



Toronto's Top Neighbourhoods

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The 11 most exciting store openings of 2011

From world-class designers to local boutiques, the GTA's top new shopping destinations

1. Clean and green



PRETTY BEAUTY & BOOKS | 587 MARKHAM ST. | 905-580-0285

The definition of clean living: a fresh look and an informed mind. At least, that seems to be the thinking behind Pretty Beauty & Books, a petite boutique in Mirvish Village, which opened in April. The shop is filled with environmentally friendly products, which, yes, include books. Their clean and green makeup adheres to a "less is more" aesthetic. Their books align with a healthy lifestyle, with such varied topics as yoga and surfing, as well as the environmental and health impacts of commercial beauty products.

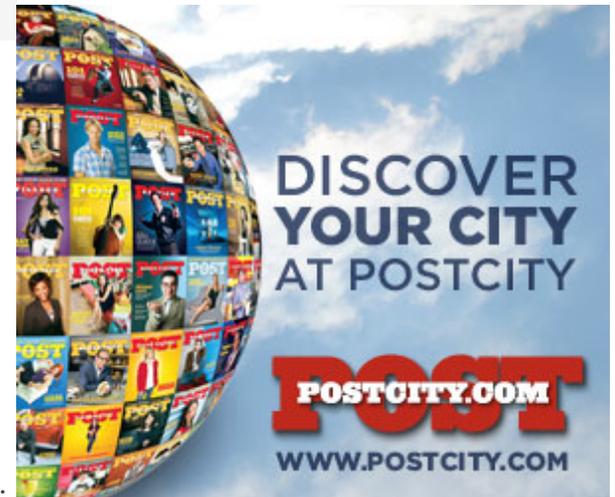
For those seeking a more natural look — both literally and figuratively — the store carries 100% Pure, a cosmetics line made from the pigments of fruits and vegetables, and nail polishes by Scotch Naturals.

2. Riant-in' and ravin'



RIANT BOUTIQUE | 35 BATHURST ST. | 416-367-4567

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Riant Boutique, which takes its name from the French “to laugh,” is spreading some joy in the rapidly expanding King West neighbourhood. Owned by local fashion maven Maxine Waters, the boutique opened its doors in August. The store is clean, modern and spacious, and boasts a wide array of New York- and L.A.-based designers and brands, including Cynthia Vincent, Rebecca Taylor, Wildfox Couture and Nicole Richie’s House of Harlow. Adding cred to cool, Riant is the only store in Toronto

that carries handbags by J.J. Winters. Also check out the exquisite jewellery by local designer Elliphont Creations. Neighbouring the hip Thompson Hotel, Riant is sure to be the next “it” spot for local fashionistas and the jet set.

3. Junior gents



NORTHBOYS | 31 DISERA DR. | 905-771-0987

The new Thornhill store, NorthBoys, is like the Gentlemen’s Clothing Club for young men. With a wide array of dress shirts, pants, suits, ties, belts and shoes, it’s the perfect place to help ease the transition from the sweats and jeans of boyhood into the more sophisticated silhouette of a young man. The store, which opened in April, sells such top designers as DKNY, Michael Kors, Cole Haan and Kenneth Cole. The store also has a high-end offering of casual clothing, like Seven for All Mankind jeans and

polos from Hugo Boss, proving, once again, that boys will always be boys.

4. What goes around ...



MAGWOOD | 1418 DUNDAS ST. W. | 416-818-3975

If you want to take a sartorial step back in time, Magwood on Dundas West is the vintage store for you. Owner Sarah Magwood, a local designer and fashion blogger, first started Magwood as a design series called Make Sale that ran for six months at the Drake Hotel back in 2009 before officially opening its own boutique doors in April. The store offers a rich array of timeless and delicate pieces that date all the way back to the prim- and-proper Victorian era and fast- forward to the hippie

fashion of the swinging ’60s. Exquisite pieces of antique jewellery as well as designer vintage boots and handbags are also on sale. For now, Magwood is sticking with fashion and accessories but eventually plans to tackle antiques.

5. Très chic boutique



STACEY ZHANG | 292 QUEEN ST. W. | 647-346-2889

When Montreal-based designer Stacey Zhang opened her eponymous flagship store on Queen Street West last May, she brought a unique and personalized touch to a block that’s been

Do blondes really have more fun?



This time, it’s personal



Blues Traveller



Made In Toronto



Haute hats



Back to the future





saturated with mass-market big guns. That personalized service includes extensive product knowledge, which helps customers learn more about the ecologically sound and sustainable fabrics used in her clothing. Zhang's designs are clean and classic with a dash of funk — and perfect for the precocious twenty-something

career girl or the adventurous forty-something woman looking for an original eco-friendly ensemble. Another perk? Regular clientele cocktail parties and shopping events. The near-instant positive response to this store proves that Stacey Zhang is exactly what Queen Street West has been missing.

6. Pretty in the city



SKIRT | 476 BLOOR ST. W. | 416-533-3139

Young urban women with their sights set on the latest trends have found their mecca in Skirt, which opened last February in the Annex. Its hip downtown vibe is slightly ironic; it first originated in London, Ont., and has locations in Waterloo, Peterborough and Muskoka. But don't let its suburban roots fool you: this store is definitely for the chic city girl. The items in the store have a playful vintage-bohemian feel to them, and with printed tops, cocktail dresses, jeans, blazers and even Modrobes

on offer, there is a little bit of everything for every young fashionista. Popular brands include Ark & Co., Lush and Pretty Good, which is how you'll be feeling when you leave Skirt with your next fashionable purchase.

7. The framing edge



CUTLER AND GROSS | 84 YORKVILLE AVE. | 416-966-5149

Those of us with less-than-perfect vision can rejoice with last month's arrival of the U.K.'s Cutler and Gross boutique in Yorkville. The namesake gentlemen know a thing or two about eyewear: they've been in the business for 40 years and have helped turn glasses from geeky to très chic. The sleek, gallery-style store is stocked with thousands of frames, from aviators to round shapes, all available in a variety of acetate colours. The

new shop boasts a unique-in-North-America experience by offering a customization service where spec-sters can choose their own shapes and colours. Perhaps what is most exciting about the store is its "secret" mini-museum and VIP salon hidden behind a wall-sized photograph of Cutler and Gross themselves. There, shelves reveal a selection of unique frames from the company's archives. It appears glasses aren't just for geeks and grandmas anymore.

8. Perfect partnership



DURUMI & CHOCOLATE SHOES | 416QUEENST.W. | 647-727-2591

PB & J. Gin & Tonic. Bert & Ernie. Some things just go better



together. That's the thinking behind Durumi & Chocolate Shoes, two companies that joined forces to open a two-in-one shop on Queen Street West in April. Durumi supplies the cool clothes, while Chocolate stocks the stylish shoes, most of which are sourced from Korea. Though they are two separate businesses, the two are a match made in heaven. Durumi has a vintage vibe

with plenty of prints, classic cuts and unique detailing. The shoes from Chocolate range from tomboy practicality to girly glamour. The inspired accessories, like pocket watch necklaces, pair well with everything from a plain T to black pumps. The handmade shoe clips, which are a huge craze in Korea, will make you stand out from the rest of the crowd.

9. Shop 'n' sip



LOST & FOUND | 1255 DUNDAS ST. W. | 647-348-2810

Shoppers at Lost & Found won't have to feel guilty for perusing clothes while sipping a cup of joe. That's because Lost & Found is one part fashion boutique, one part espresso bar. The unique shop, which opened in January in Little Portugal, boasts both high-end coffee (Chicago's Metropolis Coffee) and high-end clothing (it's the only store in Canada to have exclusive rights to Charlotte Ronson designs). Lower price points include the ever-reliable Levi's, popular Japanese casual wear retailer Uniqlo and

jewellery from Joomi Lim and Axe and Apple. Catering to both men and women, as well as java junkies, this is surely one shop you want to be found in.

10. International invasion



J. CREW | 3401 DUFFERIN ST. | 416-785-3682
TOPSHOP | 176 YONGE ST. | 416-861-9111

"The Americans are coming, the Americans are coming" is something we've been hearing all year as one U.S. chain after another staked a claim on our local retail territory. Though we might prefer more Canadian designers on our backs, the clothes from J. Crew are pretty irresistible. With its first Canadian store opening in August at Yorkdale, the well-loved retailer introduced the essential posh prepster look to Toronto women with their

collared shirts, khaki pants and sharp cardigans. But it's not just the American chains that are making their way over to our home and native land. A British invasion was spearheaded by Topshop when it opened its first Canadian flagship store-within-a-store in September at the Bay on Queen. The fast-fashion retailer features a wide array of super-stylish clothing and accessories for both men and women who want to keep up on the latest trends without going over budget. Look for a second location to open at Yorkdale this month.

11. Modish minimalism



A'BOUT DESIGN CORP 1042 BATHURST ST. 416-548-8881



A'bout Design Corp is about nothing and yet everything. Pretty deep stuff, but this is the epitome of what it means to be minimalist, which is the philosophy behind the label. A'bout opened in March in the Annex, and the boutique clearly represents their simplistic approach to clothes: there are no signs, no cash registers, no price tags and very few pieces of clothing on display. But what A'bout lacks in showmanship, it makes up for in its artistry and dedication to craftsmanship. Everything has been handmade by its design team, Torontonians Dean Hutchison and Yunchieh Chang, who first met in San Francisco before deciding to open their shop in Toronto. Just don't mistake their minimalist take for "boring" — their unfinished hems and rounded edges make their basic essentials anything but.

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What is 4 + 5 ?

