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Supreme

getting their kicks

THE HOTTEST SNEAKERS AND WHERE TO BUY THEM **B4**

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Arielle Haller-Silverstone, co-owner of Southampton's Le Closet, holds a couple of kicks. The Sneaker Room at Le Closet gets 15 to 30 new pairs every week.

ON THE COVER Patrick Farrell, of Northport, shows off some of his collection. The 19-year-old says he's bought and sold more than 1,000 pairs of sneakers over the years. He says he wears some of the shoes he's not saving as an investment.

Collectible kicks gain traction

Inside the world of LI sneakerheads and the local shops catering to them

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Special to Newsday

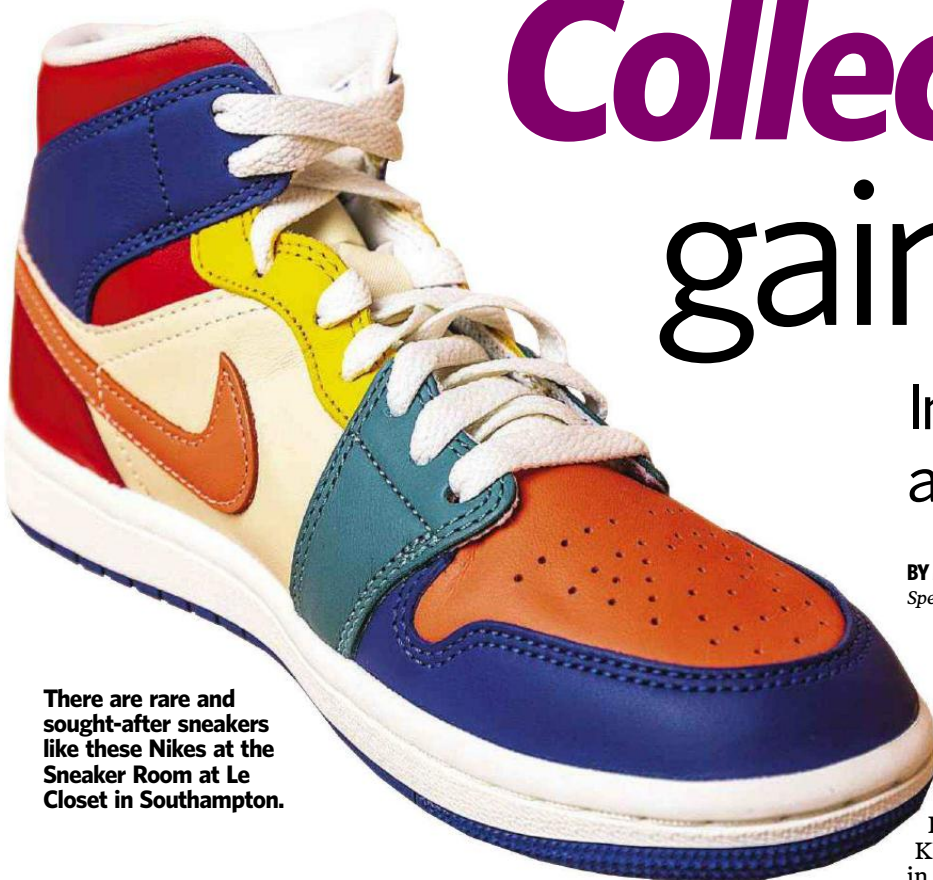
When Patrick Farrell was a freshman in high school, he entered countless raffles and won the chance to purchase rare Air Jordan 1 Travis Scott high-tops for \$190. He begged his dad to drive him to KITH, an apparel and footwear store in Manhattan, to pick up the shoe,

which he later sold for a \$1,000 profit. "Worth it," he recalls.

Now 19, Farrell, of Northport, has bought and sold more than 1,000 pairs of sneakers.

He's one of a number of avid Long Island sneaker collectors who scout out the latest kicks, some valued at thousands of dollars on the resale market, by waiting for online "drops" and social media sales and scanning the shelves at local sneaker rooms, including the newly opened one at Le Closet in Southampton.

There are rare and sought-after sneakers like these Nikes at the Sneaker Room at Le Closet in Southampton.



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"Buying and selling collectible sneakers has been around forever, but COVID brought the process into the mainstream," says Le Closet co-owner Arielle Haller-Silverstone, on the uptick in online interest.

Sneakers new and old have been a timeless accessory for decades, often showcased in fashion, pop culture, movies and TV. Most recently, "Air," starring Matt Damon, Ben Affleck and Viola Davis, slam-dunked the story of Nike's Air Jordan sneakers, released in 1985, on screen.

But "the pandemic elevated sports-wear completely," Haller-Silverstone says. "Comfort became key, and we're really seeing its staying power."

WHAT'S A SNEAKER 'DROP'?

Harlan Friedman, 50, of Oyster Bay, has more than 200 pairs in his extensive collection. The rarest shoe he owns is the Louis Vuitton Air Force 1's, which retails for \$2,750. Naturally, he's also gone to great lengths to secure a pair of sought-after sneakers. He recalls the moment he won a KITH raffle to purchase the Off-White x Nike Vapor Max during its initial drop. When he found out, he was then tasked with navigating from the Jacob Javits Center to KITH in a two-hour window to grab his prize.

"After getting there just in time, I went in and copped my pair," he says. "On the way out, all the sneaker resellers were standing there offering two to three times the purchase price in cash on the spot."

Weekly sneaker drops, as they're called, are a big draw for collectors.

They're a marketing technique used on social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram that allow consumers to preview upcoming, new, limited or restocked merchandise.

Hype World at Walt Whitman Shops, which is co-owned by Mohamad Barakat and Zeyad Hijazi, mainly uses Instagram to promote new inventory, which includes random drops throughout the week, for sneakers that are in high demand. Barakat adds that Hype World also does "Saturday steals," where they "post a limited quantity of sneakers for customers to purchase." This is typically a wide variety of sneakers, meaning "there's always something for everyone."

Haller-Silverstone follows a similar route, as the Sneaker Room at Le Closet posts "our new sneaks every week, usually on Friday or Saturday, and we get between 15 to 30 new pairs every week, depending on our needs. As we ramp up for Memorial Day and summer, this will definitely increase." And they are not limited to selling sneakers just for men; they also have pairs for women and children. Sizes range from a women's 6½ to a



Sneaker enthusiast Harlan Friedman shows off his collection. His love of sneaker culture started when he was a kid and when he heard Run-D.M.C.'s "My Adidas."

Shopping for cool kicks on Long Island

Between Eitan Landa, Patrick Farrell and Harlan Friedman, their collections include a range of standouts, such as Nike Sean Wotherspoon X Air Max 1/97, Run-D.M.C. x Adidas Superstar "Jam Master Jay" autographed and inscribed by Darryl McDaniels (including inscriptions like "IT'S TRICKY" and "MY ADIDAS," both of which are Run-D.M.C. song references), Nike X Off-White Dunk Low, Clyde Pumas with an autograph and inscriptions from former NBA star Walt "Clyde" Frazier, Nike Air Force 1 x Tiffany & Co. and Jordan 1 OG Chicago. When it comes to actually buying highly prized sneakers, there is no shortage of places to shop for them. Friedman frequents Hirshleifers and KITH in Manhasset for new sneakers, as well as UP NYC in the Bronx.

Additionally, Friedman is a patron of resale stores like Luxe Swap in Oyster Bay and Plugged In in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. Both Landa and Friedman shop from the SNKRS app, which is run by Nike. The app allows users to explore and buy rare and coveted sneakers. The app also features drops and provides insider information on exclusive shoe releases.

More info:

- **Sneaker Room at Le Closet**; 9 Windmill Lane, Southampton; leclosetnewyork.com
- **Hype World** at Walt Whitman Shops; 160 Walt Whitman Rd., Huntington Station; simon.com
- **Hirshleifers** and **KITH** at Americana Manhasset; 2080 Northern Blvd.; americanamanhasset.com

men's 13 and kid's starting at size 5.

Haller-Silverstone is seeing an uptick in interest in sneakers like Air Jordan 3s and 4s, as well as Air Jordan 1 Mids, Nike Dunks and New

Balance. The prices at the showroom range from \$185 to \$450, but Haller-Silverstone has personally seen sneakers for sale elsewhere for close to \$10,000.

Sneaker collectors like Eitan Landa, 14, of Bridgehampton, are well-versed when it comes to the ins and outs of buying, selling and trading these rare sneakers. Landa started collecting when he was 9 years old and has about 60 pairs. Rare sneakers in his collection include Air Jordan 4 Retro White Oreo, Lost and Founds and a few Off-White collaborations.

To ensure that every pair of sneaker is, in fact, authentic, Haller-Silverstone and her co-owner, Nicole Schumann, only work with one supplier. "He runs the 908 store in Montclair, New Jersey, and authenticates all of the sneakers he sends to us," she explains. "We're hyper sensitive to the authenticity issues, especially since the rest of our store is high-end consignment, so we are very grateful that we have such a special partnership with 908."

"There are many ways to spot fake shoes," says Landa. "For Jordans, I mainly look at the Jordan logo to see if the 'R' and the 'D' are touching and I check the stitches and the box [and] packaging." He adds, "Also, and this comes with experience, a lot of fakes have a certain glue smell that is different from the real shoes."

FOR THE LOVE OF THE SNEAKER

It isn't always about the money.

After scoring his sneakers at the Off-White drop, Friedman says he took off his old pair of shoes and took the new ones out of the box, which would have covered more than a month of his rent had he sold them. Instead, he put the shoes on and went back to work, and still remembers the applause from resellers as he walked away.

"Even resellers have mad respect for people who buy sneakers to wear them," he says.

For Friedman, the love of all things sneakers started at a young age and has continued into adulthood. The hobby began in fifth grade with Jordan 1's. "I was a husky kid, so sometimes the cool new fashions didn't quite fit, but the sneakers, they were always there. At the same time, Run-D.M.C. rocked their Adidas shell tops, released 'My Adidas' and I was in for life," he says.

Naturally, some collectors prefer to not wear certain pairs in their collection, keeping them in pristine condition, while others take pride in wearing their footwear as much as possible. Some, like Farrell, practice the latter.

"Every shoe that I am keeping for myself and did not buy as an investment or to make money off of them, I wear," he professes. "And I really wear them. I beat up my shoes . . . The shoes will eventually be forgotten; the memories you make in them will not be."