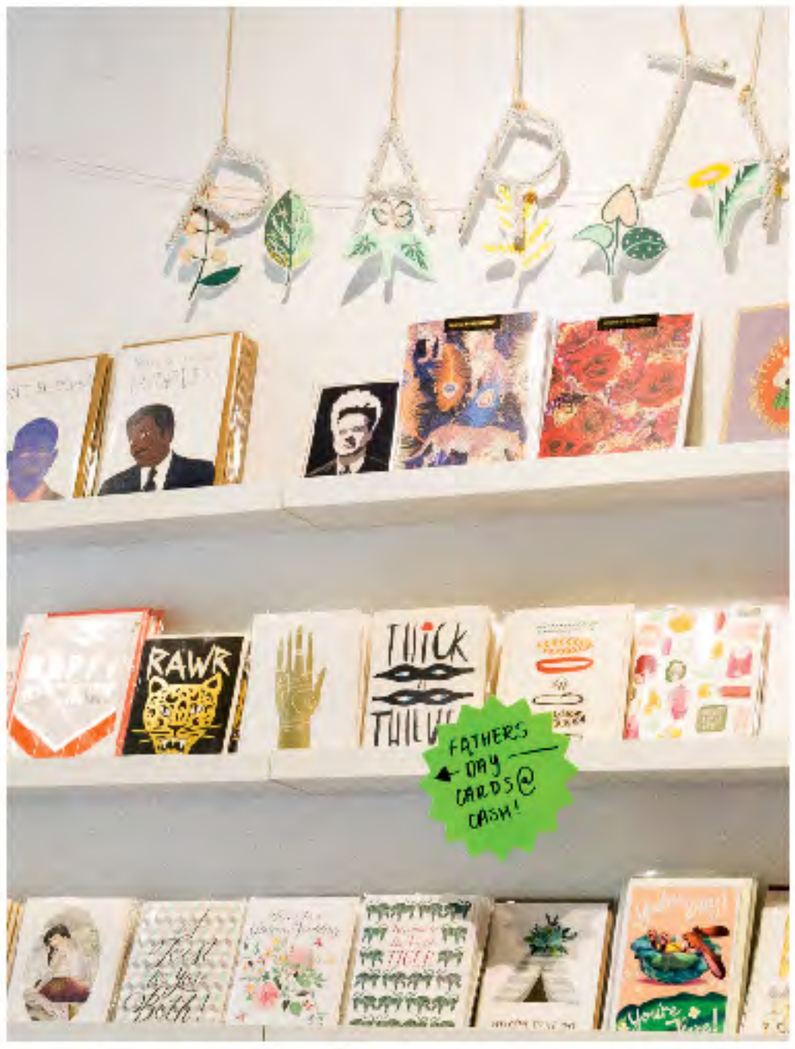
PHOTOGRAPHS: **KOUROSH KESHIRI; KAYLA ROCCA**

SHOPPING IN TORONTO

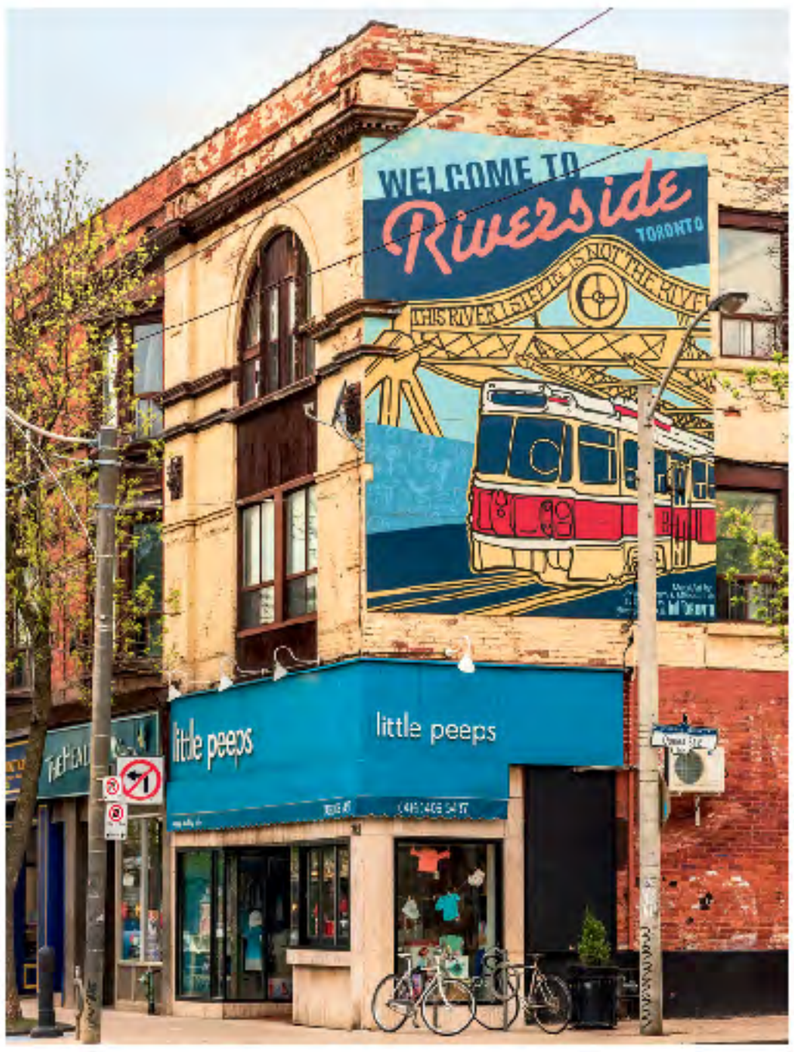
THIS LAID-BACK, MULTICULTURAL CITY IS ECLECTIC WITH A FONDNESS FOR RETRO – NOWHERE MORE SO THAN IN RIVERSIDE, A ONCE SHADY ZONE OF INFAMOUS STRIP CLUBS THAT'S THE NEW HIPSTER GROUND ZERO

BY KAREN BURSHTEIN

Owner Trevor Larocque in his Tiny Record Shop. *Opposite*, The Broadview Hotel bar


RAWR
THICK
FATHERS DAY CARDS @ DASH!

MAILEG MOUSE
MOUSE RACE
DANISH DESIGN
SAFETY MATCH
QUALITY MATCHES
CORKTOWN
SOAP
• 100% Olive Oil •
• Vegan •
• Handmade in Toronto •
CORKTOWNSOAP.COM


WELCOME TO
Riverside
TORONTO
little peeps
little peeps

EMPIR

PHOTOGRAPHS: KAT ALANNA & KIRSTIE FOX; RYAN VISIMA/IMAGEBRIEF.COM

BRIKA

What was started as a small-scale crafts website by friends Kena Paranjape and Jen Lee Koss has become Toronto's bricks-and-mortar answer to Etsy. Everything is handmade but the homeware, fashion and particularly good jewellery selection are more elevated than the knitted tea cosies and braided leather necklaces found at craft fairs of old. And while the makers' products change all the time, patterned linen-and-cotton napkins from Sweetgum Textiles and Joyo's cherry-wood cuff bracelets are reliable finds. Blue maple-leaf stickers signify an item is Canadian-made. *768 Queen St East (brika.com)*

NASSER VIES SHOES

Getting Nasser Vies to talk about himself is like pulling teeth. But here's what we do know: this Iranian-born gentleman is one of the last artisan cobblers in the city, and he once made tango shoes for Robert Duvall. Packed into his tiny workroom, which is tucked down a side street, are rolls of well-tanned calf leather, books on the Peloponnesian War, and young apprentices who stand around like silent disciples absorbing his long-honed skills. Vies creates his elegant footwear out of canvas, leather, snakeskin and suede. He also offers shoemaking courses for a new generation of cobblers. *93 Lewis St (nasserviesshoes.wordpress.com)*

IRISH DESIGN HOUSE

Knitwear maker Sinéad Clarke came to Toronto from Cavan, Ireland, in 2013. She spent her first year selling her designs at pop-ups before opening this shop. It's decorated with antique trunks and wardrobes in which she displays the coolest Irish wares: textiles, soap, jumpers and more, curated from her favourite brands, as well as her own clothing line, Fada, which she whips up in her back-of-store studio. The vintage-inspired shirtdress with a retro shoe print is especially popular. The common thread through Clarke's stock is that everything is hand-crafted and rooted in her home country. *756 Queen St East (theirishdesignhouse.com)*

GUFF VINTAGE FURNITURE

Ceramic Lotte lamps, Hans Wegner oak armchairs and other hard-to-find, well-priced Scandinavian and mid-century-modern pieces show up at Guff. This vintage furniture store on the site of a former sign-maker's is owned by long-time dealer John Jakeman. And it even has the occasional AY Jackson neo-Impressionist painting. While it might be tricky to take home that incredible (and incredibly comfy) Percival Lafer leather Earth sofa or Seventies shag-pile rug, smaller items such as architectural drawings and leather wine flasks are easier to pack. *1 Davies Avenue (gufffurniture.com)*

TOKEN

Nicole Babin-Powell sells ethically sourced, locally made gifts you won't easily find anywhere else. There are greeting cards themed on Canadian music icons Leonard Cohen and Neil Young, and cute Degrassi Street pins designed especially for the shop, an ode to the neighbourhood street that inspired the eponymous Eighties TV series. But give or take a collection of ceramic garden frogs or a beaded Death's Head purse, her pretty, colourful items tend toward the practical: honey-, garlic- and truffle-flavoured Zoe olive oil, thick eco-wool Klippan blankets, and Anita's La La Land orange-blossom goat-milk soaps. *804 Queen St East (tokentoronto.com)*

TINY RECORD SHOP

A shop within a shop, at the back of Token, this place appears on the world's best record-store lists. It was opened by Trevor Larocque, who also owns Toronto-based indie label Paper Bag Records, known for producing a stable of Canadian stars such as Sam Roberts and Born Ruffians. The retail space morphed from Larocque's own vinyl collection. Now its crammed drawers hold hard-to-source European, Japanese and American imports, and one-off finds from his travels, such as Lee Perry and Friends 'Give Me Power'. The shop has also hosted curated exhibitions of record covers by The Smiths and The Kinks. *804 Queen St East (tinyrecordshop.com)*

COMMON SORT

Vintage clothing is a big deal in Toronto and Common Sort leads the pack. In a former hardware store next to Token, it trades in mostly near-mint items. You can usually find a pair of Miu Miu mules or Manolo Blahnik pumps, or a Marc Jacobs bag that looks as if it was used just once before the owner traded it in. There's some seriously Seventies styling here, too, with

Clockwise from top left: greeting cards and crockery at the Irish Design House; toys at Little Peeps; furniture at Guff; the Irish Design House; Quince flowers; candles at the Irish Design House; pendants at Common Sort; Empire by Bullet; a turntable at Token; a Riverside street; Brika babywear

suede jeans and old-school leather Coach bags. The quirky-cool shop girls are happy to rifle through the racks for, or with, you. *800 Queen St East (commonsort.com)*

MARY MACLEOD'S SHORTBREAD

The sweet smell of chocolate, sugar and butter wafts down the street; the shortbread Scottish-born Mary Macleod started selling here in 1981 is now globally sought out by biscuit buffs. The late Macleod was a pioneer of the small-batch, single-item, done-well concept that drives millennial entrepreneurs today. Local policemen were her taste-testers for recipes such as the best-selling chocolate-crunch shortbread. According to her daughter-in-law Sharon who now runs the shop, Macleod sent a batch to the Scottish Society who told her she couldn't call it shortbread because it contained chocolate. Then they tasted it, and called it 'the loveliest shortbread they'd ever had'. *639 Queen St East (marymacleod.ca)*

EMPIRE BY BULLET

This British-themed store might seem a bit 'coals to Newcastle', but it's fun to peek in to see what Canadians perceive as must-have British items. There are Walkers Crisps, Yorkshire Tea and Cadbury chocolate bars, but also cheery homewares and gifts such as Thierry Poncelet's military-dog tapestry cushions and Doctor Who knick-knacks. In the back is Keep Me Posted, a stationery section selling the city's cheekiest greeting cards. *724 1/2 Queen St East (empirebybullet.com)*

THE BROADVIEW HOTEL

For more than 30 years Jilly's strip club was a fixture of the East End. Its cheesy glamour-girl posters hung in the windows of a peeling red Romanesque-revival building dating from 1891. Now the façade has been meticulously restored and the inside reimagined by DesignAgency (responsible for the hip Generator hostel brand) into the sharp and chic Broadview Hotel. There are risqué nods to its past throughout, with the odd brass pole as a decorative feature, velvet curtains and boudoir-inspired, custom-made furniture that looks as if it was collected over time. The lobby is a day-to-night café, there's a buzzy restaurant, The Civic, and a gorgeous rooftop bar. *Doubles from about £205. 106 Broadview Avenue (thebroadviewhotel.ca)*

LOCAL KNOW-HOW

KIERAN ROY
CO-OWNER OF INDIE RECORD LABEL ARTS & CRAFTS

'I'm a regular at Bill Hicks, a tiki-inspired rock bar where there are classic LPs on every bit of wall and ceiling space and a tabletop arcade with Eighties Atari gems.'

'For cocktails I go to The Comrade, a dimly lit space with a mass of taxidermy. I order the Beck Taxi, with Aperol and cucumber – orange and green like the fleet of a local taxi company. And the steak tartare is superb.'

'The Opera House has hosted some of my most memorable concert experiences, including the Foo Fighters, My Morning Jacket and Ryan Adams.'

'I like to take the dog for a walk and bring my daughter to the playground at Jimmie Simpson Park. She loves it so much, she named our cat in its honour.'

arts-crafts.ca

Above from left: the rooftop bar at The Broadview Hotel; House of Hackney wallpaper at the hotel

PHOTOGRAPHS: **KAYLA ROCCA**