

Second-hand treasures tickle retro shoppers' fancy

■ A flourishing thrift shop industry has everything out-of-style, smelling of moth-balls and absolutely fabulous for the tres chic

By Kristina Johnson
Oregon Daily Emerald

In Eugene, new clothing stores are hard to find, and harder to afford. And if you do find a cheap store, chances are its clothes were sewn by Indonesian children. Wear them, and risk being attacked by an angry mob of sweatshop activists.

Luckily, alternatives exist. Eugene has an incredible array of vintage and thrift stores, most of which are situated within a mile of campus.

Nobody's Baby is tucked away in an inconspicuous gray building on 13th Avenue between Mill and High streets. An army of perfectly mended and cleaned vintage dresses waits inside its doors while Billie Holiday croons on the stereo.

Hawaiian prints, which sell for \$10 to \$20, 1950s cocktail dresses and formals occupy the front half of the shop. The back is shared by the men's collection of beautiful vintage ties, hats and cowboy shirts and the more delicate and expensive dresses from the turn of the century to the 1940s.

Look for seriously discounted items (under \$5) in the overflowing trunk. The kitchen corner, a pink and blue tribute to Betty Crocker, features 1940s tablecloths, Tupperware and pots and pans. The clerks at Nobody's Baby let you browse in peace, but are happy to search the racks for a specific request, which is helpful because of the sheer volume of dresses — literally hundreds of them — that fill the store.

Across the street on 13th Avenue and High Street, Antrican lures even the most innocent passerby with its wafting incense and elaborate pink mural.

Inside the store, you'll find five or six racks of embroidered dresses, tie-dyes and Indian prints. Contemporary natural cotton dresses mingle haphazardly with 1970s muumuus and old prom wear. An irresistible rack of bright feather boas stands by the dressing rooms, and the counter is crowded with body jewelry, scented oils, candles and cosmetics. Dresses at Antrican cost anywhere between \$8 and \$20.

Just down 13th Avenue between Oak and Pearl streets is Eugene Jeans, which specializes in — you guessed it — jeans. Even the oddest shaped butt has a chance of finding a happy home in one of their many pairs of worn Levi's, which sell for anywhere between \$8 and \$20.

The store also carries a wide selection of old school Nikes and Converse (also \$8-\$20), as well as an eclectic assembly of retro 1970s dresses, shirts, cords and jackets fit for the cast of "Dazed and Confused." The 1980s memorabilia, such as A-Team dinner trays, Pac-Man lunch boxes and autographed Dukes of Hazzard photos add to the nostalgia.

Puttin' on the Ritz, in a fancy tan house between Mill and High streets on 11th Avenue, carries quality and rare vintage pieces, all of which are dry cleaned and mended. The dresses range from 1930s cotton sundresses to Victorian era gowns, and cost anywhere from \$15 to \$175.

Boys will appreciate the cashmere cardigans, bowling shirts and silk ties hanging in the men's sec-

tion. The laid back staff encourage you to try on the merchandise in their spacious and comfy dressing room.

A huge glass case is packed with costume jewelry, Zippo lighters and silver cigarette boxes, and purses and pillbox hats are scattered throughout the store. An entire room is devoted to kitchen and housewares — fluffy aprons, cocktail glasses, linens, cookie jars and salt and pepper shakers. One unexpected pleasure: Reading messages scrawled from soldiers to their wives on the antique postcards in the back of the store.

St. Vincent dePaul's downtown store on 11th Avenue and Oak Street features several racks crowded with crumpled dresses which appear to have been worn by loyal bridesmaids of all shapes through many fashion eras. Dig long enough, however, and you may be rewarded with an embroidered Kimono or a vintage I. Magnin formal.

A separate rack brims with old coats, 1950s furs and 1960s leather. The collection of uniforms for every club from Boy Scouts to the U.S. Navy guarantees that this place will

be hopping the day before Halloween. The prices (\$7 to \$20 for a dress) may be higher than what you'd expect from a thrift store, but the colored tag rotation assures that every item in the store is discounted after four weeks on the floor.

Once you get to the Goodwill on Willamette Street between 15th and 16th avenues, you're on your own.

You'll have to dig through rack upon rack of late 1980s stretch pants and maternity wear, but buried between all the ugly sports T-shirts is the inevitable gem: A crocheted sweater from the 1970s, a pony hair purse, a 1950s slip or a perfect pair of men's golf pants.

A good retro dress at Goodwill costs anywhere from \$4 to \$20, and prices can occasionally be negotiated.

Depending on how you look at it, you will be treated to/assaulted with the constant flow of Lionel Ritchie and Phil Collins from the stereo speakers. Employee banter over the PA system lends the aura of a big department store.

Whether you're shopping for a coffee pot, a sundress or a bathrobe, Goodwill has it — even though it might still have peanut butter crusted on it (at least hope that's what it is).



Tom Patterson for the Emerald
Walking inside a vintage clothing store can be like a trip back through time.

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