

The CONSCIOUS Consumer

ANIMAL RIGHTS-CONSCIOUS SHOPPERS in San Diego may be hard-pressed to find the cruelty-free baubles they seek, but All Vegan boutique in University Heights is positioning itself as the local source for all things vegan. The cozy shop offers shoes, T-shirts and handbags produced from 100 percent man-made materials, eschewing any that may have come from animals. The shoes and belts are leather-free; handbags are made of soft, durable alternative materials; shelves boast organic lotions and creams with fresh lemon scents.

"We're trying to use our spending power to promote companies that don't cause suffering to animals," says owner Joy Zakarian. As the director of San Diego's Last Chance for Animals, Zakarian realized the need for a source for cruelty-free products that were fashionable and stylish, sold under one roof.

One wall of the boutique offers vegan shoes, from flats to heels to knee-high boots, priced from \$35 to \$150, while a center rack displays chic handbags starting at \$60. Watch for Mat & Nat, a Montreal-based line of handbags that rivals any high-priced totes, in a variety of plaids and leather-like materials. All Vegan also sells a wide array of pins, bumper stickers and books, plus a small selection of vegan chocolates. More information: 619-299-4669; allveganshopping.com.

— BROOKE SELDIN



Joy Zakarian

WALK ON THE ARTSY SIDE

ARTWALK, the free, art-infused block party featuring more than 400 artists, returns to Little Italy April 26 and 27 (noon-6 p.m. both days). Billed as the region's largest open-air gallery, ArtWalk showcases works by Southern California and Tijuana artists working in various media: painting, sculpture, glasswork, photography and live entertainment (drama and music). More than 100,000 art enthusiasts turned out for last year's festival.



"ArtWalk brings the possibility of owning original art into the realm of possibility for everyone," says managing director Sandi Cottrell. "It is a truly rewarding experience for veteran art collectors and first-time buyers."

This year's highlights include the garden-bench silent auction (visitors can bid on painted benches to benefit ArtReach, a nonprofit program created to enrich local elementary school students' lives through the visual arts), the KidsWalk interactive area in Amici Park, the Binational Showcase (highlighting works by Mexican artists) and live entertainment from numerous stages.

ArtWalk stretches east to west from Beech Street to Fir Street, with India Street and Kettner Boulevard as the main thoroughfares. Call 619-615-1090 or see artwalksandiego.org for artist locations and performance times.

