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TAKING
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SILHOUETTES

By Laura Compton

WINDOW SHOPPING



COCO-LUXE BOUTIQUE

Stephanie Marcon has been making nostalgic boxed chocolates "to share ... or not" since early 2006, but it took at least a year to find the right setting for her retail shop, Coco-luxe Boutique & Hot Chocolate Bar. It turned out to be her own neighborhood, the Haight-Ashbury.

Marcon's enrobed truffles — 13 flavors in all — are \$2 each and range from white chocolate to dark ganache flavors like gingerbread, malted milk and devil's food cake. Her boxed chocolates, dragee nuts — Country Fair Peanuts and Block Party Almonds (\$12.95) — and chocolate bars (\$4.95) are also sold here, and she says she expects to taste-test new creations, such as praline caramels, on customers.

At the center of the store is a counter where drinks are served: from hot chocolate and a "hot pudding" drink to mochas and lattes using Blue Bottle coffee (\$4-\$6). The pre-chocolatic set can be easily distracted with a Fluffy — a cup of handmade marshmallows covered with cream and dusted with cocoa.

Working with Caroline Stephens of Design by Posh, Marcon translated her line's 1960s vibe into a space that mixes dark wood accents with vibrant orange paneling and whimsical drum lights.

"We wanted a mix of both locals and tourists," she says. "It's not just the people that I expect to support us; even the older hippie crowd is coming in, saying, 'Wow, this is great!'"

1673 Haight St. (at Cole Street) San Francisco;
(415) 367-4012 or coco-luxe.com. Open noon-8 p.m. daily.



BASIL RACUK

There's an Old World quality to Basil Racuk, a spare Grecian sensibility to the stark walls and reclaimed barn planks. The 200-square-foot showroom in the funky shopping arcade at the end of Telegraph Avenue's shopping strip looks more like a gallery that happens to display exquisitely handcrafted leather goods. Racuk himself has more modern leanings. After a career designing menswear for Banana Republic, Andrew Marc and his own line, he felt compelled to "create a new vocabulary."

The result is a line of functional bags and accessories fashioned from waxed cow leather, deerskin and buffalo purchased from a Napa company. Each features distinctive details: The Farmers' Market tote (\$485) has a subtle water bottle pocket. The Voyage travel bag (\$685/\$875) is based on a Korean war helmet bag. A computer case (\$400) looks more like a professor's well-loved valise; belts, document holders and electronic device holders have a similarly vintage look. Briefcases (\$450-\$675) are based on the same pattern, yet look completely different because of the type of leather used. "I let the material guide me to what the shape is going to be," he says.

Customers can view the collection online, then work with him by phone or e-mail (orders take four to six weeks). Each piece is made by hand and can be further customized — different skins, bigger or smaller sizes, with longer or shorter straps, or perhaps an extra pocket.

2256 Telegraph Ave. (between Parker and Blake streets) Berkeley;
(510) 409-4452 or www.basilracuk.com. By appointment only.



CLARY SAGE ORGANICS

Are you an urban yogini who brings nature into her space? A curious global citizen who strives to take care of the environment as well as yourself? Stylish, but not perfect? If so, you're the customer Patti Cazatto and Daniel Kalish had in mind when they conceived Clary Sage Organics, a wellness boutique in Pacific Heights.

"We had this vision that people are starting to lead a much more healthy, active lifestyle," says Cazatto, who has worked as a senior vice president for Gap and Levi's, running international divisions and helping launch Gap Body and Levi's Capital E line. The shop's dove-gray industrial interior boasts a range of chemical-free organic skin care products (displayed on wooden shelves from old barns) and eco-friendly fashions.

Organic clothing from eco-crieb designer Linda Loudermilk, Prairie Underground, EcoCentric, Perfectly Imperfect (lingerie) and Loomstate (dimm) sits alongside Cazatto's own line of yoga wear (\$48-\$88), including sturdy and stylish boot-cut pants, camis and tops with feminine details, all made from organic cotton and manufactured locally.

Kalish, a natural-medicine practitioner, brought his practice to the space, along with herbal remedies that address concerns from weight loss to hormone balance and energy. "Like an old-fashioned apothecary pharmacy, where you can get advice from someone."

"I call it my clinic, she calls it her store," he jokes.

2241 Fillmore St. (near Clay Street) San Francisco;
(415) 673-7300 or clarysageorganics.com. Open daily.

To submit a new boutique for consideration, e-mail sf@sfchronicle.com or send information to SFIS, 901 Mission St., San Francisco, CA 94103.

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