

Shopping & Style



EDITORS' PICKS

BEST EMERGING VINTAGE PROS

Sheila Teruty and Maggie Solvesen and of Plume

What happens when two wardrobe stylists with a shared love for vintage apparel get together? For Maggie Solvesen and Sheila Teruty, the result is Plume, one of Milwaukee's newest vintage boutiques.

At Plume's Bay View storefront, Solvesen and Teruty provide accessible vintage apparel for "birds of all feathers." The name Plume is derived from the Spanish word "plumas," meaning feathers. The inspiration for the name arrived when Solvesen was mid-run.

"I was taking a jog around a lake and there were ducks and I was thinking to myself, 'I don't like birds of a feather, I like birds of all feathers. That's so much more inclusive,'" Solvesen explains.

Solvesen and Teruty opened Plume in January. The shop features vintage men's and women's apparel and a selection of new clothing and local handmade goods, including jewelry and home accents.

"We are vintage, but it's modern, wearable vintage," Solvesen says. "We offer a range of sizes and styles, so the hope is that everybody can find something they like."

Shoppers will find plenty of statement pieces, but the store also features basic, everyday items in a range of prices.

Before opening Plume, Solvesen and Teruty

both worked as independent vintage curators and stylists. Solvesen sold vintage apparel at various markets and street festivals, and Teruty sold her finds on eBay and Etsy.

The women connected when Teruty was part-owner of the Cocoon Room, a now-defunct boutique and venue in Riverwest. The duo collaborated on a fashion show at Cocoon Room and quickly became friends and business partners, traveling together to vintage shows as far as Tennessee to sell their vintage finds.

The decision to open a brick-and-mortar store came naturally, and the burgeoning boutique scene in Bay View provided the perfect home for their vision.

"I feel like Bay View has always been a creative and open-minded community and there's just been this blossoming trend of interesting business here," Solvesen notes. —L.S.

BEST FURNITURE BUYER WITH A LEGACY HISTORY

Randi K. of BILTRITE Furniture-Leather-Mattresses

Randi Schachter, better known as Randi K., knew she wanted to go into the family business from a young age.

Today, Randi K. is the face of BILTRITE Furniture-Leather-Mattress and a fourth-generation member of the Komisar family business. Over the years she has worked with her grandparents, parents, aunt, brother and sister-in-law, and she brings her sense of style and interior design expertise to her work at BILTRITE Furniture-Leather-Mattress.

It's hard to pinpoint Randi's role with a succinct job title — she handles advertising and marketing, manages the sales floor, assists with human resources and also works on the sales floor herself.

"All the family members laugh when somebody asks, 'What's your title?'" Randi muses. "We do a little bit of everything here."

As a small, locally owned business, BILTRITE Furniture-Leather-Mattress has a long history in the Milwaukee community. The business started in 1928 on Mitchell Street and moved to its current location in Greenfield in 2006. This year, BILTRITE Furniture-Leather-Mattress celebrates its 90th anniversary.

Randi says she's proud of the unique product mix available at the store, where customers can find one-of-a-kind pieces at a range of price points. "You're not going to see it at the chain stores," she notes.



While Randi says her own style is “very modern and funky,” she puts her personal preferences aside to help customers find furniture that suits their own needs and tastes. The showroom is set up by category, making it easy for shoppers who arrive in pursuit of a specific piece.

BILTRITE Furniture-Leather-Mattress also specializes in mattresses, which is an industry that has recently been shaken up by the rise of online mattress retailers. But buying a mattress online can’t beat the experience of testing one out in person, Randi says.

“The online (mattress) world is about marketing first, and the bottom of the totem pole is the quality of the product,” Randi explains. “You need to test out sleep in a bed, properly ... we live it, we breathe it, every day.” —L.S.

MILWAUKEE’S BEST SOUVENIR PROPRIETRESSES

Colleen McCarrier and Hannah Jablonski of HANmade

Years ago, Colleen McCarrier noticed a hole in the Milwaukee souvenir market. As she traveled to other cities around the country, McCarrier often encountered retro tablecloths from the 1950s that depicted quirky illustrations and maps unique to each city.

“I thought, ‘Milwaukee should really do something like this,’ but I didn’t really have any know-how,” McCarrier says.

Thanks to a serendipitous encounter, McCarrier met her cousin’s daughter, Hannah Jablonski, who also happens to be an artist and graphic designer who could bring her vision to life.

In 2011, the cousins created HANmade Milwaukee, specializing in bandanas, puzzles, postcards and other products that feature Jablonski’s original illustrations of the Milwaukee lakefront.

McCarrier says she’s the “ideas gal” behind HANmade while Jablonski is the “art gal,” bringing her design sense to the souvenirs they sell in local gift shops and at festivals around the region.

Jablonski notes that her whimsical illustrations are influenced by old tablecloths and maps from the 1950s, but with a modern twist. Each illustration features bright, bold colors to portray some of the lakefront’s most iconic locales, from Discovery World to the Old North Point Water Tower.

“It’s been cool to continue to put Colleen’s ideas on paper,” Jablonski says.

The Milwaukee lakefront bandana is HANmade’s signature product. Although the original inspiration for HANmade came from the tablecloths McCarrier spotted during her travels, the duo decided that a bandana would be more practical. HANmade’s other popular products include jigsaw puzzles and postcards.

Jablonski has recently introduced new designs to HANmade’s repertoire, including an “up north” Wisconsin design and a Wisconsin party design that showcases “the kind of foods you’d find in your auntie’s rec room,” McCarrier explains, from deviled eggs to raw beef and onions.

Jablonski’s signature style, featuring thoughtful details hidden throughout each illustration, is what makes HANmade’s souvenirs stand out in a crowded marketplace, McCarrier notes.

“To me the whole idea is that there’s more to Milwaukee and Wisconsin than meets the eye,” she says. —L.S.

READERS’ CHOICE AWARDS

Best Women’s Clothing Boutique

Winner: Faye’s
Runner-up: Lizzibeth

Best Men’s Clothing Boutique

Winner: Harleys:
A Modern Man Store
Runner-up:
Mark Berman & Son

Best Children’s Clothing Boutique

Winner: Little Monsters
Runner-up: Goo Goo Gaa Gaa

Best Paperie

Winner: Broadway Paper
Runner-up: Paper Source

Best Plant Store

Winner: Bayside Garden Center
Runner-up: Stein’s Garden & Home

Best Shoe Store

Winner: Stan’s Fit for Your Feet
Runner-up: Shoo Inc.

Best Fine Jewelry Store

Winner: Kessler’s Diamonds
Runner-up: Schwanke-Kasten Jewelers

Best Health Foods/Grocery Store

Winner: Sendik’s Food Market
Runner-up: Outpost Natural Foods

Best Wedding Gowns

Winner: Gigi of Mequon

Runner-up: Amelishan Bridal

Best Home Accessories and Furniture Store

Winner: Fringe Interior Design & Home Furnishings
Runner-up: west Elm

