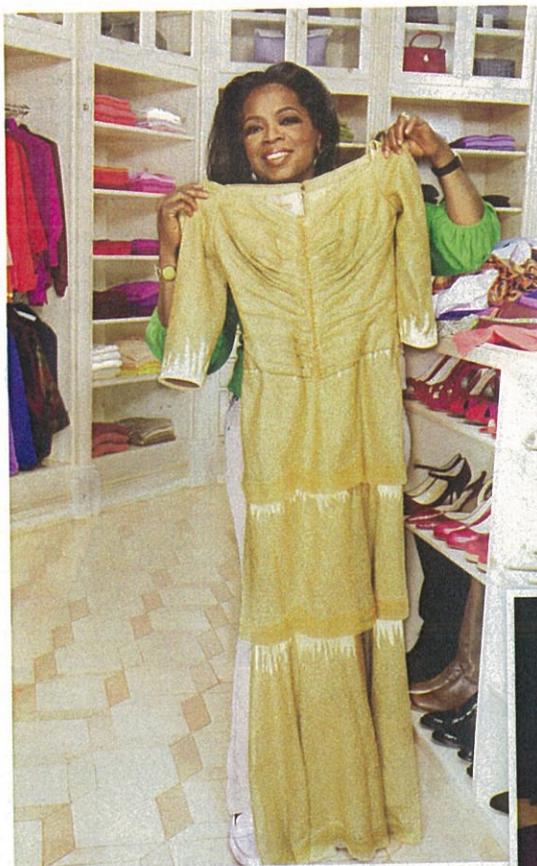
“When I announced the end of my show, I wanted my dress to be classic. Gayle said, ‘Don’t you want to wear something with color?’ I thought, *Absolutely not. I don’t want people looking at the color of the dress. I don’t want this dress to wear me.*”



“I wore this the first time Michael Jordan was on the show. And I wore it in Texas when Patrick Swayze came on [below]. But I don’t wear fur anymore—ever. I’d have to take the fur cuffs off to wear it again.”



“I wore this to the 1994 Emmy Awards. I’ve never looked or felt better. I was fit and strong both inside and out. For a long time, I wanted to be buried in this, but now I’m thinking about being cremated, and I don’t want to waste the gorgeous fabric.”



“This is Vera Wang couture from the 2005 Oscars, when Jamie Foxx won for *Ray*. This was one of my prettiest days—and I knew it. As I hit the red carpet, my earring dropped. There are all these shots of me with my hand behind my ear. But I was just catching my earring.”



“I chose a jumpsuit to sing with Tina Turner in 1997. I didn’t want to show my legs. You cannot have your legs being compared with Tina Turner’s! My knees were knocking as I walked down the stairs to the stage. I thought, *It’s true. People’s knees really do knock.*”



## Attention, Shoppers!

Oprah knows—these three habits are the quickest way to clog your closet.

### 1 BUILD A WARDROBE BASED ON FANTASY

**OPRAH:** “I bought a lot of little bags when I thought I was going to be a ‘lady who lunches.’ I’ve never been one, but I’ve always liked the idea and longed for that life. There’s something about dressing up and being ladies—it’s like playing house.”

**ADAM SAYS:** “Fashion can help you create an image, but be honest about your lifestyle. Do you really need yachting clothes when you never set foot on a boat? When buying an item, if you can answer ‘Where am I going in this?’ with at least four legitimate places, you have my blessing.”

wrong with having a go-to brand or ensemble. But if you’re buying multiples of things, ask yourself: *How many black pants or little gray sweaters do I really need?* Invest in a few high-quality pieces; better craftsmanship and fabrics always last longer.”



### 3 SHOP FOR THE BEAUTIFUL BUT IMPRACTICAL

**OPRAH:** “I was at Bergdorf Goodman one day, coming up the escalator. And these boots said, ‘Helloooo, Oprahaaaah.’ But did I wear them once? No. I bought them because they were beautiful—because I wanted to look at them.”

**ADAM SAYS:** “I call this trophy shopping. Before you buy, take stock of your closet: What are you missing? Shop for those pieces before impractical items. As for ‘closet jewelry’? Hang a few gorgeous items on your closet door, just to make yourself smile.”



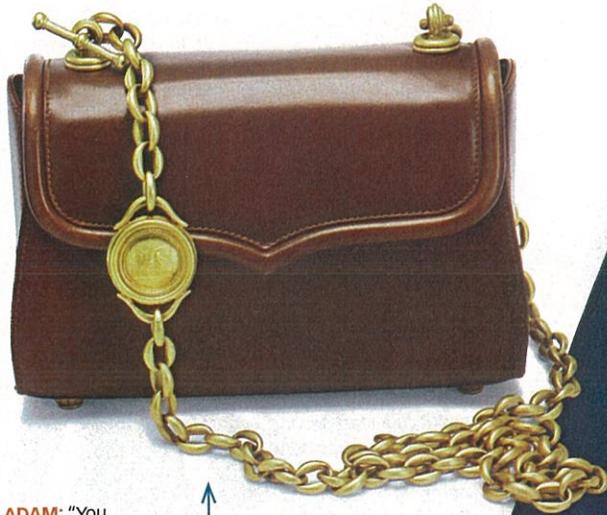
### 2 BUY YOUR FAVORITES OVER AND OVER AND OVER

**OPRAH:** “This suit, I don’t know why I have it. I’ve never even worn it. But when my favorite designer, Gianfranco Ferré, was alive, I never went to Los Angeles or New York without going to his store.”

**ADAM SAYS:** “There is absolutely nothing

# What's Going, Going, Gone...

And the result of the Great Closet Cleanout? Oprah chose more than 150 items to auction on eBay. The sale, which will benefit her Leadership Academy for Girls, features everything from evening glam to a comfy walking shoe. Here's a sneak preview.



**ADAM:** "You can always wear a classic cream trouser and jacket as separates—but please, remove the huge '80s shoulder pads."

**ADAM:** In the '80s and '90s, everyone either owned or coveted Barry Kieselstein-Cord! With a simple suit or sheath dress, it will complete your outfit."



**OPRAH:** "This little wearable art number was definitely a gift."

**ADAM:** "Oprah is fortunate enough to get a lot of gifts and hates to part with them. But in reality, I'm not sure where she can ever wear these booties."

**OPRAH:** "The Chicago delegation for the 2016 Olympics all wore the same jacket to Copenhagen. I would have kept this if Chicago had won, but it's a reminder we didn't."



**OPRAH:** "These are from a time when I was doing a menswear look—wearing a lot of pants or something. They're very '90s."

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: MARKO METZINGER/STUDIO D (5); STYLIST: GENEVIEVE YRAOLA. BEN GOULIST/STUDIO D (4); STYLIST: GENEVIEVE YRAOLA. TOP LEFT: MARKO METZINGER/STUDIO D (3); STYLIST: GENEVIEVE YRAOLA. OPPOSITE PAGE: CLOTHES FROM: KRISTY VANT FOR MARK EDWARD INC. OPPOSITE PAGE: CLOTHES FROM: KRISTY VANT FOR MARK EDWARD INC. OPPOSITE PAGE: CLOTHES FROM: KRISTY VANT FOR MARK EDWARD INC.

**ADAM:** "Great bag! Just not Oprah's style, and it's too small for her frame. But it's still chic."



**OPRAH:** "Gayle calls these my Aunt Ethel shoes, and they do look like that. It's the heel!"



**ADAM:** "Who didn't own a stretch boot in the early to mid-'90s? Comfortable? Yes! A little outdated? Certainly. But it will still look good if worn with trousers."



**OPRAH:** "I did love these boots. I wore them one time, and they killed my feet. And that was the end of that."



**OPRAH:** "These are my Ralph Lauren cashmere bucks. They just make me happy—they're supercomfy. I've had them about nine years. I think I have two more pairs at home."

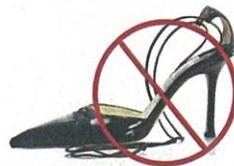


## Oprah's Style Revelations

The rules she's learned, plus a few mistakes she's made along the way.

**1 NO SUITS, PERIOD** "I wore them for ten years straight, but now it always feels like too much—like I'm wearing a man's clothes. I'd rather wear a lovely cashmere top or sweater instead."

barely walk two feet in them, and straps make your ankles look fatter."



**2 KEEP IT CLASSIC, NOT TRENDY** "I used to like more trendy style. In the '80s, I couldn't get an earring big enough. There are pictures of me where my earrings look like napkin rings. It took a lot for me to say, I'm going to stay in my own lane of classic style."

**5 WARM SHADES WORK BEST** "People always want me to wear purple. But gold-infused colors look best on my skin tone: browny golds, burnt oranges, and golden yellows."



**3 SCOOPNECKS AND V-NECKS ARE THE MOST FLATTERING** "About two years ago I got rid of all my crewnecks—they box me in. It's really important to know what shapes work for you."

**6 STURDY EVERYDAY BAGS ARE A MUST** "When I leave work, I'm carrying books for the show or folders for business, so my bag also has to serve as a briefcase. It can't have delicate little straps. I'd ruin it because I carry too much stuff."



**7 COMFORT IS KING** "Pajamas are my favorite look, so I'm always doing a variation of that. My favorite thing on Earth is my Donna Karan cashmere onesie from 15 years ago. That's why I like jumpsuits—they're like wearing pajamas."

**4 AVOID POINTY-TOED OR ANKLE-STRAPPED SHOES** "I had a lot of these at one time, but I have a new shoe philosophy. Pointy toes are too uncomfortable. I can



## How to make a bid on eBay

To find out more about O's eBay auction, which runs from March 1 to March 11, visit [oprah.com/oprahauction](http://oprah.com/oprahauction). All the money raised goes to Oprah's Leadership Academy for Girls in South Africa. Opened in 2007 with 150 low-income seventh- and eighth-graders, the school now enrolls approximately 300. The first senior graduation will be in 2011 (and Oprah already has her outfit picked out).