

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

63(F)

SHOPPING CENTERED



City slickers love the western look

Let you think the country/western craze peaked a couple of years ago and has gone the way of Lyle Lovett (remember Julia Roberts' ex?), you better dust the trail dirt off your boots and polish up your spurs because cowboy clothing is still the rage.

"We have a new customer who is sampling prairie skirts, denim shirts, moccasins and tooled leather belts," says Kelly Cottone of Arizona Saddlery, 1687 S. Woodward in Birmingham. "Professional people are buying distasteful denim boots that are so fine and supple as their best dress shoes and they even gander up to the Stetson display. The only thing they shy away from is the fringed suede jacket."

Prairie party

Cottone cited the recent Oakland Family Services Great Western Roundup as a particularly good weekend for sales. Hundreds of city slickers vied into the store for fancy western party duds and Cottone believes she made a believer out of some of the novices. Once you're hooked on line dancing and barbecue, there's no turning back. Cottone's sister Linda Lee Leannais manages the Arizona Saddlery location in downtown Rochester, and she shared her picks for this fall's hottest western wear.



Sometimes hot items are defined by celebrities like the Brooks & Dunn flame shirt (\$47.95) made famous by Garth's album cover and his concert appearances. Ellen Barkin posed for photos in Allure magazine wearing a Gucci leather belt with a horse bit buckle. That photo generated so many calls that Arizona Saddlery now makes a similar belt while you wait and their custom design is around \$150 compared to Gucci's \$325.

Other popular items include "Mo" Betta collarless shirts in flashy motifs (\$56.95), Bay-Apache distressed, oiled boots in various skins from shark to kangaroo (\$155-\$200), horse belts made of cow bone, buffalo horn, glass and silver (\$125), and accessories like silver boot straps (\$26.95) and tips.

Days gone by

Arizona Saddlery boasts over 30 different styles of cowboy hats and offers custom steaming of creases if you inherited your granddaddy's old Stetson that needs a little refurbishing.

Thinking of getting hitched? Leannais' store displays three different styles of wedding gowns, all lace and all under \$500. They are embellished with crystal fringe and appliques, and come complete with a cowboy hat trailing a long white train.

Over at Scott Colburn, 20411 Farmington Rd. in Livonia, a special trunk show featured Western Maker Cowboy Clothing, the traditional garb that embodies the spirit of the American frontier. Popular styles include the Cavalry Bib Shirt, an old-west military post staple that was designed to provide protection from dust, wind and cold while astride your silk bandanas called Wild Rags; Duckies or old-time western jeans with wide suspenders, a button fly, and two riding pockets; and herringbone trousers for a Saturday night bode-down or a poker game at the saloon.

Scott Colburn also specializes in boots from famous names such as Tony Lama, Justin, Dingo, Lucchese and Laredo. The Midwest lassos by the country craze? You bet.

And if you haven't tried the Cotton Eye Joe or spun your partner through the western swing, you just may be missing a rit roarin' good time. Git yourself a long frilly deconstructed, a fitted pair of jeans, a Concha belt and some red boots and hit the dance floor.

Linda Bachrach welcomes photos and information on unique merchandise to feature in this column. Send information via fax to (810) 644-1314, or call (313) 963-2047, mailbox 1829.

LOOKING AHEAD

What to watch for in Malls & Mainstreets next week:

- Go Behind The Label with silver designer Emilia Castillo of Tama, Mexico.
- A report on area close-out shopping.
- Added Attractions lists events at local shopping centers.
- Retail Details briefs changes in the marketplace.

Malls host jail-bail for March of Dimes



The Mother's March for Dimes was never this fun! Beginning Oct. 10, the March of Dimes annual fundraiser features a cocktail party, Jail and Bail, and the Internet!

This year's March of Dimes fundraiser combines community, computers, and celebrity campaign, to aid the fight against infant mortality and birth defects.

First, there's a cocktail party to kick-off the event at Parian Department Store, Laurel Park Plaza in Livonia. Next is the 8th annual four-day Jail and Bail Program. And last, but definitely not least, is "Jocks in

Cyberjail" or pledge raising on the Internet.

"Jail and Bail is the chance for you to get revenge on a snoring husband, a television remote junkie, or a forgetful co-worker, while raising money for the March of Dimes," said spokeswoman Margaret Champline.

Jail and Bail takes place Tuesday, Oct. 17, through Friday, Oct. 20, at seven "jail" locations: Tel-Twelve

Mall in Southfield, Wonderland Mall in Livonia, Arborland Mall in Ann Arbor, Macomb Mall in Roseville, Renaissance Center in Detroit, The Eatery in Flint, and the Frenchtown Mall in Monroe.

For a \$25 fee to the March of Dimes, the "jailbird" of your choice will be picked up at work or a public location, and transported by March of Dimes Police to the closest jail site. Once in the "March of Dimes Court of Law," the accused goes before a "March of Dimes Judge." Bail is set and the jailbird is sentenced to one hour "hard labor" — unlimited use of the telephone to call family, friends,

and co-workers to raise bail in the form of pledges to the March of Dimes.

All inmates are released and returned to their normal day after raising their bail or spending one hour in jail — whichever comes first. Call (810) 423-3200 to book your pick-up, or fax (810) 423-3229.

New twists to the campaign are the cocktail party and use of the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers On Line Network to raise additional funds to fight birth defects.

See MALLS, 7B

Eric Gaskins couture: clean and classic

By SUSAN DEMAGGIO

When you grow up with a mother who is a school principal, and a father who teaches music, the academic world surely beckons. But for soft-spoken, low-keyed Eric Gaskins, 37, the future was Seventh Ave., and his own couture business.



"Yes, I guess you'd think I'd be a teacher," he said during a recent trunk show at Jacobson's in Birmingham where he busily measured and fit customers in his winter collection. "But, when I was a teen, I became fascinated with the glamour and the clothing in Vogue magazine, which I'd look through after school with my twin sister. We'd pick out things we liked and didn't like, and I guess those fashion images had a profound effect on me."

The German-born and Massachusetts-bred designer said he knew he wanted to create women's clothing since he was 16. He pursued an art/fashion degree at Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, and after graduation, apprenticed in Paris as an assistant to Givenchy.

"I was part of a whole group of young designers who worked on drawings for his licensed accessory lines. Not many of my designs were selected for use, but what an experience! I created all day long," he reminisced.

Back in the states by 1981, Gaskins continued to sharpen his skills with

several design jobs. He launched his first labeled collection in 1987.

"I like classic. I like clean," he explained his design philosophy. "I want my customers to be able to wear the clothing they buy from me for more than one season. I chose to design for women because their fashion can be more creative, fun and interesting than menswear. I use couture fabrics from Europe in my collections because it is the best."

An Eric Gaskins original dress can cost anywhere from \$800 to \$2,500. Lois Walts of Bloomfield Hills explained why she wears Gaskins' designs.

"I bought some things from his spring collection and I always felt very well dressed in them," she explained. "They're beautiful. Fun. Not trendy. I can wear them years from now, so they're a good investment."

Gaskins' designs are sold in fine department stores and specialty boutiques like Jacobson's, Barney's New York, Saks Fifth Avenue, Bloomingdale's, Neiman Marcus and Lord and Taylor. Celebrities who wear his clothes include Melanie Griffith, Vanessa Williams and Mariah Carey.

Gaskins enlists old-world couture techniques to insure quality and consistency in his creations. His fall collection includes pure, sophisticated

styles in satin, silk and linen crepes and chiffons, with subtle mixes of color, shapes and graphics. Silver lurex lends shimmer as it threads through sheer organza and merges into metallic-hurst brocades.

With a staff that now numbers 10, Gaskins said he feels like a real businessman on Fridays when he must make payroll for folks with families that depend on him. "That's a pressure," he said. "I worry about that

See GASKINS, 7B



Satin sizzle: This Gaskins strapless evening gown sells for \$1,375 in lavender blue.

Sophisticated style: Designer Eric Gaskins builds an architectural quality into his creations with texture, form and color.

Retailers aim at family violence with benefits for women's shelters

By SUSAN DEMAGGIO

STAFF WRITER

Two major benefits for victims of domestic violence take place next Thursday, Oct. 19, hosted by Liz Claiborne and Jules Schubot Jewellers.

Focusing on the work of HAVEN

(Oakland County's program for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault and child abuse), Schubot Jewellers of Troy presents "It's Hot! It's Gold!" from 6-9 p.m. at the store on Big Beaver at Coolidge.

Tickets are \$35 per person and include cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, and a

jewelry fashion show highlighting the designs of the world's most renowned jewelry creators Omar Torres (formerly with Bulgari and Van Cleef and Arpels), Hidalgo, Old World Chain, Andrew Meyer and Kurt Wayne. Torres and Hidalgo will make personal appearances at the benefit. For tickets, call Schubot's at (810) 640-1122.

Retailers can submit announcements of upcoming events and promotions for Added Attractions. The deadline is the Wednesday before publication on Monday. Send the facts to: Malls & Mainstreets, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 806 E. Maple, Birmingham, 48009. Or fax to: (810) 644-1314.

MONDAY, OCT. 9

ART EXHIBIT

"Strokes of Color," presented by South Oakland Artists Association through Oct. 20. Monday-Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Items for sale to benefit association. American Center Bldg. 11 May/Franklin, Southfield. (810) 435-6041.

PUPPET SHOWS

Little Red Riding Hood presented daily at 7 p.m. through October. Saturdays at 11 a.m., 1 and 3 p.m. Sunday at 1 and 3 p.m. Meadowbrook Village Mall, Warren/Livonia. Rochester Hills. (810) 375-5431.

TUESDAY, OCT. 10

PUMPKIN DECORATING

Kids Club (open to children under age 5) hosts fall craft fun beginning at 11 a.m. Wear old clothes! Free. Sign up at any place store or at event. Newburgh Plaza. Six Mile/Newburgh, Livonia. (810) 649-6500.

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 11

FASHION SEMINAR

Berman Marcus and First of Michigan present "Dress to Impress," wardrobe seminar and investment lecture, 6 p.m. at the department store. Free speakers. Gift items and special offers. Fashion show. Free wine and hors d'oeuvres. Seating limited. Reservations required. Somerset Collection, Big Beaver/Coolidge, Troy. 1-800-795-4350.

RESPONSIBLE SHOPPING

Fashions from Chico's presented noon to 2 p.m. during lunch at Stage & Co. Boardwalk, Orchard 1 and Maple, West Bloomfield. (810) 300-9622.

THURSDAY, OCT. 12

RECESSION LIVING SHOW

Lifestyle product information throughout the mall.

ADDED ATTRACTIONS

through Oct. 15. Doct's showcase home improvement and health/fitness ideas. Tel-Twelve Mall, 12 Mile/Telegraph, Southfield. (810) 353-4111.

FRIDAY, OCT. 13

INFORMAL MODELING

Latest fashions from American Eagle Outfitters and Northern Reflections presented during lunch from 12:30 to 2 p.m. at D. Davidson's and A&A's, Laurel Park Plaza, Six Mile/Newburgh, Livonia. (313) 482-1100.

CLOTHES AT LUNCH

As part of her 20th anniversary in the fashion biz, Janet Varner hosts informal modeling of her latest collections from noon to 2 p.m. at Kruse & Muir, every Friday through Dec. 20. 321 Main, Downtown Rochester. (810) 652-2212.

SPORTS COLLECTIBLES

Sports and coin show through Oct. 15 with many new vendors. Former Tiger pitcher Art Houtman signs autographs from 1-3 p.m. Former Tiger catcher John Woodentash greets fans on Oct. 18 from 1-3 p.m. Livonia Mall, Six Mile/Kildebeek. (810) 476-1160.

WINE & DINE

Saks Fifth Avenue hosts 1994-1995 men's Made-to-Measure Menswear Collection for fall/winter line and preview of Spring. Special orders. 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. First floor. Somerset Collection, Big Beaver/Coolidge, Troy. (810) 643-0000.

SATURDAY, OCT. 14

HALLOWEEN SLUMP

Children welcome to create a Halloween decoration inspired with the favorite items of fall from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Labeleds provided. Free activity. Tel-Twelve Mall, 12 Mile/Telegraph, Southfield. (810) 353-4111.

PHOTOGRAPHY

"Come Home to Plymouth" event celebrates Plymouth's 350th anniversary season. The Penn Theatre, 730 Riverfront, presents "The Penn Play" directed by Anne Anderson at 1 and 3 p.m. 1940s Car Show outside the Theatre and Historical Museum. 1940s radio broadcast at Historical Museum. 1:05 p.m.

Main at 1 and 4 p.m. (repeated Oct. 10 at 2 and 5 p.m.); Chantre Julie Fountain performs "40s tunes at 8 p.m. at Plymouth Coffee Bean, 684 Pennington. 1940s memorabilia on display in downtown shop windows; walking tour of 1940s neighborhoods, maps available at participating establishments. Plymouth, Main/Pennington. (313) 543-4532.

HEALTH TESTS

Free blood pressure checks from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Courtesy of the American Heart Association. Booth near Montgomery Ward. Wonderland Mall, Plymouth/Kildebeek, Livonia. (313) 452-4100.

FALL FESTIVAL

Pumpkin bowling, leaf identification, scarecrow-making lesson at 12:30 p.m., pumpkin-painting contest, guess the Pumpkin's weight. Local arts and crafts. Free. Noon to 5 p.m. On Sunday, Oct. 15, fall gardening tips. 12:30 and 2:30 p.m. Four Seasons Garden Center, 114471 W. Eleven Mile, Oak Park. (313) 543-4600.

ARTIST'S SALE

Livonia Artists Club presents their work for show and sale through Oct. 15. Laurel Park Plaza, Six Mile/Newburgh, Livonia. (313) 482-1100.

PLYMOUTH FARMER'S MARKET

7:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. choose from fresh produce, plants and baked goods every Saturday. The Gathering, Across from Kidzurg Park. (313) 453-1845.

FARMINGTON FARMER'S MARKET

Now through Oct. 26 in the Village Commons Shopping Center parking lot. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Flowers, fruits and vegetables. Grand River/Farmington Rd. (810) 473-7216.

OCTOBERFEST

Collectibles on display for questions with manufacturers' representatives. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Members of Antique Auto Club of America show off their collections. 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Canterbury Village, 1-75/Orchard Rd. Lake Orion. (810) 301-6700.

SUNDAY, OCT. 16

STORYBOOK SUNDAY

Stacy Dupont reads "Backyard Ramble." 1 p.m. Children receive limited book report forms for most discounted titles. 80-cent kids meals. Portstone Town Center, Michigan/Hubbard, Dearborn. (313) 683-3646.