

RETAIL THERAPY

BY SCOTT FAZZINI



Palace 5ive

I've admitted it before, and will undoubtedly repeat myself in the future: I'm a dork. I'm not talking about those pseudo-fashionable Urban Outfitters dorks, but the genuine article. Having said that so that you'll understand why I might find it difficult to shop in stores that are silently understood to be reserved for the "cool kids," I do manage, however, to always find things that suit my character even in the "hippest" of shops.

Palace 5ive is one of those said hep shops. Their main demographic, I assume, is the young skateboarder. (*Note: I'm neither young nor a skateboarder.) They stock all of the stereotypical skate-related apparel and accessories, but also a great selection of items that are very much atypical of the skater genre... or at least my uneducated idea of the skater genre.

This shop is loaded with shoes. They carry an impressive collection of Tom's (starting at \$44.), this generations Chuck Taylor All Star's. The venerable skate shoe company Vans has introduced some prep to their lineup. The Zapato Lo-Pro (\$50.) is in appearance a boat shoe, but constructed as a supportive skate shoe.

If shoes aren't your thing for some strange reason, you can chose between a great array of Hershel bags and accessories. The canvas and leather Little America backpack (\$140.) made me a little weak in the knees. You'll also find, displayed neatly inside of glass vitrines, rows of sunglasses, like the classic Persol 450's (\$270.), and watches. Oh, and they have skateboards, too.

Palace 5ive: 2216 14th Street NW 202/299-9008

Room & Board

With a mammoth overhaul, including the addition of a penthouse complete with wraparound rooftop deck providing sweeping views of the bustling intersection of 14th and U Street, Room & Board DC was born. The company was founded in 1980, and continues to sell well designed modern / transitional furniture which is all made in America by a small family owned business.

Room & Board's design point of view is apparent the moment that you walk through the large glass front doors. The aesthetic is clean and simple, and the furniture is void of any fussy details. The emphasis is more on form and materials. They provide furnishings and accessories for everything inside and outside of the home.

The Brooks sofa (starting at \$899.) is a perfect scale for many of the smaller spaces in the area. Their upholstery is offered in a stock fabric, or you can choose from a wide array of textiles ranging from solid and neutral to vibrant and boldly patterned.

They also offer a tight collection of mid-century design classics; the Eames leather lounge (starting at \$3,579.), Nelson benches (starting at \$729.), and the stunningly sculptural Wegner Shell Chair in brindled leather (\$3,390.), to name just a few.

Room & Board is a terrific source for all of your home furnishing wants and needs.

Room and Board: 1840 14th treet NW 202/729-8300



Martha's Outfitters

There is a shortage of actual thrift stores in DC, especially in the ever-burgeoning U Street area. Martha's Outfitters is an offshoot of Martha's Table, an organization designed to help families and individuals by providing educational programs, food and clothing. They accept gently worn donations, and stock an variety of goods; dvd's, books, housewares, clothing and more.

Because of the nature of the acquisition of product at Martha's Outfitters the assortment is ever-changing, and totally unique. Dvd's (\$4.) mingle on shelves with dog-eared paperback books (\$3.). The housewares department is filled with handmade pottery, monogrammed stemware, and the odd electronic gadget.

They've also got, as is to be expected in a thrift store, a plethora of clothes, for men, but mainly women. Men's button-downs (\$6.) are neatly pressed and hung. There are racks and racks of jeans (\$6.), jackets, and



skirts all very fairly priced.

Martha's Outfitters serves a good cause, and is a great alternative to the much higher priced, though more excitingly stocked, vintage shops in the area.

Martha's Outfitters: 2114 14th Street NW 202/328-6608



And Beige

And Beige is hands-down one of my favorite furniture shops in the District. The product assortment is refreshingly modern with timeless characteristics. In terms of visual display, the store is immaculately well-appointed. The owner, Daren Miller, is a former corporate merchandiser and buyer, and a true gentleman possessing a rare combination of business savvy and creative genius.

I met up with Daren and asked him to share with me four of his favorite fall finds.

1. 30" tall ivory and chocolate taper candles (\$23. for a pair). On a personal note, I buy these all the time, usually in black. They are dramatic, beautiful, and last a lifetime.
2. Large antler taper candle holders (89.).
3. Ruched velvet pillows in a deep "cool" 1970's orange (\$275. each).
4. Boxes, boxes, boxes. Nesting / stacking gray felt boxes with leather snap closures (\$330. for a set of three). These are not only decorative, but practical too.

There is a lot to discover at And Beige. Daren has thoughtfully curated a varied collection of product and price points to please a wide range of clients. Stop by and see for yourself.

And Beige; 1781 Florida Avenue NW 202/234-1557 ◆