

# ROOM WITH A (DISTORTED) VIEW



YOU CLOSE THE dressing room door behind you, disrobe and start wriggling into those stylish pants and oh-so-cute top. You take a deep breath, turn around and voila! The image in the mirror is much better than you anticipated. Your butt looks firm. Your gut is gone. Love handles? What love handles?

Fast-forward to the night of the big event. You put on that same outfit, turn to your own mirror and the view is quite a disappointment.

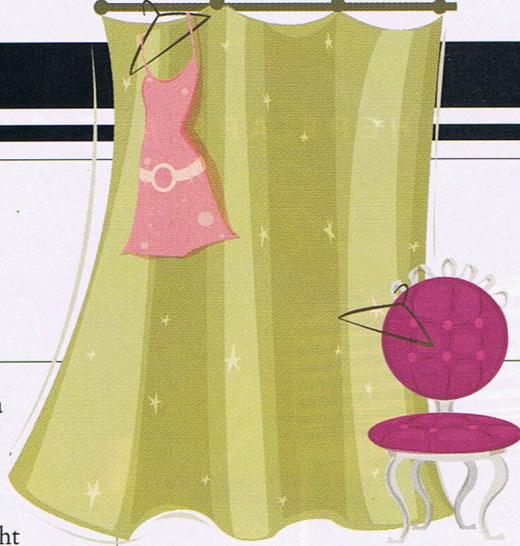
We've all been there, and it's not all in your head. You actually *do* look better in that dressing room reflection. "The use of lighting, music, mirrors and so forth creates an environment that is as flattering as possible," says Dan Bellenger, a Georgia State University marketing professor. "We all have basic needs that go beyond the physical, and retailers know this." To avoid buyer's remorse, bear these facts in mind when in a dressing room.

**LIGHTING**—"Retailers tend to use lighting that has a warm glow to it and gives your skin a healthy, rosy look," says Hal Crawford, owner of General Lighting Distributors, which has been providing lighting services in the Atlanta area for more than 60 years. Stores such as **Atlanta Beach** are known for using such flattering lighting to de-emphasize your flaws. On the other hand, many discount stores such as T.J. Maxx and Marshalls tend to use harsh fluorescent lighting that seems to magnify everything you don't want to see. However, that's not all bad. Similar lighting is often found in many office build-

ings, so this could give you a more accurate view of what you'll look like in the boardroom.

**MIRRORS**—You need the right mirror to inspect yourself from all angles. An open space away from the main shopping area and one of those tri-fold mirrors tend to do the trick. If you're in a department store, consider moving to the swimwear, bridal or **formal wear** departments for more space and a better view. Beware of slanted or beveled mirrors most often found in boutiques. They tend to make you look thinner than you actually are.

**SERVICE**—For the most accurate analysis, utilize the store's salespeople. **Ann Taylor**, Mark Shale and Nordstrom are known for having pleasant and knowledgeable staffers who will go above the call of duty to retrieve extra sizes, give you feedback on the fit and suggest accessories. Dillard's department stores even have doorbells that allow customers to ring for help. —CHANDRA R. THOMAS



## PARK LIKE A PRO Veteran shoppers present their picks for hassle-free ways to get in, get the goods and get out.



**LENOX SQUARE, Bloomingdale's, top two levels**  
Except for holidays, an abundance of empty spaces.



**LENOX SQUARE, Clubhouse**  
Park at this location and walk directly into the mall.



**MALL OF GEORGIA, Dillard's**  
A straight shot to stores, the food court and IMAX.



**NORTH POINT, parking deck**  
The mall's widest spaces can be found here.



**NORTH POINT, Lord & Taylor**  
Not as utilized as other entrances. Park here to avoid getting dinged by other drivers.



**PERIMETER, Nordstrom parking garage, third level**  
Parking spaces are plentiful and within close range of the mall's entrance.



**PERIMETER, valet**  
Centrally located, inexpensive and crowd-free, superior among metro-area malls.



**STONECREST, Rich's-Macy's**  
Parking at this wing of Stonecrest gives shoppers the best exit to busy Turner Hill Road.



CONVENIENCE



MOMS-TO-BE



SUV FRIENDLY

—NADIYAH SHABAZZ