

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

Let's get fabulous: The best of the season in Toronto

Getting into the spirit doesn't mean pumping up your stress level. The Globe's DEIRDRE KELLY shares her top 10 picks for shopping, noshing and getting pampered



SHOPPING

ZOLA SHOES: Simply the best shoe store in Toronto, with many European and New York labels you can't find anywhere else. Owner/buyer Debra Anissimoff declares the shoe of the holidays to be one of her limited-edition black suede, leather and rhinestone stiletto pumps by Jane Brown of London (pictured at right, \$545). Wear them like a femme fatale. 1726 Avenue Rd., 416-783-8688.

PUSATERI'S FINE FOODS: This is foodie paradise, with a large and excellent meat counter and a huge assortment of deli. It's a one-stop gourmet-food emporium, the closest thing Toronto has to Zabars or Balducci's or Dean & DeLuca in New York. 1539 Avenue Rd., 416-785-9100.

MARKIE PHARMACY: Alternative medicine meets the best skin-care lines from all over Europe — care lines from all over Europe — L'Occitane, Thalgo, Boiron and La Roche-Posay. Owner Mark Rosenhek has made sure there's nothing mega-drugstore about the place. 1235 Bay St., 416-969-9332.

HARVEST WAGON: The place for ultrafresh and exotic vegetables. Where else can you buy zucchini flowers (in season), baby artichokes, white peaches and broccoli rabe in one place? And if you don't feel like you've already spent way

too much, there's a premium-priced organic corner. 1103 Yonge St., 416-923-7542.

RAHIER PATISSERIE: For the best croissants in the city, and oh-so-French holiday cakes that look so beautiful they should go on the mantel. 1717 Bayview Ave., 416-482-0917.

HOAX COUTURE: Co-owners and designers Chris Tyrell and Jim Searle specialize in eveningwear with a funky groove. *Moulin Rouge* (the movie) has boosted the corset trend that Hoax has been carrying for years. Wear one of their satin and numbers under the mistletoe and be the most popular girl at the party. Every Saturday afternoon for the holidays, enjoy a complimentary eggnog and cider. 114 Cumberland St., 416-929-4629.

TEATRO VERDE: A flower shop, but, oh, so much more. Dozens of unusual gift ideas, from tortoise shell frames to bamboo place mats. Everything's so artfully displayed that you walk in wanting posies and you walk out with napkin rings. Perfect for that last-minute hostess gift. 87 Avenue Rd., 416-966-2227.

ROWE FARMS: Check out this Guelph, Ont.-based organic meat producer's booth at the St. Lawrence Market (north building) on

Saturdays. Christmas geese, hams, turkeys and steaks are steroid and antibiotic free. Special orders available. St. Lawrence Market, 92 Front St. E., 519-822-8794.

UNICEF: For a hit of feel-good shopping, pick up cards, calendars and charming handcrafted tree ornaments from around the world at Unicef shops. The UN organization has been using its card sales to benefit the world's damaged children for half a century. Holt Renfrew Centre, 50 Bloor St. W.; Fairview Mall, 1800 Sheppard Ave. E.; Macdonald Block, 900 Bay St.; Eaton Centre, 220 Yonge St.; and Cumberland Terrace, 2 Bloor St. W. 416-487-4153.

FORMES BIS MATERNITY:

Pricey but it's got some of the best maternity wear around. Non-pregnant women shop there for the cutting-edge Parisian fashion; they just don't let out the waistbands. 128 Cumberland St., 416-972-0207.

BODY BEAUTIFUL

SALON IIE: For the best haircut and blow dry in town by one of the and egomaniacal hairdressers most ever. Owner Jie Matar says he gets away with it because he's perfect. 154 Davenport Rd., 416-926-0026.

INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED SKINCARE: Home of Drs. Schachter, Bell and Born — two cosmetic surgeons and a dermatologist who cater to stars and wannabes. This is where to go for a

glow to outshine the Chanukah lights or blinking Christmas tree. 199 Avenue Rd., 2nd floor, 416-962-0001.

MELONHEAD: Best place to get your child's hair snipped for the holidays. Chairs that look like carnival rides, and lots of lollipops to distract screamers. Parents will love the gelato and espresso bar in the basement. 3215 Yonge St., 416-483-7010.

AVEDA: The list of services includes the usual manicures, pedicures and body rubs. The difference lies in the pure, plant-derived products that exude a heavenly scent. Here is where you inhale and then brag about it. 95 Bloor St. W., 416-413-1333.

NAILS BY JADE: You don't go for the ambience, unless you are into beat-up chrome. You go for the impeccable manicures and pedicures. Owner Jade Chung also specializes in acrylic nails — divas with talons are always in her chair. 823 Yonge St., 416-934-9370.

ESTEE LAUDER: This oasis of calm in the heart of the Holt Renfrew flagship offers the most civilized pedicures. You sit sheltered by drapes and dangle your feet in warm waters. Hideaway chairs in

remote corners ensure privacy while drying. You can even have lunch with a copy of *Vogue* on your lap. 50 Bloor St. W., 416-922-2333.

SALON DANIEL: Owner Daniel Fiorio and his staff recommend styles that suit you, not the trends. Donna Dolphy is an award-winning stylist who also teaches at the acclaimed Schwarzkopf Academy, so you know you're in good hands. Each cut comes with a cup of winter-busting hot chocolate. 79 Yorkville Ave., 416-975-1935.

FOOD & DRINK

YYZ: Simon Bower's new restaurant is named after Toronto's airport code. But there's nothing flighty about it. Its excellent cuisine by chef Chris Zielinski and strong interior design have garnered attention from *Wallpaper* and *GQ*. 345 Adelaide St. W., 416-599-3399.

PANGAEA: While shopping on the Bloor Street West fashion strip, the bar at this minimalist restaurant with a formidable wine list and zesty olives by the bowl is a great pit stop. 1221 Bay St., 416-920-2323.

AMBER RESTAURANT AND BAR: The hottest night club in Yorkville, where a Bellini Amber cocktail (champagne, peach schnapps and cassis) costs \$18, but you don't care because the vibe is so cool, you feel invincible. 119 Yorkville Ave., 416-926-9037.

OMI: For the best sushi in the city, this hole-in-the wall in the heart of Toronto's gay district can't be beat. Chef/owner John Lee studied under the better-known Hiro and there isn't a raw shrimp he can't wrestle into submission. 451 Church St., 416-920-8991.

BIFF'S: Situated across from the Hummingbird Centre, it's where to go to digest the ballet or the opera. Lots of buzz, and cool bistro fare like steak-frites and coq-au-vin. 4 Front St. E., 416-860-0086.

BRASSERIE AIX: David Bowen of Monsoon has a hit with his French-style restaurant on the trendy College Street strip. The decibel level is deafening on weekends, but on a weeknight, you can snuggle into a quilted booth and have a quietly old-fashioned time. 584 College St., 416-588-7377.

ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS

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