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Shopping in Cape Town

Take the springbok by the horns and hunt down the city's greatest gear with our insider's guide, says SARAH KHAN

While high-street behemoths such as Topshop, Forever 21 and H&M are making inroads here, South African brands and boutiques proudly maintain cult followings, revitalising formerly run-down neighbourhoods into vibrant shopping hubs in the process. Johannesburg may be where the big money is made, but the Mother City's got all the looks, and its pedestrian-friendly districts are a far cry from Joburg's seemingly never-ending expanse of malls. Hit the streets of the Central Business District or Woodstock and De Waterkant to witness the transformation up close: chic studios showcase everything from handcrafted leather bags to artisan chocolate and moustache wax – much of which is produced locally and likely only to be found in this independently minded city. ▶

PHOTOS: RUSSELL SMITH, ADRIAAN LOUW, WARREN HEATH, ELSA YOUNG, ALL AT FRANK FEATURES

Multi-brand boutique
Maison Mara.
Opposite: The city's
V&A Waterfront

FEBRUARY 2016 CONDE NAST TRAVELLER 77

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Shop, drink and dine at The House Of Machines



If there's no space for a man-cave at home, outsource the position to this cool café/bar/live-music venue/motorcycle shop/menswear boutique

CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

As recently as five years ago the CBD was almost empty beyond business hours. But the city's heart is beating again, with glossy shops and restaurants reviving wilting Victorian-era buildings and a lively First Thursdays programme that turns downtown into a massive street party each month.

Merchants On Long

Designer Hanneli Rupert has sourced a covetable mix of high-end brands from across the continent in this museum-like concept shop. Alongside her own Okapi handbags – she uses antelope, ostrich and crocodile leathers, and fashions handles out of springbok horns – the store carries cut-out dresses by Ghanaian label Christie Brown, and brightly printed men's shirts from Malawi's Makono. 0027-2-422 2828, merchantsonlong.com

Issa Leo

Spanish fashion designer Issa Lopez's new outpost is dedicated to her edgy, urban menswear, such as denim boots and leather jackets splashed with hand-painted lions. 0027-21-426 2757, issaleo.com



Funky jewellery at Olive Green Cat

Olive Green Cat

From their Church Street atelier, jewellers Philippa Green and Ida Elsje craft and sell playful pieces (rings inlaid with spangled Lego blocks and diamonds set in resin) under the label Nunc.

002-21-424 1101, olivegreencat.com

Klûk CGDT

Christiaan Gabriël du Toit and Malcolm Kluk, the creative minds behind Cape Town's most celebrated fashion house, transformed

a huge Bree Street car park into their new flagship store last year. The first two levels stock the duo's lavish ready-to-wear, couture and bridal lines, and from the street you can spy seamstresses busy at work through the windows of the third-floor atelier.

0027-83-377 7780, klukcgdt.com

The House Of Machines

If there's no space for a man-cave at home, outsource the position to this cool café/bar/live-music venue/motorcycle shop/menswear boutique, all under one roof. Pop in and score a Reuben sandwich, a shot of spirits, a Biltwell motorcycle helmet and a tin of hair pomade, among other manly essentials.

0027-21-426 1400, thehouseofmachines.com

Blackwood Brothers

Shortmarket Street seems to be turning into quite the bro-block. This recently opened heritage-denim emporium stocks global brands including Edwin and Schott NYC. 0027-21-422 2549, blkwood.co.za

Stable

Interior designer Aidan Bennetts, a familiar face on South African television, opened



Artisan chocolatier
Honest Chocolate

Stable to bring together all the go-to specialists he uses on his projects. There are more than 100 décor labels here; some of the more portable ones include wood tablet covers from Houdt, LeatherLab's Nguni-hide place mats and neon-coloured plastic salad tongs by Snapp.
0027-21-426 5922, stable.org.za

Wild Olive

If there is a heaven, I hope it smells like this apothecary. It sells heady bath oils, body butters, soy candles and more, all of which are made on-site.
0027-21-22 2777, wildolive.eu

117 On Long

Every design boutique should have a setting as beautiful as this lovely Victorian pile, home to three beloved South African homeware brands – ArtVraat Designs (linens), Ceramic Factory (retro robots and hanging pots) and A Love Supreme (quirky stationery).
0027-21-839 2103

Honest Chocolate

For a sugary souvenir, grab a slab or 10 of artfully packaged dark chocolate from the

city's greatest artisan chocolatier.
0027-76-765 8306, honestchocolate.co.za

DE WATERKANT

Wear trainers when heading to this area, just west of the CBD – steep hills and cobbled lanes mean you'll be giving both your calves and your wallet a workout.

Maison Mara

When fashion buyer Kelly Withey was deciding on where to lay down roots (she grew up in Kenya, Gabon, Nigeria and Angola before studying and working in Paris), she chose Cape Town. And when she started missing the brands she loved in France, she opened Maison Mara to share her favourite labels with locals. It's easy to while away an afternoon here, admiring not only clothes by Chloé, Maison Martin Margiela and Sonia Rykiel, but also the 19th-century building's structural details: antique closets with coloured-glass panels that now serve as changing rooms; a marble bathroom/display space for Malin + Goetz products; a stone-clad courtyard, and tiles that have served as a backdrop for plenty of #ihavethisthingwithfloors Instagram posts.
0027-21-425 6320, maisonmara.co.za



Menswear store and
café Loading Bay

Loading Bay

Think of this industrial space as a Maison Mara for dudes: it sells man-essentials such as Acne Studios jeans, Our Legacy T-shirts and a full range of Aesop products. There's also a funky café serving some of Cape Town's finest burgers and fresh juices.
0027-21-425 6320, loadingbay.co.za

Nap

Head here to pick up some stylish beach-house knick-knacks and homeware in a neutral palette; such as wood boot racks, mesh lampshades and skull-motif ashtrays and serving platters.
0027-21-421 6482, napliving.co.za

Luxury Africa Atelier

Reservations aren't required at this art gallery/boutique, but if you do phone ahead staff can arrange to have the designers and artists themselves on hand to tell you about their work. Charmaine Taylor's Legacy Collection jewellery is a conversation starter: each necklace, ring and bracelet is crafted from remnants of a fence at Robben Island prison, where Nelson Mandela was locked up for 18 years. Also worth a look are driftwood ▶



sculptures by Tony Fredriksson and Oliver Barnett's surreal floral photography.

0027-21-180 4010, luxuryafrica.co.za

Africa Nova

On the hunt for chic African décor that doesn't slip into kitsch? This emporium is brimming with statement pieces, including a feathered Cameroonian headdress, mosaic faux antelope busts and cushions in bold West African fabrics.

0027-21-425 5123, africanova.co.za

Yakira homeware pickles & roses

This cave-like sliver of a shop opened in April and stocks the most unusual mix of things: imported fabrics from Afghanistan and India, upholstered Art Deco chairs, candles, ceramics and homemade pickles.

0027-83-321 0333

WOODSTOCK

Once gritty, now artsy (but still rough around the edges), Cape Town's original urban-renewal success story continues to thrive with plenty to browse beyond the popular Saturday-morning Neighbourgoods Market at The Old Biscuit Mill on Albert Road.

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Petal side tables from Vogel

C20 Galerie & Posie

When design dealer Emma de Crespigny moved back to Cape Town from New York, she brought her enviably extensive collection of mid-century American furniture with her. She doesn't keep them for herself, though: you can browse and buy the straight-out-of-*Mad Men* range at her showroom. If the set of four bar stools made from tractor seats are a touch bulky for your suitcase, then consider a pair of cushion covers she's screen-printed from classic Art Deco designs instead.

0027-82-414 0317

Miyu

Head to this shop in the Salt Circle Arcade for animal trophy busts fashioned from bottle caps, corks, knitted wool and neon wires.

0027-76-110 5816, miyu.shopstar.co.za

Imiso Ceramics

Andile Dyalvane and Zizipho Poswa have exhibited their smart ceramics from London to Taipei, Dubai to Miami. Highlights from their past collections, many of which incorporate the duo's signature "scarified" technique inspired by African tribal traditions, are on display at their gallery/workshop in The Old

Biscuit Mill. The View from the Studio range, in particular, consists of sculptures inspired by their Woodstock surroundings.

0027-21-447 2627, imisoceramics.co.za

Pedersen + Lennard

This recently expanded showroom in the Woodstock Exchange is the place to shop for locally made, Scandi-style furniture. If you're not in the market for coffee tables and bed frames, there are also butcher-block side tables and colourful metal-bucket stools. Otherwise, just have a snack at its coffee shop – of course there's a coffee shop, this is Cape Town.

0027-21-408 7600, pedersenlennard.co.za

Vogel

Acclaimed architect and designer John Vogel carries a limited selection of his custom-made furniture in his workshop. On display are chairs, benches and stools with his signature bright, woven cane seats and a collection of petal-like side tables that come together to form one large, flower-shaped coffee table.

0027-21-447 6128, vogeldesign.co.za

Kat Van Duinen

The fashion designer's sumptuous collections are showcased at this boutique, including her favoured classic cuts luxed-up with lavish materials and detailing: a python-and-ostrich leather bag here, a rooster-feather coat there.

0027-21-447 6582, katvanduinen.com

Dear Rae

Look out for delicate brass and silver necklaces and rings in Karin Rae Matthee's airy showroom and atelier.

0027-21-447 1390, dearrae.co.za

V&A WATERFRONT Watershed

As a rule, you should flee the Waterfront shopping malls as soon as you've disembarked from the Robben Island Museum ferry. After all, you didn't come all this way to shop in Mango. But with last year's opening of the Watershed craft and design market, everyone has a compelling reason to wade through the Waterfront's visiting hordes. The complex houses an eclectic mix of South African designers curated by Trevyn McGowan of Source, a collective promoting home-grown talent overseas. Here, McGowan has installed mini boutiques for fashion designer Michelle Ludek's feminine frocks, reversible jackets by Lo, Shongololo's stuffed giraffes, homeware from her own Odeon collective and dozens more under one roof.

0027-21-408 7600, waterfront.co.za/shop/watershed **CNT**



Shop South African designers at Watershed at the V&A Waterfront

LOCAL KNOW-HOW

Neil Aaron

Co-owner of fashion label Fiction, Lies and Filth

"Woodstock has become a thriving place with loads of 20- and 30-somethings moving their businesses and studios to the up-and-coming area. When people think of Woodstock, they often automatically think of the **Neighbourgoods Market** (neighbourgoodsmarket.co.za)

which is amazing. Every Saturday you can find fresh food and drinks made by local creatives. They also have a great selection of clothing, leather accessories and other craft goods. **Rosetta Roastery** (coffee from AED 10; 0027-21-447 4099, rosettaroastery.com) in The Woodstock Exchange has excellent coffee with an awesome, laid-back vibe. They also have the coolest barista alive, Ollie Teddy. **Fat**



Neighbourgoods Market's local offerings

Cactus (entrées from AED 20; 0027-21-447 1713, fatcactus.co.za) has become a bit of an establishment with its Mexican food and spirits and rad vibe. **The Pot Luck Club** (tapas from AED 15; 0027-21-447 0804, thepotluckclub.co.za) in The Old Biscuit Mill is one of the best places to eat out in the country, and it has outstanding views, too. **The Local Grill** (entrées from AED 25; 0027-21-447 0934, local-grill.co.za) has really good steaks, which are paired with equally delicious grape. And I love the **Corner Store** (0027-21-811 0519) on Sir Lowry Road; these guys are the new kids on the block and have been killing it. The store stocks local brands such as Young and Lazy, 2Bop and Sol-Sol." fictionliesandfilth.com