



# Cheap Chic: Hundreds of Money-Saving Hints to Create Your Own Great Look

*Catherine Milinaire , Carol Troy , Tim Gunn (Foreword)*

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**“I think it’s terrific.” –Diane von Furstenberg, of the original edition of *Cheap Chic***

**Beloved by designers and style mavens alike, the LBD of fashion guides—with a new foreword by Tim Gunn—is back and more in fashion than ever.**

Before there were street-style blogs and ‘zines, there was *Cheap Chic*. Selling hundreds of thousands of copies when it was originally published in 1975, this classic guide revealed how to find the clothes that will make you feel comfortable, confident, sexy, and happy, whether they come from a high-end boutique, sporting-goods store, or thrift shop.

Astonishingly relevant forty years later, *Cheap Chic* provides timeless practical advice for creating an affordable, personal wardrobe strategy: what to buy, where to buy it, and how to put it all together to make your own distinctive fashion statement without going broke. Alongside outfit ideas, shopping guides, and other practical tips are the original vintage photographs and advice from fashion icons such as Diana Vreeland and Yves Saint Laurent. Inspiring decades of fashion lovers and designers, *Cheap Chic* is the original fashion bible that proves you don’t have to be wealthy to be stylish.

## Cheap Chic: Hundreds of Money-Saving Hints to Create Your Own Great Look Details

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Author : Catherine Milinaire , Carol Troy , Tim Gunn (Foreword)

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# From Reader Review Cheap Chic: Hundreds of Money-Saving Hints to Create Your Own Great Look for online ebook

## Nalora says

I was never a fashion plate in the 1970's but this book was instrumental in defining my individual style. It is dog-eared, roughed up and beloved for its practical and cheap suggestions at getting the most bang for your buck and resisting conformity that permeated and still permeates the fashion industry.

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## Phyllis says

I was really excited to see Cheap Chic was being reprinted, because it's a really cool book with an overall amazing philosophy of style as personal expression (this is the heart of a lot of style books now, but in the 70s it was a relatively new idea to wear what you like and ignore trends) and more selfishly because I was always afraid to touch my original copy because it was like the Gutenberg Bible of fashion to me. The new introduction by Tim Gunn articulates what I love so much about this book in a much more witty, introspective way than I ever could, but of course he can, because he's Tim Gunn.

I hate to be that person, but I'm totally going to be that person: the picture quality isn't that great compared to the original edition. It kind of looks like photocopies, which makes me wonder if the original galleys got trashed since fashion is so ephemeral. There's some aspects of this book that haven't aged well--the shameless poaching of ethnic clothing as part of an overall wacky bohemian look would be seen as cultural appropriation now, and there's a picture of a completely full frontal naked toddler that in our To Catch a Predator times will make people shriek in horror (I'm actually really stupefied that they left the kid in there, or didn't give her digital underoos or something). There's also this weird recurring theme where a woman they profile for having great personal style openly admits totally biting the style of black and Latina women--so why not just interview the black and Latina women these white ladies were biting the style of in the first place? Also, because it was the 70s, the overall body image statement is "love yourself, but you can probably lose some weight." These issues aside, this book is still a major landmark in fashion history and it inspires me every time I reread it.

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## Jaina Rose says

This review is also available on my blog, Read Till Dawn.

Yikes, I am so not the target audience for this book. I have no idea what I was thinking when I requested it, except that I've been thinking about sprucing up my wardrobe lately and the idea of buying "cheap" and "chic" clothes sounded really appealing. Plus, this book came out when my mother was very young - my older aunts were even old enough to be putting together their own wardrobes in the 70's - so it's kind of cool to see what was fashionable back then.

But therein lies the problem I have with Cheap Chic: it's meant for girls old enough to be my mother's age. And while it's pretty cool to see all those original pictures of people wearing various outfits, there's really just about nothing I can pull out for modifying my 21st-century wardrobe. And all of the nitty gritty - about

mail-order boots (oh, the novelty!), wrap-around clothes (did people seriously walk around in clothes held on just by knots?), finding cute original 30's pieces in thrift shops (I wish!), and so many fur coats (I think the animal lover in me just died) - kind of did me in. On one hand it's cool; on another, it's just really, really long and detailed, in a way that is boring in its uselessness. I can't blame the authors, of course, because I can tell that their advice would have been much more helpful when Cheap Chic was actually modern, but I can question the purpose for republishing such an old and obviously out-dated book forty years after it originally came out.

Actually, I can question myself for reading it. I mean, I know some people are really into this sort of stuff. I bet this book will be just what some people were dying to read, in all its out-dated, sometimes hilariously-out-of-touch glory. But I am not one of those people, and I lost interest once I realized that every single page was just more of the same micro-analyzing of different outfits and how they were put together. It's like, "here's a picture of some random person! Let's look at every single piece of her outfit, say where it came from, and then analyze how you can use her tactics for making your own outfit." That sounds great, doesn't it? Not when you read that exact same thing like three hundred times. And not when every single woman looks like she just jumped out of some old movie that you've never even seen, let alone want to emulate.

The other problem I had with Cheap Chic is more an issue of morals: it flirts a little too often with the idea that the reader sometimes wants to dress - well, to flirt. The word "sexy" is used many times throughout, and the word "erotic" a few too many times than I would like. There's nothing very explicit, but that also didn't help with the whole "building my outfit" thing. Also, two or three of the pictures were very inappropriate for no apparent reason other than "fashion." I don't find it fashionable to walk around with a bare chest; I also don't want to see a picture of a woman wearing nothing from the waist up. Other readers back then must have had different taste than mine, however, because there are a couple of nude-top pictures scattered throughout the book. All I have to say to that is: why?

Honestly, I only recommend this book if it looks like something you'd like. You know who you are, antique fashion fans. If you've read this review all the way through, you've got a pretty good idea of what the book is like and whether or not you'll like it. If it's up your alley, by all means give it a try - but if you're not sure, then I suggest giving this one a pass.

Disclaimer: I received a complimentary copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

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## **Autumn says**

Quirky look into a vanished fashion world where there were only three kinds of jeans (Levis, Lee and Wrangler) and you had to make an effort to buy a non-printed t shirt. The basic tenets of the next 10-15 years of fashion are laid out here. Unfortunately, most of the advice here is dated either because the suppliers no longer exist or the ideas have worn thin after 30 years. A fun read, but not worth top \$\$\$ on Ebay.

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## **lee says**

This was a constant reference for me in the 70's. It's a classic.

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## **Monica Kelly says**

The principles that made many famous fashionista rich and famous I think came from this book. This book has saved me not only time but money as well and it makes it so easy to get dressed in the morning! The photos in the book are to die for, true fashion Jerry Hall, Ola Hudson. In a sense this book is a blast from the past becoming a collector's item.

My teenage daughter and I have read and reread this book a couple of times always walking away with a little more style, and gaining that fashion confidence! We aspire to cheap chic: with a great look. Looking stylish can be tough in this day and age, thanks to Cheap Chic we have a mixture of both relevant advice and tips. Each chapter covers a type of clothing or topic such as classics, sportswear, and work clothes. We both loved the section on wrapping fabric into skirts, tops, and sarongs.

Since the book was originally from the 70s the guide "The Chic Shopper's Guide" is irrelevant today. However the chart of how to care or clean different fabric types is worth a read..

<https://writersnauthors.com/book-revi...>

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## **Phyllis says**

For a fashion book to come out and say "wear whatever you like" is still pretty revolutionary, especially for a book originally published in 1975. I find most of the looks in here to be pretty timeless & cool, but the chapter on poaching hot looks from ethnic clothing is really embarrassing.

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## **Gail says**

This is a kitch classic. I love the 70s attitude about clothes. It's so free. We're not this open minded about clothes these days, and the market has changed drastically.

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## **Deb says**

i bought my copy when it came out in 78. this is my favorite book of all time! now copies go from 95\$-165\$!

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## **Iris says**

1970s, how you invigorate me! This is a large-scale hardcover with text and black and white images suggesting how to dress well and creatively with garb from thrift shops, military surplus stores, and "ethnic" markets (for saris, sarongs and cotton mary janes). No factory-made "fast fashion" here; this was published during a time when essentially all clothing sold in the US was made in the US by unions. The clothes were built to last.

The industry is wildly different now. As a result, this book has little practical use; for help building your

wardrobe, head to its contemporary equivalent: the excellent "I Love Your Style" by Amanda Brooks, with abundant rare photographs of classic and bohemian clothes.

"Cheap Chic" fetches top dollar at rare book shops; I read a well-preserved first edition at my local library.

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## **(Jen) The Artist Librarian says**

2 1/2 stars:

As a full time college student with limited funds (thank you, part time job), I aspire to cheap chic: I enjoy fashion and looking stylish, but don't want, nor can afford, to spend a lot on my clothes. While not completely what I expected, the 40th Anniversary Edition of *Cheap Chic* is a mixture of both relevant advice and tips along with a fascinating (dare I say historical?) look into some of the fashion ideals of the 1970s. Each chapter covers a type of clothing or topic such as classics, sportswear, work clothes, thrift store shopping, and ethnic wear, to name a few. Interspersed in between are profiles and interviews with style mavens of the time such as Yves St. Laurent, Betsey Johnson, along with lesser known fashionistas.

When I first heard of this 40th Anniversary Edition of *Cheap Chic*, I was under the impression that this was an updated or revised version of the original, which was first published in 1975. However, other than a new forward written by style guru and fashion designer mentor Tim Gunn from *Project Runway*, it is basically a reprint. While not what I was expecting, it was my misconception and mistake alone. Regardless, there are some amusing details that date this book, such as the prices mentioned: "Sailor pants ... should run about \$6" (pg. 17) --if only new pants were that inexpensive today! Another historical aspect are the style interviews -- it's interesting to see how the people the authors' chose to profile thought about popular 1970s styles. Fran Liebowitz confesses, "I can't believe what some people wear ... incredible platform shoes, glitter, hideous fabrics ... useless extravagance" (pg. 77).

Despite my initial disappointment, *Cheap Chic* has quite a few relevant ideas and advice that make this style book worth a read, in my opinion. The idea cost-per-wear, in which you invest in a better quality, well made piece if you will wear it multiple times more than a cheaper option, is one that I've seen other stylists use or suggest today. For myself, one of the most interesting portions of the book was a section on wrapping fabric into skirts, tops, sarongs, and other clothing items. That chapter in particular definitely had a 1970s, laid back, hippies, boho chic, carefree sort of attitude.

Though certain sections such as "The Chic Shopper's Guide" ---a directory of stores near the end of the book-- are most likely obsolete and irrelevant today, there are enough gems such as a chart of how to care or clean different fabric types and other concepts and advice that make this mid-20th century style guide worth a read or a check-out from your local library.

Brief content note: This was published in the 1970s and reflecting that era, there are a couple of photos of topless women such as those that illustrate some of the fabric wrapping techniques.

[Disclosure: I received a complimentary copy of this book from the publisher through the Blogging for Books program for review purposes.]

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## **Cindy says**

The Classic with great ideas about dressing well on a budget.  
It was amazing!

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## **Ginni says**

(I received this book for free through a Goodreads giveaway.)

This is a reprint of a book that was first published in 1975. That MATTERS when it's a book about fashion; everything in it is so out of date that it's not even useful. It's an enormous book, much bigger than it needs to be, due to the large (low-quality) photos and lengthy interviews with random people from the 70's. There is a random photo of a toddler that includes full frontal nudity. And wow, I expect to see some heated comments about the chapter on 'ethnic' clothing.

Don't get me wrong--it's a fun curiosity read. But don't go into it expecting it to be "astonishingly relevant forty years later," as the back claims.

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## **Nancy says**

Just not what I was thinking it would be.

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## **Mazzou B says**

First, I would like to give a little update about myself: although you probably know by now that I have been a seamstress and clothing designer for over 10 years now, you may not know that I am also a costume designer and am currently taking a European-based course in fashion design! Therefore, I was quite interested when this book- Cheap Chic- caught my eye! I must begin this review with a note that I had no idea that this book was originally published in the 1970's. I simply thought it was current fashion book. If you are purchasing this book because you know the original and you love fashion of the '70's, then this book just might be for you! Personally, I was disappointed because all the images inside were black and white and very '70s. Oddly enough, I do not despise the fashion of that time period. Rather, I dislike the whole mentality of many of the people who lived during those "hippie" years. Unfortunately, that expression was all too well captured in Cheap Chic...it left me with a dark and literally cheap feeling. Besides, many of the images were inappropriate.

On a cheerful note, the advice in the book can be considered timeless especially since we are currently living in a fashion world which is implementing many trends from the 1970's!

I received this book from the publisher in exchange for my honest review. Thank you!

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