

BY HUNTER L. GORINSON

Capitol Hemp

1802 Adams Mill Road NW

202-332-8191

www.capitolhemp.com



Capitol Hemp: Wall-to-wall hemp (literally) and hula-hoops too.

OK, let's get this out of the way – Capitol Hemp is not a reggae thumping, incense-muddled head shop. Rather, the stock at this mid-city basement boutique reads like a bullet-point presentation on the virtues of that most versatile, if somewhat controversial, of fibers. Perhaps to prove a point, owners Adam Eidlinger and Alan Amsterdam (yes, he's aware of the irony) even went so far as to build their Adams Morgan storefront out of 2,000 pounds of pressed-hemp construction board.

And the duo couldn't be prouder of the results. Capitol Hemp boasts the Washington area's largest selection of all things hemp – from footwear to foodstuffs – and has been briskly moving their selection of durable winter wear, like HoodLamb jackets with hemp outer shell (\$200), out the door in the wake of the blizzard of '10.

But as Eidlinger is quick to note, hemp is capable of producing much more than earth- and animal-friendly textiles. Workout junkies are now stopping by to swap out their whey protein for hemp powder (16 ounces, \$37) and foodies, too, are turning up in search of hemp seed oil (8 ounces, \$11.99) for salad dressings or the occasional low temperature sauté. The store even stocks every single Dr. Bronner's bath and body product and is the sole area source for 30-percent-off refills of the good doctor's famed Castile soaps.

Legendary Beast

1520 U St. NW

202-797-1234

www.legendarybeast.com

Unlike other jewelry dealers, Anne Fox could care less about precious stones and carat counts. She started selling vintage pieces straight out of high school in 1971, and the same two principles – style and story – still apply when she's sorting the more than 1,000 pieces of authentic period jewelry and faux recreations that spill off the shelves at her 4-year-old U Street tribute to opulence gone by, Legendary Beast.

Almost everything at the Beast has had a life before – quite literally. (When

asked where she sources her stock, Fox deadpans, "Dead people ... they can't take it with them.") The cases are divided by "feeling" – tribal, mid-century modern, plastic, Egyptian, the list goes on – with items running the gamut from a blue glass necklace (\$250) that's a dead ringer for the Titanic's titanic MacGuffin, to first-wave punk spike and rubber wristbands (\$25).

According to Fox, men these days are coming in to troll through her selection of '60s "Mad Men" cuff links (\$35 and up), while women are in the midst of



Legendary Beast: For the distinguished, foppish or pierced gentleman in one's life.

a full-blown Victorian revival that has them seeking out ornate, imperialism-era pieces like her lion's head brooch (\$225).

Still, one needn't be attuned to current tastemaker chic to enjoy the Beast's decade-tripping reveries. Nostalgia-prone shoppers are always easily sold on costume cocktail rings (\$25 and up), not to mention one-of-a-kind oddities like a chunky, 1950s dragon bejeweled bracelet (\$225) that even Fox notes may be a bit "over the top." For Legendary Beast, that's really saying something.

RCKNDY

1515 U St. NW
202-332-5639
www.RCKNDY.com

Just when you thought your own backyard could never possibly benefit from the work of Buckminster Fuller, here comes RCKNDY – where they'll sell you a birdhouse, but only if it's shaped like a geodesic dome (\$60). That same smart, snappy eye for home décor (and the tchotchkes that come with it) pervades the store's large U Street showroom, turning up in other eye-catchers like their Metro map shower curtain (\$29) and a firecracker-red centerpiece made out of melted down army men (\$400).

Still RCKNDY isn't all urban-nerd style over everyday substance. In between the high-end beds and chairs, lamps and dresser drawers, there's also an ample array of practical devices. The Blu Dot Juice Box (\$129), for instance, routes all too numerous cell phone and iPod chargers through one aesthetically simple piece of woodwork, while the talking alarm clocks (\$49) welcome one into the morning via an anthropomorphic robot face. (Punch it in the nose to hit snooze ... again.) If this all sounds a bit "Pee Wee's Playhouse," keep in mind that the original most definitely did not have a wet bar. RCKNDY carries an entire line of cocktail ware from Italian kitchenware designers Alessi (with select items currently going for 30% off).



Army men: still cool, but slightly less playable, care of RCKNDY.

Red Onion Records & Books

1901 18th St. NW
202-986-2718

www.redonionrecordsandbooks.com



One man, one room and a whole lot of alphabetization just waiting to be done at Red Onion.

Talk about a teenage dream realized. Since opening Red Onion three years ago, owner Joshua Harkavy has managed to squeeze the sum of his literary and musical knowhow onto his store's shelves. The results feel as much like a clubhouse as they do a secondhand record-cum-book store.

It's a small joint, and, where the less discerning could have filled shelf space with Grishams as far the eye can see, Red Onion's book selection is heavy on

cult writers ("Art to Choke Hearts" by Henry Rollins and "El Borbaj" by Charles Burns both turned up during our visit) and non-fiction, including sections devoted to travel and women's studies.

While one can find a near-complete selection of DC bands past and present in the CD racks (average price \$7), it's clear that the real labor of love here is the vinyl. The bulk of Red Onion's stock is jazz and rock, so it can take a little digging to get to those gems like "Sonar Safari," the long lost 1983 LP from DC's original surf band, the Insect Surfers (\$15).

Outside of the big two, however, the genre classifications get really specific. The "audiophile" section cordons off those precious few quadraphonic LPs still in existence, but for some truly interesting juxtapositions, check out the "spoken word/strange" bin where comps of old Peter Lorre radio shows (\$14.50) and Jesse Jackson's poetry (\$4.50) get wedged up against "A Field Guide to Bird Songs" (\$6.50). ★

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KIDS ON ICE NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT



Kids On Ice community skating program is in need of your support! With the elimination of the District of Columbia appropriations and the downturn in the economy, the organization is projecting a serious financial shortfall for 2010. The Board of Directors and staff of Friends of Fort Dupont Ice Arena are doing everything possible to raise the funds needed to continue Kids On Ice, but it will take the strong support of the local community to be successful. The organization is acting on faith that the challenge will be overcome and moving forward with plans for summer camps and programs.

To make a donation or for more information on summer programs, please visit www.fdia.org

United Way # 7193

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