

| Lifestyle

Le Shopping

Laissez les Bons Shoppings

Let the good shopping roll! Next time you're in New Orleans, make sure you venture *beyond* the French Quarter and head Uptown to Magazine Street.

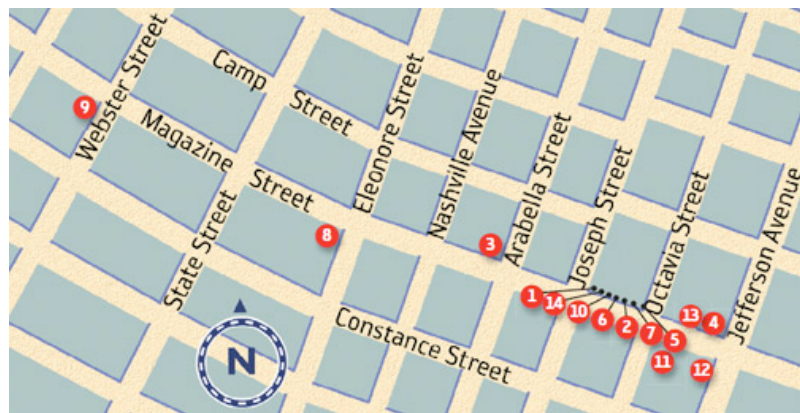
Named for a warehouse—or “magazin,” as it was known—that was built in the late 1700s to house goods awaiting export, Magazine Street in New Orleans

upholds its commercial and acquisitive origins with a bevy of stores that suit all tastes, from classic to funky, antique-y to boutique-y. It's where leafy side streets lined with colorful shotgun houses intersect a thriving shoppers' paradise that stretches a full six miles. Because of the sheer length of the thoroughfare, we suggest you drive or cab it out to the 5400 and 5500 blocks, where the variety of shops will keep all members of your party entertained but just short of overwhelmed.

Pick up a Mochissippi—a frozen espresso drink—from (#4) **CC's Community Coffee House** at the corner of Magazine Street and Jefferson Avenue (900 Jefferson, 504-891-4969), and let the good times roll all the way down to Monkey Hill Bar at 6100 Magazine. Strolling along the sun-dappled sidewalks, chatting with the friendly shopkeepers and soaking up the town's laissez-faire vibe, you'll know what it means to love the Big Easy. (Worth a look before you begin your shopping excursion: , operated by the Magazine Street Merchants Association.)



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BOOTS, HANDBAGS AND BUCKLES, OH MY!—You'll want to spend some time at (#12) **Retroactive** (504-895-5054), a jampacked vintage store at No. 5414, to appreciate the sheer vastness of the color-coded handbag collection, overflowing racks of cowboy boots (\$45–\$300), and masses of well-chosen dresses, men's shirts and leather jackets. Owner Joe Weise goes on buying trips throughout the United States to assemble his wares, but his collection has a flavor as distinctively New Orleans as the local gumbo—spicy, unpretentious and one-of-a-kind.

PUTTING PEN TO PAPER

Down at No. 5423, the hand-printed stationery, wide array of journals, and colorful selection of pens, calligraphy supplies and custom wax seals at (#13) **Scriptura** (504-897-1555, www.scriptura.com) will make you want to turn off your BlackBerry for good and revivify the lost art of letter-writing—or at least send your mom a note.



LACE DELICACIES—(#2) **Basics Underneath** (504-894-1000), a lingerie store at No. 5513, sells everything a girl could possibly need under her clothes—from frilly thongs to body-shaping Spanx. Men, this is a great place to pick up a silk robe (\$80–\$150) or other sweet nothing for the woman in your life, and the friendly staff will make picking out just the right gift a breeze.

DYNAMIC DUO—Neighboring dress shops (#14) **Spring** (504-896-9185), at No. 5525, and **Azby's** (504-895-1311), at No. 5531, have everything you need to put together your new favorite outfit—shoes, hosiery, dresses, pants, tops, jewelry, coats, bags and even sunglasses. Go ahead, ask if you can wear your new duds out of the store.

MONKEYIN' AROUND—No trip to New Orleans would be complete without imbibing a cocktail (or three) while listening to live music. At (#9) **Monkey Hill Bar** (504-899-4800, www.monkeyhillbar.com), No. 6100, you can do all of the above while lolling on a comfy couch or enjoying a free game of pool or shuffleboard.—*Kate Hanley*

RIPE FOR THE PICKING

At No. 5430, (#11) **Plum** (504-897-3388, www.plumneworleans.com) sells small wares that offer a big helping of cheek, such as mini battery-operated plastic chandeliers for \$16, and T-shirts bearing the design of the city's distinctive manhole covers (\$24).



JEAN POOL

(#7) **Jean Therapy** (pictured top) (504-897-5535, www.jeatherapy.com), No. 5505, is the place to meet all your denim needs, whether you're male or female, short or tall, a relaxed-fit or skinny-jean devotee. The casual mix of tees, tops and jackets will help you complete the ensemble.

HOME RUN

A gift from (#6) **Hazelnut** (504-891-2424, www.hazelnutneworleans.com), a home accessory shop at No. 5515, is sure to please anyone on your list with its perfect marriage of tradition and chic. Choose from Byzantine glassware (from \$52), an opalescent ceramic soap dish in the shape of an oyster shell (\$30), or a wooden starburst mirror (\$648).



FOUR IN ONE

(#10) **Pied Nu** (504-899-4118, www.piednuneworleans.com), at No. 5521, is where gorgeous clothes, sumptuous home furnishings, intoxicating scents and stunning jewelry all live happily together behind one shopfront. Honestly, there's nothing in this shop that's not so exquisite and unusual it makes you want to fall over. Don't doubt it—just check it out.

OCEANS OF LOTIONS

Dive into the sea of sweet-smelling skin-care products for sale at (#5) **Earthsavers** (504-899-8555, www.earthsaversonline.com), No. 5501. It carries well-known brands such as Philosophy, Jack Black and Ahava, as well as its own comprehensive line. It also sells everything you need to turn your home into a spa—from plush robes to aromatherapy supplies.

SWEET REWARDS

(#3) **Blue Frog Chocolates** (504-269-5707,), at No. 5707, is a great source of midafternoon sustenance as well as souvenirs for the folks back home. Jump on the house-made truffles, dark almond bark and chocolate alligator lollipops (\$3).



THE CALL OF THE CARIBBEAN

Tucked away at No. 5908, just a few blocks past the end of the busy strip, (#8) **Martinique Bistro** (504-891-8495, www.martiniquebistro.com) serves up inventive twists on traditional N'awlins fare such as fresh fish with a Tabasco beurre blanc (\$21–\$28) and lavender-honey crème brûlée (\$7). Sit by the courtyard fountain, have your server suggest a wine, and end your perfect day away from the tourist fray.

PHOTOS BY WILL CROCKER; MAP BY JEFF WEST