

Island of Design

Long the center of finance, media, art, fashion, and real estate, Manhattan is also one of the top design spots in the world



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Story by Tom Eubanks

Photography by Linden Hass

If you were to trace the last four decades of New York City's growth, from its near-bankruptcy and record high-crime rate of the 1970s to its present incarnation as a *Sex and the City*-meets-Disneyland theme park, you'd see first-hand the power of gentrification and the "nesting movement" of the 1990s. Today, the average price of a one-bedroom apartment in Manhattan is \$1.7 million. Which means Manhattan's once legendary "bohemian fringe" has vanished because starving artists can no longer afford to live and work here.

Taking their place, it seems, are buildings. Not the New York skyscrapers of the past, but 20-story "boutique" hotels, *new* museums, and modern-looking yet quaint-seeming corporate headquarters. All made by name-brand architects, or "starchitects," a pejorative appendage that illustrates how far design has come in our consciousness, where architects are the new rock stars.

Just in the past year, Manhattan got its first Frank Gehry building (the IAC/InterActiveCorp headquarters on the West Side Highway; like a billowing sail made of curved, white-frosted glass), its first Renzo Piano tower (the grand, grey New York

Times building a block west of Times Square), its first Santiago Calatrava (a soaring white transportation hub at the World Trade Center site), and yet another free-standing structure to house art: **THE NEW MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART** 1, designed by Japanese "starchi-duet" SANAA and situated on the Bowery. Yes, that Bowery, which shows how much things change.

In the wake of all this high-wattage real estate, a greater sense of design has followed. And sure enough, the starchitects have turned to mass-marketing pieces that design aficionados and starchitect groupies can't get enough of. You can't just have any old lamp in your \$1.7 million apartment. Obviously, for anyone interested in design, the city has become a breeding ground for exceptional furniture and home décor stores.

In fact, you could spend a month in New York and never find all the best spots. So we gathered our design experts, Dabney Doswell, Sherry Jo Williams, and Tim Ranney, and asked: "Keeping in mind that not everyone can fork over a million dollars for a place to live, if you only had a weekend to hit the best design spots in New York, which would make your list?"

Their answers ranged from obscure outposts in Williams-

burg, Brooklyn to the abundance of sleek **APPLE STORES** 3 to the usual suspects in SoHo, with the shops of MoMa, the Museum of Arts & Design, the Guggenheim, and the **COOPER-HEWITT NATIONAL DESIGN MUSEUM** 2 thrown in for good measure. We've winnowed their selections down to those spots most off the beaten path, distinguishing the high-end spots without diminishing those places where good design can be had on the cheap.

Not surprisingly, **moss** 4, at 150 Greene Street tops each of our experts' lists. Williams considers it a "must-do" for any visitor and considers Murray Moss, who opened the store in 1994, a design guru. According to Doswell the store is "arguably the best furniture and objects shop in the country." At moss, "the distinctions between production and craft, industry and art, and more recently, between industrial and decorative arts" are deliberately blurred. Looking for a set of whale-bone caviar spoons? A Hella Jongerius embroidered ceramic pot? Reproductions of 18th-Century Meissen porcelain dishware? A chair upholstered with stuffed animals? moss is the place for you. Says Doswell, "It's an inspiration and a lesson in design just to walk through the shop."

Looking for a Hella Jongerius embroidered ceramic pot? A chair upholstered with stuffed animals? moss is the place for you.

You'll even see moss' influence when you exit the shop and walk down what Williams calls, "the Greene Street corridor," home to places like Lush Baan, BoConcept, apt, and **CITE** 9 at 131 Greene Street, which carries Cecchini custom furniture, vintage Danish pieces, and Verner Panton lighting. Doswell considers CITE, "heaven sent for design enthusiasts."

While in SoHo, don't forget to pop into **AERO** 8 at 419 Broome Street and check out what Ranney calls, "the masculine warm modernism that owner Thomas O'Brien (the designer of the chic 60 Thompson Hotel) is known for." A short walk around the block to 455 Broadway will bring you to Manhattan's "long overdue" Japanese design store, **MUJI** 12, where



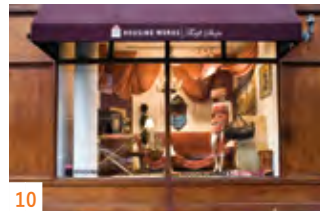
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you'll find items like minimal houseware objects, t-shirts shrink-wrapped in cubes, and disposable cardboard speakers. Williams sums up MUJI as "the quintessential source for Japan's version of 'less is more.' It's as friendly to the pocketbook as it is to the eye."

On the other end of the scale—yet just down the street—visit **PEARL RIVER MART** 6, at 477 Broadway. This Chinese home-furnishings emporium is "fantastic for inexpensive folding screens, bamboo chairs, paper lamp shades," says Williams, before adding this caveat: "The store may pose an ethical issue since we don't know the circumstances behind the manufacturing, and what we do know isn't good."

While you're downtown, both Ranney and Doswell suggest heading east (look for the New Museum to guide you) to John Derian Company at 6 East 2nd Street. "On the crafty side of design," says Doswell, "Derian employs artists who help create his charming *découpage* accessories" that depict famous works of art, botanical sketches, maps, and old documents. Besides *découpage*, Derian also carries "odd and lovely antiques, imports, quilts, table linens, and a line of stationery." Says Ranney, "I'm pretty sure the event stylist for the Mad Hatter's tea party created the tabletop with designs from John Derian."

A few blocks west at 39 Bond Street, there's **LOBEL MODERN** 11 with "furnishings that appeal to the James Bond and Tom Ford

in all of us," according to Ranney.

Another secret Ranney and Williams agree upon are the six **HOUSING WORKS THRIFT SHOPS** 10 scattered throughout Manhattan. You'll not only feel good about shopping at them since the profits fight AIDS and homelessness, but you'll also find amazing deals on 'pre-owned' art, furniture, books, and clothing. Says Ranney, "I know more people who have furnished their apartments with HW merchandise than from any other store. The reason is they get amazing donations from the best people (and inventory from design companies)." Ranney recounts that he bought an 80s desk with a sliding top for \$250—it was later appraised at about \$1,000.

Before you head uptown, there are two more spots on our must-do list: **ALAN MOSS** 5—not to be confused with moss—at 436 Lafayette Street, and White Trash at 304 East 5th Street. In the words of Ranney, "Last time I went to Alan Moss, Nina Garcia from *Elle Magazine* and *Project Runway*, was browsing, and a couple of distinguished European Royals were being fawned over while they decided on a very expensive lamp." (Next door to Alan Moss, Ranney suggests two other post-modern shops: DeLorenzo 1950 and Gallery 440.)

On the other end of the spectrum from Alan Moss but just a short walk to the east, you'll find White Trash, a tiny, warm East Village standard that's been a favorite of Ranney's for more



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than 20 years. Stuart Zamsky, the proprietor, is a well-known 'picker' who re-sells his treasures at amazing prices. There's always been a fantastic mix of Danish Modern, Knoll, Herman Miller, and brilliant obscure designers accented by random objects that seem to appear as if they were custom-made.

Doswell's next pick takes you uptown to the Museum of Arts & Design at 40 West 53rd Street (down the block from the refurbished MoMa and the stunning Folk Art Museum). The Museum of Arts & Design's shop, says Doswell, "is like a miniature and very colorful global market: vases from France, leather handbags from Italy, sleek tableware from Canada." The trip to the store is almost as educational as a trip to the museum: "each cluster of crafts, housewares, instruments, and ceramics are meticulously organized and accompanied by paper cards listing the artist's name and location."

The next stop is Williams' choice: **THE CONRAN SHOP** 7, nestled under the 59th Street Bridge and featuring modern furniture and household objects from London. Conveniently located near the Design and Decoration (or D&D) Building, The Conran Shop is surrounded by several antique and furnishing stores between 58th and 62nd Streets.

And just twelve blocks north of this uptown 'design district,' you'll find Doswell's final destination: Mariette Himes Gomez at 504 East 74th Street. Gomez, a world-renowned interior

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designer, "culls statement antique pieces from New York, Paris, and London to create a collection of transitional furniture that is neither too modern, nor overly traditional," says Doswell. "And her choices complete a study in design as they show a pure inclination towards the clean, simple, and elegant."

A good thing to keep in mind on your shopping journey is that many of the independent stores mentioned here will not charge New York state sales tax if you have your purchases sent out of state. So get yourself here and get shopping before the next unpredictable wave hits Manhattan.

EXIT



Golden Touch

Vancouver, Canada's design darling, finds itself front and center for the 2010 Winter Olympic Games.



Story by Kyra Shapurji
Photography by Linden Hass

Vancouver, British Columbia, takes everything in stride. It's a temperate city—both in climate and in the attitude of its citizens. But just because it's a stark personality contrast to most major metropolitan areas, doesn't mean a savvy design scene is lacking.

If design encompasses the art of reinvention, then Vancouver knows all too well how to re-create. The city was completely rebuilt after a fire leveled most of the downtown area in the earlier part of the 20th Century. So the façade of this Canadian city, in most respects, seems quite young.

With vigor on its side, Vancouver kept its design industry contemporary and local, so visitors looking to feed their craving for design won't be left wanting. The city offers a broad mix of stores that run the gamut from antique to crafty to contemporary and chic, all set in newly gentrified neighborhoods.

To get an insider's perspective of Vancouver's design scene, we handpicked local experts to tell us what 'design hits' are a

must when visiting "Van": Patricia Gray, acclaimed interior designer (Patricia Gray, Inc.); Omer Arbel, creative director of Canadian firm, Bocci; and Jan Halvarson and Earl Einarson of the popular design blog, Poppytalk. Their suggestions will have you traversing most of Vancouver's individual neighborhoods—the best way to soak up every corner of the city's culture.

All three of our experts recommend making the trip to the **2 MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY**, one of architect Arthur Erickson's masterpieces, at the University of British Columbia. From the museum's Great Hall, you can take in a floor-to-ceiling view of the Point Grey cliffs. Arbel calls the museum "a real contribution to international modernist discourse."

When you're ready to make your way downtown, stop by the **15 VANCOUVER LIBRARY SQUARE**, designed by Moshe Safdie. This seven-story structure, surrounded by a free-standing elliptical wall, features reading areas accessible by bridges and a roof-

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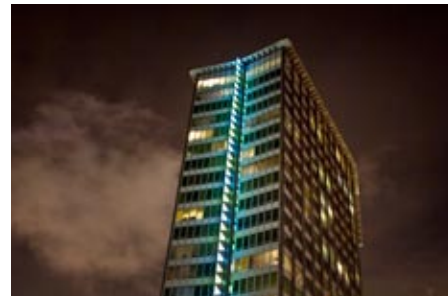
turned-public-garden. And since you're already in the tiny neighborhood of Crosstown, you should take the opportunity to visit **11 PROVIDE**. Recommended by Poppytalk for its selection of organic interior accessories, Provide's clean space is filled with abstract art, fashionable clothing, and even kimono by Human Nature that add to the store's tranquil atmosphere.

From Crosstown you can easily walk to Yaletown, where you'll find two of Gray's favorites—**9 LIGHT FORM** and **7 THE CROSS DÉCOR AND DESIGN**. Gray shops at Light Form for the "latest and greatest in 'designer' lighting fixtures because their products are international cutting-edge." She calls The Cross Décor and Design, "the hip place to shop" and says "their packing rivals Tiffany's." The beautifully expansive store has a 1914 heritage mark and features exposed beams in the ceiling and 5,000 square feet of luxury bedding, lighting, bath products, and vintage furniture.

While you're still in the relative downtown area, you might

head up to Gastown, named after infamous local, "Gassy Jack," a late 1800s saloon owner. Stop in at **8 INFORM INTERIORS** and be carried away by its four-floor showroom with "the usual suspect brands," according to Arbel, including Philippe Starck, Isamu Noguchi, and Eero Saarinen. But they carry other pieces that are more "magical and special" as Arbel notes, such as the "Sponge" chair, designed by Peter Traag for Edra. Another wonderful perk is the architecture library filled with every book or magazine you could want on the subject.

Granville Island is always a definite destination in any guidebook on Vancouver. It's not an island *per se*, but rather a peninsula that juts out into False Creek, filled with markets for artisans, food, and flower merchants. Within the Net Loft Building on "the island" lies a store called **5 PAPER-YA!** that Poppytalk says is "the place to go if you're looking to find anything paper related." Here, you're certain to find ornate and decorative supplies for your office: pens, seals, stamps,



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and origami materials. Once you’ve made your way into the Granville area, you can stop at **12 18 KARAT** for “contemporary products inspired by nature.” The store originally designed and imported floral containers for large volume users, but has since grown into the place for tabletop, textiles, and lifestyle products. Gray says the store’s accessories are “simple and totally unique” and adds she recently purchased a Selenite crystal log set for a client.

On the other end of the scale, the Vancouver antique stores don’t disappoint. **10 PANACHE ANTIQUES** by Granville Island is a good one to hit up if you’re looking for pieces from the 17th through the 20th Century, such as an exquisite shrine cabinet from the Meiji period. Gray has an understandable soft spot for this store—the owner gave her her first job back in the 80s—yet Gray wistfully mentions a “Lalique chandelier circa 1920 that I am coveting.” You’ll also want to visit **4 ARCHITECTURAL ANTIQUES**, recommends Arbel. This glimmering maze into the

past boasts the largest lighting collection in North America, and they perform restorations on the premises. Beautiful gramophones are scattered throughout the store, among unusual pieces like an 1860 four-arm gas fixture and a 17th Century Celtic castle sculpture.

The next store suggested by both Arbel and Poppytalk is **13 VANCOUVER SPECIAL**, a relatively new store named after the infamous house design from 1965-85 in Vancouver, Arbel says, adding: “Finally a young *and* intelligently curated design shop in Vancouver!” If you continue on the same street for another few blocks, you’ll reach **5 THE REGIONAL ASSEMBLY OF TEXT** that Poppytalk recommends for original papergoods designed by the owners. The tiny shop has an “old office” look with wooden and metal file cabinets, and a collection of vintage typewriters—perfect for their monthly letter writing nights. If you’re nostalgic for the days when typewriter font was the standard, then you’ll find yourself a couple hours later having forgotten



what’s next on your schedule. It’s a paper junkie’s dream come true. Last but not least is **6 LIBERTY**, a design store cultivated with strict taste by its managers, so when you step inside, it immediately feels like an Alice in Wonderland-world infused with shades of black, white, and purple that make stuffed crows, modern gothic chairs, and table linens shine.

A must-see when the sun goes down is the **14 BC ELECTRIC BUILDING**, renamed “The Electra” when its lights are turned on. Originally built for BC Hydro, one of Canada’s largest electric utilities, the building was a collaboration between the modernist architect Ron(al) James Thom and the painter B.C. (Bertram Charles) Binning, who designed the blue and green porcelain mosaic tiling on the lower floors.

Closely situated near the airport, check out the recently completed **1 RICHMOND OLYMPIC OVAL**. The city took sustainability to a new level when it decided to use local, resourced pine trees to create a “wave roof” for the structure. The links

of wood panels create an undulating, rippling effect, a unique touch for the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. But that’s just another example of Vancouver’s willingness to think innovatively and in the present.

Vancouver may be considered a quiet, placid city with a “take it as it comes” attitude, but its design industry holds its own next to the larger ones south of the border. And yes, it may be architecturally young, but Vancouver definitely doesn’t feel naïve. Globally aware and culturally receptive, you realize why Vancouver makes perfect sense to hold the upcoming 2010 Winter Olympic Games, a melting pot of cultures, athletes, and *some* design. Vancouver is ready to show the world that creativity flourishes best in a city where ingenuity is proudly upheld.

EXIT



The Design Winds of Chicago

The City by the Lake is a place where art and culture foster a local design scene on the cutting edge.



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The city teemed with the possibility of a life lived with panache, where something in the water motivated people to fight for their principles.

Story by Dave Bourla

Photography by Linden Hass

The media's continual search for what "Real America" actually means has me thinking about Chicago. The city's "great fire" and almost instantaneous reconstruction happened over 125 years ago, but that same sense of hope and renewal still sweeps through the air like a breeze off Lake Michigan.

Like many in my generation, my first glimpses of Chi-town came through the lens of the late John Hughes. The city teemed with the possibilities of a life lived with panache, where something in the water motivated people to fight for their principles. Recognizing this dreamy confidence, it seems natural that these films' audience members played a vital part in throwing off earlier political norms to install a Chicago resident as the United States' first black president. Each year, those who have stuck around take a chance on their beloved Cubs, recognizing

that while incredible advances in science, business, and the arts take place at Northwestern and Chicago universities, the only true ivy league resides within Wrigley Field's brick walls.

This unbridled optimism allows the city to thrive and helps Chicagoans foster a design aesthetic that reflects the opportunities inherent in the modern age. Few pieces encompass this spirit of discovery better than Daley Plaza's now-iconic **2 CHICAGO PICASSO**. Though it no longer sparks the controversy it did at its dedication in 1967 (the piece so confused residents that some asked the city to replace it with a statue of Chicago Cubs' legend Ernie Banks), this unidentifiable beast continues to invite admirers to identify its meaning for themselves.

If you're looking for a personal connection in the city, it can happen at **8 CASTE**. Located at 521 North Halsted Street, northwest along the Chicago River from the Picasso, Caste's clean,

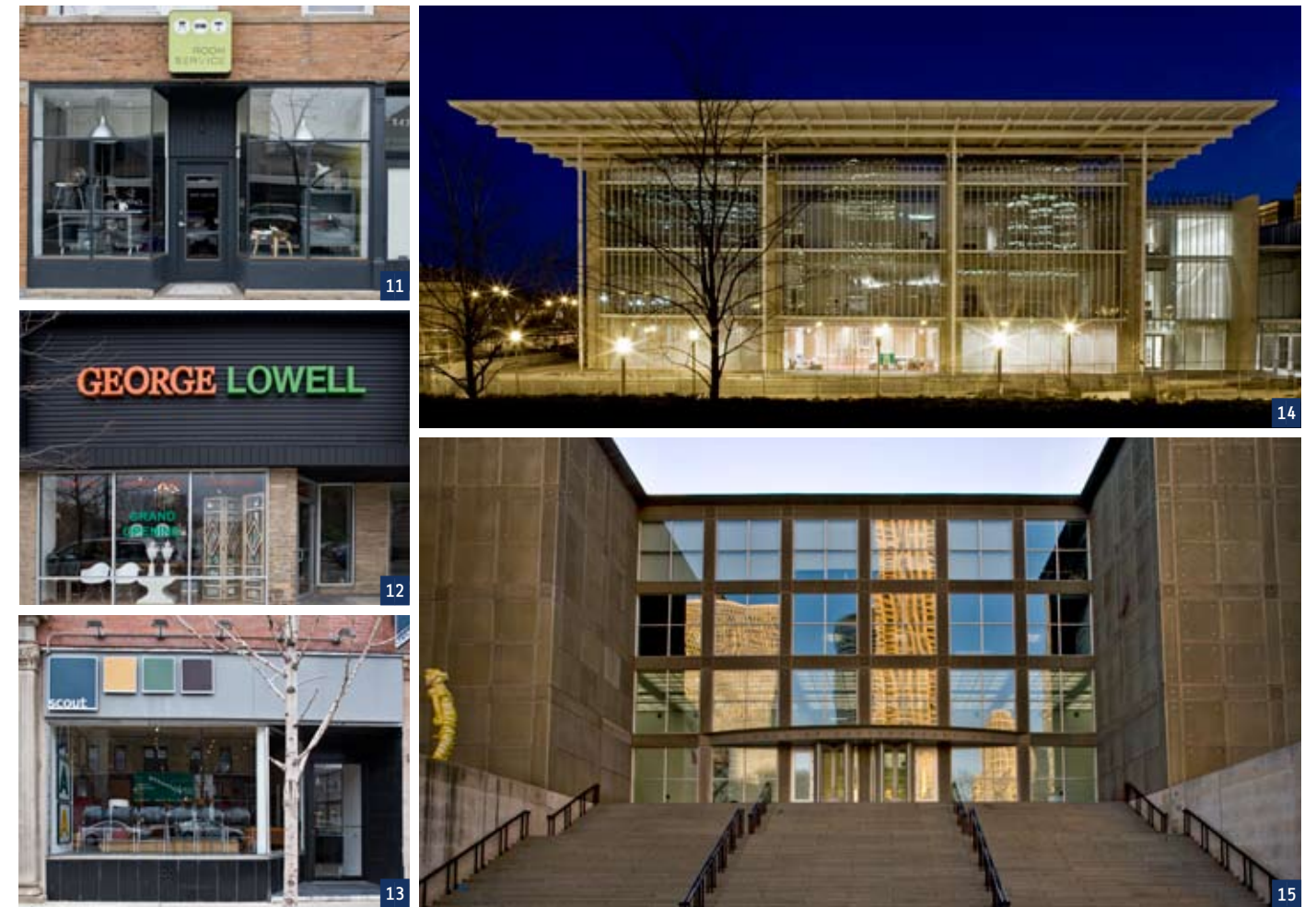
open space houses furniture, art, and home accessories hand-crafted by co-owner Ty Best from exotic woods and carefully shaped metals. Showcasing these pieces helps the boutique ensure that each customer finds a unique creation to demonstrate his or her own individuality.

Chicagoans are naturally young at heart, and one store to stop in for some childhood quality time is at 1953-55 West Chicago Avenue, home to **4 ROTOFUGI DESIGNER TOY STORE & GALLERY**. Owners Kirby and Whitney Kerr's extensive collection took my breath away. Feeling as if I had peeked inside Takashi Murakami's mind and discovered the inner and outer limits of his creativity, Rotofugi seems to have found a number of local Chicago artists to create tiny figurines based upon this artistic pop art style.

A short walk away is one of Chicago's more terrestrially-

focused spots, **7 SPROUT HOME**, at 745 North Damen Avenue. Like their Brooklyn store, not only does Sprout carry an overwhelming supply of plants, they also have individually designed water-delivery systems to appeal to each specific perennial that the heart desires. Sprout offers design and installation services, getting as personal as you want them to. And it's not all potted plants and whimsical watering cans; Sprout also carries a fine furniture collection. Pieces like their "Loft Timber Bench" particularly caught my eye—what fills a person with more hope than thinking they're sitting on the ceiling?

Continuing eastward towards Lake Michigan and beginning in Edgewater, I stepped into **11 ROOM SERVICE** at 5438 North Clark Street. The motto, "Live With What You Love," encourages buyers to trust their instincts in a storefront filled with



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charming current and vintage pieces. Modern multi-colored blown-glass vases somehow mesh with their old world credenzas, a vision best imagined while sitting on one of the modern seating options the store sells.

Just down the road are two spots that truly embody the concept of classic simplicity. Both **13 SCOUT** at 5221 North Clark Street and **5 WHITE ATTIC** at 5225 showcase a healthy dose of urban antiques. Scout offers furnishings that eschew baroque adornments in favor of clean and simple lines. White Attic puts its stark, egg-shaped baubles and eye-popping mirrors next to a modern “lamp bar,” where power is returned to the customer. At the “lamp bar,” customers can design their own lamp from 17 ceramic bases, five shade sizes, and close to 100 fabric shade options—customers can walk away with exactly what they had in mind.

A few storefronts away at 5061 on the same street brings the

wanderer to **9 FOURSIDED**, a framing gallery and appreciators of art. Continuing south and back onto North Halsted Street at 3337, I stumbled upon **6 I.D.** and its incredibly large “modern eyewear” collection combined with a “modern home” side. Owner Steven Burgert looks to a future in home décor that’s “more geometric, more bold, that pushes the edge of Modernism.” Beyond cutting-edge frames from Jean Lafont and Tom Ford and choice furnishings from BluDot, Spectrum, and Bensen, I.D. carries international designers “people can’t generally get in Chicago.” Droog, Iittila, and free-trade Transglass vessels from Guatemala mingle with the work of local designers such as TIVI, who sells a line of cuffs, rings, and purses made from ebony and metal.

Perhaps a little less on the cater-to-you kick is George Lowell Arduser’s storefront **12 GEORGE LOWELL** at 5123 North Clark Street. Arduser does want to meet your needs, but it’s probably

better if your tastes match his. His work displays a very definite sense of design, which provides a slightly modern addendum to antiquated austerity.

This differs greatly from the waterside whimsy of 613 North State Street’s **10 P.O.S.H.** A short walk from **15 MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART**’s glass-windowed façade, P.O.S.H. provides an ode to the American flea market. This shop tailors to those who like an international spin to their vintage tableware, with French water pitchers from Vin Francoeur and Belgian transferware cake stands that have employees gushing about the possibilities found in combining ceramic rounds and metal bases.

Wandering down along the water to circle back and enjoy the public offerings in Millennium Park, I reached the plazas that comprise this mall and found the recently-opened **14 MODERN WING AT THE ART INSTITUTE**. Renzo Piano’s I-beam

shaped structure underwhelmed me, while some of Piano’s other works, such as the Zentrum Paul Klee in Bern, Switzerland, are quite profound.

Finally, Anish Kapoor’s **3 CLOUD GATE** stands alone, offering a wide variety of reflections, including an expansive, singular view from the outside and infinite varieties from underneath. Like Frank Gehry’s floral **1 PRITZKER PAVILION**, “The Bean” offers the chance to consider individual interpretations in a public space, to see unique properties and tastes as part of an overarching continuum of possibility and discovery. According to Gehry, “Chicago, in my humble opinion, is the best American city traditionally and just visually.” The Pavilion, like the city itself, deserves as many looks as Aeolus, the keeper of the winds, allows.

EXIT



The Perks of Portland

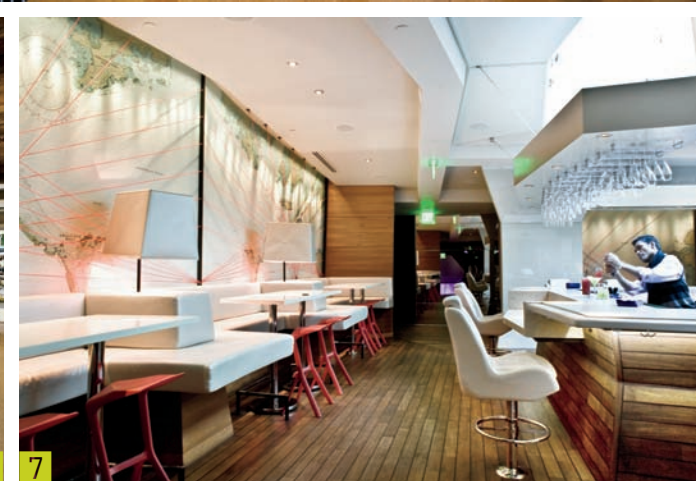
Creative talents and independent minds have forged a bulwark against boredom in America's greenest city

Story by Ashley Gartland

Photography by Linden Hass

It's not surprising that Portland is a design-driven city, with top-shelf creative firms such as Nike and Wieden + Kennedy calling it home. What's surprising to outsiders is that the people shaping the scene have little to do with these recognizable names. Rather, it's the emerging architects, designers, craftsmen, and artists who are driving the city's cultural growth. "Portland is a very accessible city for young creatives," says noted architect Jeff Kovel of Skylab Architecture.

Kovel and others have carved out spaces for artistic expression in each of the city's main quadrants. Take the gritty Eastside: Kovel put the area on the map in 2004 with his **DOUG FIR LOUNGE**, an offbeat restaurant, bar, and live music venue whose design could be defined as '50s modernism meets cosmopolitan truck-stop diner. In the upstairs bar, onion rings, burgers, and "Grandma's Meatloaf" are served, while the downstairs lounge hosts rock shows for a late-night crowd.



Next door, the 80-room **JUPITER HOTEL** looks like it was lifted from a '60s California postcard. Also open since 2004, the hotel was a design collaboration between Skylab and owners Kelsey Bunker and Tod Breslau, featuring recently updated guestrooms with modern headboards made from Ikea-like furniture, mod chandeliers, hand-painted wall murals, and Rothko-esque bright colors.

The workers who frequent the Jupiter for happy-hour drinks labor nearby at **1 BSIDE6**, a new, seven-story office building. Designed by Works Partnership Architecture with Le Corbusier in mind, the project inhabits a simple concrete frame that creates four window-filled façades, interspersed with "city rooms" that offer views of downtown at its best.

Elsewhere on the Eastside, newish developments such as the former food bank called The Hub are home to life-style boutiques, including the hybrid florist-décor shop **8 INK & PEAT**. Clientele frequent this light-filled boutique to browse country-chic wares that include rustic pottery, letterpress greeting cards, and brightly patterned pillows.

Nowhere in Portland is the design scene so centralized as

it is in the Westside's posh Pearl District. Formerly a shady neighborhood characterized by dilapidated warehouses, this pedestrian-friendly, art-loving community is now marked by high-rise condos interspersed with exceptional dining locales. There's one restaurant that only vegetarian denizens won't travel to—**4 BEAST**. With an intimate, tiny setting of two communal tables framing an open kitchen, the restaurant boasts a "frank appreciation of meat." Chef Naomi Pomeroy creates weekly menus and keeps them to six-course, prix fixe dinners with only two seatings per evening. Menus have included potato-leek soup topped with maple-glazed bacon and chervil salsa, and shredded rabbit over spätzle. For another helping of dessert, stop at one of two locations of **10 CACAO**. Owners Jesse Manis and Aubrey Lindley, boast what they call "chocolate prêt-à-porter meets chocolate haute." The shop has more than 35 kinds of the sweet stuff, offered in both chewable and drinkable form.

Elsewhere in the Pearl, modern furniture stores like **3 HIVE** feed the decorating desires of local loft owners, while the **MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY CRAFT** invites contemplation about

design with rotating exhibits and public programs, complemented by monthly First Thursday gallery walks and annual shows dedicated to contemporary art, including fall's Time-Based Art Festival.

Nearby is the West End, a budding shopping district sandwiched between the Pearl and downtown. Here, young professionals peruse the wares at **CANOE**, a modern home shop with a stock of simple, functional products. Close by is the headquarters of **2 ZIBA**, a design consultancy, built in 2008 by Holst Architecture. The firm used native Douglas Fir throughout the 53,000-square-foot LEED Gold-certified space, keeping up with the city's renowned environmental standards. There's even an auditorium open for public events.

Just a few blocks away sits the soulful **9 ACE HOTEL**. This smart, nostalgic renovation of a 1912 hotel stretches an entire block and has 79 rooms flaunting vintage décor and wall murals from emerging artists such as street artist-skateboarder Brent Wick. An adjacent event space known as The Cleaners hosts regular events such as the bike-themed party, Artcrank.

Within walking distance from the eco-chic Ace Hotel sits

THE NINES HOTEL, which houses Kovel's 9,000-square-foot **7 DEPARTURE RESTAURANT + LOUNGE** features a new-millennium sheen, softened by an ocean-liner motif and Asian cuisine. The polished wood-paneled dining room has nautical map murals, marine-inspired teak decking, and an outdoor space that offers arresting views of downtown. Also located downtown is a veteran hot spot, **SAUCEBOX**, where, since 1995 chic patrons have gathered for cocktails, as well as pan-Asian and Pacific Island cuisine.

Still need some retail therapy? Then **6 RELISH** on the Northwest side is worth visiting for another round of shopping. This modern-home boutique attracts shoppers with an affinity for local green goods such as architect Jeanie Lai's line of felt jewelry, runners, and coasters.

Nike and gang may have set the stage for a burgeoning design scene, but it's the under-the-radar individuals like Lai who are taking Portland to the next level. Says Kovel, "There's a low barrier of entry here, allowing for many early-career opportunities for self-expression." So far, it's proven to be a winning design for success.

EXIT