

by Stephanie Schulte

When it comes to sussing out fashion and cool gifts whether for body, mind, spirit or home, I decided to let the dogs loose and share with Valley Living readers my coveted cache.

65 miles from our luscious valley lives a bursting cornucopia of shopping gems. There are many, but in honor of the 500 word rule, I had to narrow it down to a choice few. And the nominees are as follows (in no particular order):

Fashion, Gifts and

Old Town Pasadena:

Colorado Boulevard in Pasadena is ripe for the fashion picking. H&M is my top pick. A Swedish company that is relatively new to the West coast. Madonna, Karl Lagerfeld, and Stella McCartney have all designed affordable lines for this sweet dish of a store. You can find amazing clothes and accessories at reasonable prices. And by reasonable, I mean I just purchased a gorgeous chic sweater dress there for \$49.00. There are also other shops on the stretch, but H&M has it all.

Downtown Los Angeles: The fashion district in downtown Los Angeles is going thru a major renaissance; a Pax Los Angeles if you will. The landscape is grid-like and the deals are abundant. Head West on the 10 freeway and exit Los Angeles Street, then point north and follow the yellow and black light post flags to the deals. Santee Alley is a sure bet; stuffed with stores and shoes and clothes and culture. The electric ambiance of designers designing and seamstress's sewing wafts through the air making the whole experience delightful and curious. **Hot Tip:** In the Fashion District lies the L.A. Mart-a mecca for stores (big and small) purchasing clothes for their store shelves and racks. On the last Friday of the month, it is open to the public to buy samples. Get there early and bring cash.

Abbot Kinney in Venice Beach:

Abbot Kinney is a lovely melting pot of a street in Venice Beach. Artsy and chock full of great shops, galleries and fantastic people watching, Abbot Kinney is a must shop. My favorite fashion and cool gift hunting ground and is Firefly. It's a small and cozy den stuffed with candles, potions, jewelry, books, designer clothes, kid goods and even better vibes. The selection isn't overwhelming; leaving room for the style to set in. My travel buddy Tenya purchased one of the most stylish messenger bags I have seen to date (I was a wee jealous). Another great must stop shop is Ananda. This trendy boutique carries mainstream lines like Free People along with funky indie labels. Super colorful and filled with trinkets; a sure bet for unique gifts.

For the artist in your life do not miss The Red House Gallery. The proprietor of this vibrant hued venue happens to be a thriving artist with a stream of contemporaries exhibiting great works of art.

If you have any questions regarding these delectable stomping grounds, contact me at 951.440.8305. Stephanie@stephaniloveslife.com



Adventure, Oh My!

