



# SHOPPING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

And God said, let there be shopping. OK, so it wasn't quite that simple, but rudimentary shops of a kind that would be recognisable to modern consumers have been part of societies since each substituted money (in the guise of coins and, later, notes) for a less handy system of exchange – I give you one candle, you give me two loaves.

Indeed, some theories argue that it was shops that gave rise to cities, in as much as overland trading routes, such as the Silk and Spice Routes linking Asia with Europe, covered such vast distances that centres in which merchants could rest and, over time, base themselves and trade became established along them.

But jump forward millennia and shops have become the new cities. The fastest-growing format for shops today – both in terms of numbers and size – is the mall: huge, convenient, comprehensive and, for many people, soulless. So, what's the answer? How can we reinvent the shopping trip as an event to look forward to? The first step is to understand what we shoppers are looking for from our 21-st century shops.