

# DC MIDCITY

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## RETAIL THERAPY

BY MARIESSA TERRELL



Anything on the Floor can be Yours at Muleh

### Muleh, 1831 14th St. NW | 202-667-3440

Giving a new meaning to home decorating, Muleh offers well-established yet remarkable brands for style mavens adept at the art of compartmentalizing. It takes a fashion intellectual of significant worth to stay focused when every item on the floor is available for purchase. Snag the knitted high-waisted navy and lilac Vivienne Westwood Red Label frock (the only one in DC). Or forget all about closet additions and concentrate on the Kenneth Cobonpue hand-quilted armchair shaped like a tulip in full bloom. Despite my best efforts I fell into a quandary at the cash register. Unable to decide between the Malene Birger faux leopard zipper-front jacket or the tomato-and-cream-striped Autumn Cashmere sweater (with peplum), I opted instead for the solid mahogany (read: no veneer) classic fourposter bed by Warisan. A fabulous choice, I thought. But, it's gonna be hard to sneak this one home if I have to borrow the truck.



Leather, Lace and Bling at Lettie Gooch

### Lettie Gooch, 1517 U St. NW | 202-332-4242

Seeing Theresa Watts on the side of a Metro bus promoting the joys of shopping in DC inspired a visit to her boutique. For me, part of the Lettie Gooch magic is the wonderfully friendly atmosphere cultivated by the staff. The other part centers around Theresa's uncanny ability to select wearable items that resonate with the romantic rocker and svelte qualities in all of us. Holiday 2012, according to Lettie Gooch, means loads of lace, leather, and bling. I adore the Jurassic raw-cut jewelry by Adina Mills and the lovely dresses on the back wall: a black sequined t-shirt dress dusted with white stars by Maloom and a sleeveless number with a tulle skirt and chocolate-draped wool bodice by Western Wear. Watching these items fly out of the shop brought a tear to my eye. DC's fashion stock is rising as we speak.



Urbain Sophistication with a European Edge

### Universal Gear, 1529 14th St. NW | 202-332-4242

Bespoke tailor Ozwald Boateng once complained that American men dress like boys. To the contrary, Universal Gear aficionados who take their cues from Kristopher August (manager extraordinaire) have a sophisticated, urbane sensibility all their own. Universal's appeal is easily understood. The offerings are rugged (by city standards) yet possess a European edge capable of elevating everyday apparel to extraordinary heights. I am already a fan of the Hudson dip-dyed stretch denim and retro Anthony Marato poly or downfilled ski jackets arranged throughout the shop. Other promising pieces include the Scotch & Soda midnight velvet separates (two-button jacket and matching trousers) that provide a ready answer to the age old query, "What to wear to the Holiday Party?"



Local Leather Goods by Twisted Aristocrat at Redeem

### Redeem, 1734 14th St. NW | 202-332-7747

While some may see the color palette of Redeem as dramatic. I find the boutique to be mysterious, edgy, and darkly romantic. My best avant-garde self was immediately drawn to Korean-branded Kai-aakmann ready-to-wear apparel. A gray wool belted shortcoat with full sleeves left quite an impression. The longer I perused the racks, the easier it became to envision myself with less Audrey Hepburn and more Amy Winehouse aplomb. The Twisted Aristocrat (love the name) leather goods likewise communicated a sense melodrama despite their simple lines. Hand-stitched and hardly ostentatious, these lamb-leather wallets and handbags are begging to be touched, scooped up, and used over and over. Many thanks to owner Lori Parkensen, a local, for finding your edge and inviting us to walk along it with you.

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