

DISTRICTS FOR DESIGNERS



Not all major New York City shopping districts are in New York City. One of the largest – and most successful – areas for fashionistas from around the world looking for a bargain is literally just an hour or so away at Woodbury Common Premium Outlets.

VISIT THE COMMON

Some people go to the Catskills to ski, snowboard and enjoy mountain air. The savvy shopper, on the other hand, heads straight to exit 16 on the New York State Thruway to Central Valley, NY, to find 800,000 square feet of the world's greatest designers.

Woodbury Common Premium Outlets was opened in late 1985 and has since been expanded twice to some 220 stores, forming one of the largest outlet centers in the world – and certainly one of the most upscale.

Because of its location, close to New York City, Bear Mountain and West Point, the center has been market-

ed extensively to visitors both in the United States and overseas, particularly Japan. Shuttle buses run daily from New York City's Port Authority Bus Terminal for car-less locals, and it's not unheard of for Japanese tourists to literally disembark from their international flight, board a bus and head straight to Woodbury Common Premium Outlets! (The staff speaks a number of languages, including Japanese, Spanish and Portuguese.) A recent holiday visit found the teeming with foreign tourists and locals looking at major sales. Discounts range from 25% to 90% if you're lucky.

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SHOP THE COMMON

You name the designer, he or she likely is here. Among the designers to be found are: Burberry, Coach, Chanel, Chloe, Dolce & Gabbana, Fendi, Giorgio Armani, Gucci, Jimmy Choo, Lacoste, Polo Ralph Lauren, Prada, Salvatore Ferragamo, St. John Knits, Tod's, and Tory Burch. Mid-price point apparel shoppers can find Chico's, French Connection, J.Crew and The Gap. Those looking beyond apparel can find David Yurman, Judith Ripka, Judith Leiber, Solstice, and Coach (such a magnet for international tourists that shoppers often must wait in line to enter), and plenty more shoes, bags and luggage. Houseware shoppers can find Frette and Pratesi linens, Le Creuset and Williams-Sonoma, among others. Barneys, Nike, Neiman Marcus Last Call and Saks Fifth Avenue Off 5th serve as "anchors."

More recent additions include Brunello Cucinelli and a brand-new second unit for Michael Kors Collection. So there's a lot to be found.

Because of the center's size, it has been divided into color-coded districts to help shoppers get around, and like tenants have been grouped together to some degree. Even

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so, some tips: be prepared to get a little lost, or to give directions to the occasional first-time visitor. Plan your day to make sure you get to your favorite stores in time. And remember that the designer stores, in particular, are true outlets – not all sizes will be available, particularly during an event sale. Still, it's worth the hunt!

DINING AT THE COMMON

While dining is not a primary focus for any outlet center, Woodbury Common Premium Outlets does have some choices for those needing a break and some



sustenance to continue shopping. Applebee's serves the family crowd, and a traditional food court includes McDonald's, Haagen Dazs and Desert Moon Fresh Mexican Grill, among others. Be prepared to wait and jostle, but you will be fed. Noshes can be found around the center from Carvel and Starbucks.

For a more quiet meal in finer surroundings, Positano Grill offers traditional Italian cuisine, a full bar and a lovely setting.

STAY AT (OR NEAR) THE COMMON

Woodbury Common Premium Outlets' Catskills location can provide the visitor with a number of choices of accommodation types. Simon Property Group, the center's owner, has created a number of "Shop & Stay" packages with both New York City hotels (ranging in price and type from Hampton Inns to the Waldorf Astoria) to local bed & breakfasts such as The Cromwell Manor in Cornwall, NY, or the Caren House. The center's web site (www.premiumoutlets.com/outlets/outlet.asp?id=7) has a current listing.

Any outlet shopping can be unpredictable – some days will produce exceptional discounts on the right sizes on the right items, other days a shopper may not have much luck. But for a day outside the city, while looking for some potentially amazing bargains, the New York metro area, as always, has the best – at Woodbury Common Premium Outlets. Happy Shopping! ■