

MALLS & MAINSTREETS

MONDAY, MARCH 1, 1993

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SHOPPING CENTERED



LINDA BACHRACK

Places to find the one of a kind

Like many of us, Lynn Baker of Grosse Pointe appreciates hand-crafted wearable art. Fortunately, the Detroit area teems with creative and artistic designers of jewelry, clothing and accessories. And there are stores that represent internationally known artists whose works can be worn, as well as framed.

Baker, a former Center for Creative Studies student, seeks out unusual designs. "It's nice not to have cookie cutter things," she says. Shopping at Royal Oak's Maggie & Me boutique, Baker bought a one-of-a-kind tapestry purse by Debbie Eggert of Commere Township. The Victorian-look purse designs are crafted of pastel and jewel-toned woven tapestries with silk cord straps. "I use antique buttons and bits of jewelry to decorate the bags," says Eggert. They are further adorned with beaded ribbons and lace, and all are generously fringed. Look for them exclusively at Maggie & Me, 325 S. Washington, Royal Oak (\$60).

Maggie LaForrest of Plymouth, the innovative clothing designer and proprietor of the Maggie & Me shops in Royal Oak, downtown Plymouth and Harbor Springs, works out of her basement studio designing fun, contemporary fashions with uninhibited use of color and pattern. Her designs are mostly one-size-fits-all free flowing dresses, skirts and pants in feel-good fabrics. Her artful combinations of prints and liberal use of button, lace and ribbon trims add unique styling to her creations.



Amy Lichtenstein was in town visiting from Chicago when I saw her browsing at Maggie & Me. Seems her friend Maria Wolf, a Bloomfield Hills resident, is a "wired advertisement" for Maggie's line of clothing, and Amy was impressed. "She has very unique things," said Amy, admiring the collection. "It all looks so comfortable and you won't see everyone else wearing your outfit." Pictured are pieces from the new spring line.

Under African Skies

If you haven't been to JC Penney Northland recently, you're missing the retailer's collection of African-inspired clothing showcasing local Afro-centric cultural designers. Responding to a growing demand from consumers, Penney searched out local individuals to create its vibrant and exciting shop.

Detroit native Pamela D. Jones combines African batik and Kente prints with fluid styling to create her line of fashions for "Sisters With Attitudes Today." Annette Shields of Artworks Inc. displays her versatile caftans, ideal for lounge wear or dining out. Carrie Pasha designs hats out of her studio in Detroit, including the popular Kuff hat and Nefertiti crown. Another talented local artist is Maria Hildreth of Design Scope. Her line includes vests and authentic African coordinates.

Also look for Shannon Rivers' scarves and Sharon Bryant's swing coats in this spirited new shop. The ultimate goal, according to merchandising manager, Barbara Murphy, is to include local designers in Penney's new catalog collection of African-inspired fashions, *Influences*.

Wearable Art

When contemplating the content of this column I felt compelled to include the work of Art Deco master Erte. For almost a century, Erte's artwork dramatically influenced the worlds of fashion, theater and fine art. His Art to Wear jewelry collection, created exclusively for Circle Gallery, captures the essence of his drawings from the '20s and '30s, often inspired by his famous Harper's Bazaar cover designs. Each piece is hand-crafted in precious metals and semi-precious stones, and is highly collectible.



Circle Gallery in the Somerset Collection now exhibits some stunning pieces from the Erte collection, including "Beauty of the Beast," a limited edition pendant worn in blue topaz, amethysts and diamonds (\$7,950). Also of interest to fine art aficionados are the artist's pins (\$22-\$60), M.C. Escher sky and water silk ties (\$35), and ancient jewelry designs at the DIA Museum Shop in the Somerset Collection.

Linda Bachrack is a Birmingham resident. To leave her column ideas, please call 953-2047, Ext. 1889, from a touch-tone phone.

Room at the top

Businesses draw on downtown charm



In the offices above and beyond Main Street, savvy business people enjoy the ambience of downtown locations without the pocket-pinching street-level rents.

BY SUSAN DEMAGGIO
STAFF WRITER

Most shoppers are too intent looking into Main Street shop windows to ever look up and beyond, but a whole different world of business goes on upstairs. "Where else but downtown Birmingham can you have a cup of cappuccino delivered on a lace doily at 3 p.m.?" asked Dorothy Paley who runs her interior design company from an office above Barbara's Paper Bag on Pierce Street.

"I love being downtown. I like the architectural style of my building. I like being close to the fabric workrooms in Royal Oak and Berkley. I need to be near the Design Center in Troy."

Mary Bush, associate broker with Thea Brown in Farmington, said some businesses are natural neighbors to a downtown business district.

"These are companies that don't have much foot traffic or older companies with their center of influence in the downtown area," she said.

"The older buildings attract artists and architects who appreciate their charm and character of design and set up studios here. Also, attorneys and financial planners like to renovate old, downtown homes into business offices. These rents are less expensive than the prime retail spots along the main thoroughfares. Good deals from a business sense."

Barbara Khalili, of the Rochester Downtown Development Authority, said rents off Main Street are roughly 20-percent less than those on the main drag. And to succeed, retailers need to have a definite marketing plan.

"Some businesses prefer to be off Main Street because they build their own traffic," she said. "The Dandy Lion, an unusual gift shop, opened off the heart of the business strip with a dynamite concept that brings people to her door. The Chapman

House, a design studio within a decorated home, is another example, clients find them. At Half-Way Down The Stairs, a children's book shop off Main Street, their marketing plan brings customers to them."

Khalili said a good marketing plan is one that gives the customer more than he or she expects, distinguishes its merchandise from the rest of the world, demonstrates product knowledge, and provides professional presentation of its products and services. Fran Tomcy, director of the Chamber of Commerce in Plymouth, said second story space in Plymouth and the Old Village is rented as apartments with a few exceptions.

"The Arts Council has offices above Fred Hill's and one office has been rented by a professional photographer," she said.

Known to customers as "Birmingham's Best Kept Secret" the 870 Bowers Building south of the downtown business district is home to Margie Cocksie, an interior designer, artists Blair Reed and Robert Dempster, Travel Headquarters, a full-service travel agency specializing in travel accommodations for the physically challenged, the Studio on Side Street hair salon, and Char's, an unusual gift boutique.

"We've got businesses dedicated to personal service," said Char Schulman, owner of the boutique and salon within the building. "When customers discover us they spread the word."

Kivi-Dean Ltd. is south of the Birmingham Theatre on South Woodward, a bit off the shopper's beaten path. Since September the little-known shop has offered designer fabrics and services without the need for a designer.

"No one else does what we do," said co-owner John Dean who was formerly a designer in Grosse Pointe. "We have the workshop to make bedspreads, slipcovers, draperies — anything for a home in the designer lines."

The Second Story: Business people who appreciate vintage charm are naturals for the older buildings above and near Rochester's Main Street.

Bra shop carries the correct corset

BY SUSAN DEMAGGIO
STAFF WRITER

It could easily be called "Bras R Us," but Harp's Lingerie in downtown Birmingham prefers its old name.

Owner Elizabeth Harp has sold women undergarments since 1947.

She moved her store several times over the past 46 years from her first shop in Hamtramck to stops in Ferndale, Univ. 3rd Mall, within Chulick's, and now to 265 S. Woodward in Birmingham one year ago.

"I have the largest selection of bras in Michigan," she said. "Size 32 to 56, Double A to H. That includes 35 different lines of bras, slips and underwear. And most of them are in

stock at all times. We're the bra pros. We're proud of the service we provide."

Harp and her staff of seven corsetiers (who all wear golden bras pins on their lapels) personally assist every customer with the selection and proper fitting of a brassiere.

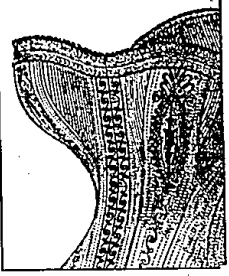
"We cater to women who've had mastectomies, women who need strong nursing bras, and we've installed a ramp at the front door to make it easier for women in wheelchairs to shop here," she said. "Several local physicians have sent their patients to us for a marvelous bra we sell. The Back Up Bra. This bra sells for \$23 and is sought by women with shoulder pain, chest pains and bur-

stis. It has extra-wide shoulder straps and built-in back support."

A bra lasts four to six months depending on how often it's worn and laundered, according to Jan, a Harp's corsetier.

"A bra should never be thrown into the dryer but line dried instead," she advised. "A bra should be hand washed or machine-washed on the gentle cycle to preserve the elasticity and shape. It's best to own several and alternate their use."

Harp's is opened Monday through Saturday 9:30 a.m. until 6 p.m. Thursday evenings until 8:30 p.m. Inquiries are welcome by calling 642-2655.



TUESDAY, MARCH 2		FRIDAY, MARCH 5		SUNDAY, MARCH 7	
<p>CANCER BENEFIT Great American Lock Up, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Through Friday, March 5. For \$25 donation interested participants can issue warrant for someone's arrest of someone. Police officers will arrest and transport accused to jail cell set up in office building next to AMC Theaters. Jailbird has unlimited use of telephone to call friends asking for pledges to make bail. Laurel Park Place. Six Mile/Newburgh. 425-6845.</p>		<p>HEADPEACE BEHAIAR Designer Gil Tereido will advise brides-to-be on creating their own personalized headpieces. 1-8 p.m. Repeated on March 20 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Jacobson's Laurel Park Place, Uxonia. Jacobsens. Downtown Birmingham. 644-6900.</p>		<p>CLASSICS AND CROSSANTS Brunch catered by Sebastian's Grill noon to 2 p.m. Rotunda performance features Michigan's finest classical musicians in concert. \$20 per person. Tickets available at concierge desk. Co-sponsored by WQRS. Proceeds benefit DIA and Center for Creative Studies music program. Somerset Collection. Big Beaver/Coolidge. 649-4343.</p>	
<p>FASHION SHOW Neilan Marcus shows the best of his spring collection in a series of six shows through Saturday. Collection runtimes. 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. Friday, March 5 at 2 and 7 p.m. Saturday, March 6 at 1 and 4 p.m. No admission fee, but seating is limited. R.S.V.P. Trends include nautical prints, casual denim, soft silhouettes and cocktail attire. The Somerset Collection. Big Beaver/Coolidge. 649-6360.</p>		<p>FASHION LUNCHEON The Liz Claiborne Store. Seating limited. Reservations necessary. Complimentary lunch and fashion show. Every first Friday. Noon to 1 p.m. Somerset Collection. Big Beaver/Coolidge. 649-4343.</p>		<p>TEEN DESIGNER Susan Beesly brings her west-coast spring collection to Jacobson's Junior Department for informal modeling. 1-4 p.m. Casual wear with furry and feminine touches. Great Oaks Mall. University/Livernois. 651-6000.</p>	
<p>ARTS AND CRAFTS SHOW Through Sunday, March 7. National exhibitors demonstrate and sell their handwork. Pottery, stoneware and children's toys featured. During mall hours. Summit Place Mall. Telegraph/Elizabeth Lakes. 652-0123.</p>		<p>GRAND PRIZE Remote car races. Co-sponsored by West Bloomfield Parks and Recreation Department. 1-3 p.m. \$4 fee per entry. Three age-groups. Center court. Registration necessary. Greenways Mall. Orchard Lake/Lone Pine. 334-5622.</p>		<p>STORY HOUR 1 p.m. Grand Court. Stories read aloud to preschoolers. Fairlane Town Center. Michigan/Southfield. 593-3330.</p>	
<p>ADDED ATTRACTIONS</p> <p>GRAND OPENING The Bread Winner opens its bakery doors at noon. Muffin and bread samples for shoppers. Specialists</p>					
<p>In multi-grain breads. Owner/manager Eric Jerock has six family members involved in the bakery. Downtown Plymouth. 448 Forest. 459-1017.</p>					
<p>Mail "Added Attractions" news items to Susan DeMaggio, Observer & Eccentric, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham 48009 or fax them to 644-1314. To assure publication, they must be received two weeks in advance of the event.</p>					