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Just in time for spring break:



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# shop

By KRISTI TURNQUIST  
THE OREGONIAN

Like any vibrant city, Portland's downtown is a concentrated batch of shop-rich opportunities, with department stores, Pioneer Place mall, boutiques and other assorted cool stops. But to get a true taste of what sets our town apart, sometimes you need to get out to the neighborhoods. Stroll along the streets, mingle with the locals and tap into some purely Portland scenes.

Let's start in Southeast, one of the first inner east side areas to make the transition from blue-collar unpretentious to bohemian unpretentious. The heart of it: Southeast Hawthorne Boulevard, an array of eclectic, mostly independently owned shops. Try **Powell's Books for Home and Garden** for a double-header featuring two local obsessions: books and gardens. You can find authoritative volumes on everything from wine to landscape design. Don't forget the impulse-buy goodies including candles, yard art, decorative pots, picture frames, glassware and scented products even guys would like (I can recommend Demeter Fragrance Library's "Wet Garden" — really).

Continue browsing at **Greg's**, which offers retro-hip cards, posters, stationery, locally made coasters with kitschy graphics, the ever-popular Queen Bee handbags and ideas for gifts when you're completely stumped about what to get that quirky, funny pal.

Now, it's on to Northeast, where once-sleepy streets have turned into shoppers' paradise. In Beaumont Village, check out **Amenity Shoes**, which has a sunny, light-filled space and atmosphere befitting that upbeat name. Comfort is key here, but that doesn't mean abandoning fashion for clunky hoofing-it wear. Not when there are strappy pumps from Kenneth Cole's Gentle Souls line (with flaxseed pillows tucked into the footbed), butter-soft leather flats from Soft and fabulous handbags in spring colors. They carry men's shoes, as well.

Head north toward Alberta Street and the choices are dizzyingly diverse. Don't miss **Office PDX**, a fascinating hybrid of work supplies, gallery, design studio and nostalgic blast from the past. Modern designs mix with mid-century pieces for a pleasing jumble of weathered steel desks, vintage typewriters (the Royal "Pink" goes

for \$200) and up-to-the-microsecond portfolio covers, laptop protectors and Japanese import backpacks.

On North Mississippi Avenue, the shops just keep on opening. But one of the best is still **Pin-Me Apparel**, a sterling example of the Portland trend of indie retailers carrying clothing you're not likely to find at the average chain store. At Pin-Me there's a range of items from dresses to accessories, chosen with a curator's eye for what's wearable but not boring. Look for springy dresses, handbags and wallets by Orla Kiely — love the ones with bright, colorful prints that look like something you might have found covering a couch in 1960.

And you can't stroll the avenue without a stop at **The Meadow**, because even this food-conscious town offers nothing like it. Where else can you find salt, chocolate, flowers and wine! The dark chocolate selection is alluring, but **The Meadow** is known primarily as a source for salts most of us never knew existed. Fortunately, there's a handy guide for suggested uses. For popcorn? Go with the Alaea Volcanic. Fish? Fiore di Cervia. Other choices: Himalayan Holy Lake, Barrique Chardonnay, Bengal Blue, Molokai Black Lava and my favorite, Murray Darling.

Downtown, do as rocker Beth Ditto does: Check out the thrifty finds at **Red Light Clothing Exchange** on Southwest 10th Avenue. Ditto, frontwoman for the Gossip, makes her home in Portland, though she's the toast of the U.K. In an article for the *Guardian* in London, Ditto called Red Light "the best place to find vintage clothes in any size." Recently, the racks included a late-'50s sort of cream floral brocade swing coat by Fred Ungar of California, \$74; a gray Wilson's suede cropped jacket for \$18; and enough feather boas, plastic sunglasses and knit caps to clothe everyone from drag queens to indie band members.

Then keep walking into the Pearl District, home



base of some of the city's modernizers, with shops to match **Zen** and you feel immediately the soft music. The soft fabric fluffly bathrobes). The adorab Or the soft scents of bath and handmade soaps, body bars, b Chinese food takeout contains sugar scrubs with playful na Beach"). You feel better ahead

Portland has a healthy supply colorful, exotic and funky in **Cargo** is a must if you're hu with a twist. Inside the 20,000 house are shoulder bags made be recycled Southeast Asian p cutest, for \$28, has three pink-ing blissed-out); red fleece Be tique Chinese cabinet with large Tibetan painted pine ce century Shinto Japanese shrin

After all this, you might be fortable place to have a seat. At in Northwest, you'll find one enduring centers for quality f decorative goodies, linens an **Right now**, for example, the c wooden Adirondack-style ch iron patio tables to tiny egg c Even if you can't afford to dro thing like the Gatsby Sofa, you it. Here, as with so many Port is half the fun.