

2015 Best Of Our Valley Winners: Shopping

Written by Suzanne Koch

Tuesday, 12 May 2015 14:58 - Last Updated Tuesday, 12 May 2015 15:21

Shopping

Phoenix is known for its phenomenal shopping, and this year's winners are no exception. Valley residents and visitors alike can expect to find great deals, handmade gifts and luxurious items for every occasion.

BY ASHLEY R. CARLSON

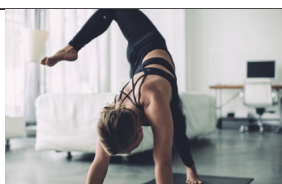


2014 WINNER

BEST DEPARTMENT STORE, BEST SHOE SHOPPING, BEST HANDBAGS & ACCESSORIES AND BEST FRAGRANCE SELECTION

>>BARNEYS NEW YORK

This mecca for high fashion has earned a reputation of class, sophistication and luxury ever since its flagship store opened in New York City in the 30's. Now, shoppers can expect to find meticulously selected wares ranging from Givenchy studded backpacks to Jellycat stuffed animals for the little ones. Barneys New York is known for its iconic store windows, and the location at Scottsdale Fashion Square is no different, with a perfect view of the fabulous displays from busy Scottsdale Road. barneys.com.



2014 WINNER BEST ATHLETIC GEAR

>>LULULEMON ATHLETICA AND NIKE

Established in Vancouver, British Columbia in 1998, lululemon athletica (pictured) has steadily grown to become a global athletic clothing provider with a strong focus on promoting fitness within the community. Originally manufacturing yoga gear, lululemon has since branched out into products for running, cycling and other fitness needs. In addition to the traditional retail experience, lululemon offers events, resources and spaces to connect and elevate the local community. As one of the world's largest manufacturers of footwear and athletic gear, Nike's name has grown synonymous with high-quality products and celebrity endorsements. Customers can find shoes and clothing for every sport ranging from baseball to skateboarding to golf, as well as specialized backpacks, cold weather items, and NFL gear. Nike's labs are constantly exploring ways to innovate athletic wear, and such well-known options as Air Jordan and Nike+ have resulted from this research. lululemon.com; nike.com.

BEST PLACE TO HOARD FASHION & ACCESSORIES FOR CHEAP

>>CHARMING CHARLIE AND FOREVER 21

Debuting in 2004, Charming Charlie now has locations across the nation that focus on providing accessories of all kinds at affordable prices. Customers can expect to find a plethora of necklaces, earrings, bracelets, scarves, shoes and sunglasses in every color under the sun, with "Charmers" nearby to help with any difficulty in decision-making. Though Forever 21 is the fifth largest specialty retailer in the United States, it's still remained a family-owned business since opening its first location in 1984. Back then it was called Fashion 21, but its mission since then hasn't changed: to provide stylish and hip clothing at prices that don't break the bank. charmingcharlie.com; forever21.com.

2014 WINNER

BEST DENIM

>>>SCOTTSDALE JEAN COMPANY

Started in 2005, Scottsdale Jean Company has since moved to its Gainey Village location in 2012 to become the largest independently-owned retailer of designer jeans and apparel in Arizona. With more than 60 brands of tops, dresses, jeans, shoes and Kiehl's skincare products,

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customers can expect to find not only specialty apparel here, but thoughtful and attentive service by Scottsdale Jean Company's staff. A children's play area in the store makes bringing the whole family an enjoyable and worry-free experience. scottsdalejc.com.

BEST BOUTIQUE: LOCAL

>> BOTANICA AT THE FARM AT SOUTH MOUNTAIN

This specialized boutique located on 10 acres of The Farm at South Mountain handpicks unique items from independent artists and vendors. Guests can expect to find handmade ceramic vases next to lace scarves, candles and silver necklaces, as well as vintage items. An open-air market on the weekends allows Botanica to showcase its wide array of local salsas, jams, breads and coffees, many of which can be sampled. After-hours classes and workshops are also offered, and can be signed up for through the Web site. botanicafarm.com.

BEST BOUTIQUE: NATIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL

>> ESCADA AND KATE SPADE

The luxury international brand Escada originated in Germany several decades ago and has grown into a fashion empire known for its elaborate designs and exquisite tailoring. The Biltmore Fashion Park location is no different, offering a range of clothing and accessories for those with impeccable taste. Staff is known for its pleasant and helpful attitude, even sending handwritten notes of thanks to patrons when the occasion allows. This whimsical brand of apparel began with founder Kate Spade's pursuit in 1993 to design the perfect handbag. The first six styles, marked by utilitarian shapes and playful colors united in an entirely new way, rocketed the brand into stardom. Kate Spade now offers a full line of clothing, eyewear, accessories, fragrance, baby and footwear at its Scottsdale Fashion Square location. us.escada.com; katespade.com.



2014 WINNER

BEST COSMETICS & SKINCARE

>> CITRINE NATURAL BEAUTY BAR

The founder of Citrine Natural Beauty Bar, Melissa Lenberg, came to her decision to open an organic-based skincare store after being diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis as a budding makeup artist in Los Angeles. Once she turned to all-natural options to combat the disease, Lenberg soon realized there was a gap in the market that she knew how to fill. Citrine not only offers makeovers and consultations, but custom essential oil fragrances that can be designed specifically to your preferences. Sidle up to the bar with one of Citrine's scent mixologists for a one-of-a-kind perfume only you will own. citrinenaturalskin.com.

2014 WINNER

BEST GLASSES

>> OPTIQUE AT THE RIDGE

This part-optometry office, part- retail store at Desert Ridge provides Valley residents with the best kind of glasses purchase: one made with a professional's assistance. Optique at the Ridge opened in 2005 and has become a favorite for glasses needs due to its expansive selection of designer sunglasses, as well as economical and prescription choices for every requirement. Customers can peruse brands like Prada and Burberry, and if an eye examination is needed, an appointment is merely feet away. azopticalillusions.com.

BEST PLACE TO PURCHASE SUNGLASSES

>> THE SUNGLASS HUT

This destination has made it a goal to be the premier choice for top brands and exclusive styles in sunglasses throughout the country. Expect to find well-known brands like Ray-Ban, Versace and Maui Jim alongside trendy options like Persol and Spy Goggles. Knowledgeable staff and an interactive face-shape guide will assist in finding the perfect set of shades for every occasion. sunglasshut.com.

2014 WINNER

BEST GIFT SHOP

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>>DO ME A FAVOR

A specialty shop with options for personalized items ranging from birthdays and weddings to baby and décor, Valley residents know that Do Me a Favor's wide selection and attentive staff will result in the perfect gift purchase for any occasion. After a gift is chosen, Do Me a Favor completes the look with hand-selected wrapping paper and ribbons and heartfelt cards. shopdomeafavor.com.

BEST YEAR-ROUND RESORTWEAR

>>BROOKS BROTHERS

Hailed as the country's oldest men's clothier chain, the Brooks Brothers brand has been defined by class and understated elegance since opening in 1818. Worn by dozens of presidents over the decades, Brooks Brothers is now a top choice for custom design as well as ready-to-wear suits for red carpet events, and women's clothing. Shoppers will find finely tailored pieces in argyle, nautical and polo shirts, as well as understated accessories and fragrances. brooksbrothers.com.

2014 WINNER

BEST NATIONAL JEWELER

>>KENDRA SCOTT

What started as a mini-jewelry collection by Kendra Scott in 2002, this multi-million dollar brand has since gone global, becoming a household name in fashion around the world. Pieces can be found in such retailers as Nordstrom, Neiman Marcus, Bloomingdales and more than 1,000 specialty boutiques, and are a favorite with celebrities like Hilary Duff and Eva Longoria. kendrascott.com.

2014 WINNER

BEST LOCAL FASHION DESIGNER

>>ANGELA JOHNSON, ANGELA JOHNSON DESIGNS

This innovative, talented designer has been "turning T-shirts into couture" for clients in Arizona and around the country since 2002, using recycled T-shirts as material for works of art. Johnson states that each one-of-a-kind design uses around 25 shirts, with clients either invited to provide their own or request a theme for Johnson to follow. When not designing, Johnson is hard at work on her newly-launched free fashion directory, LabelHorde.com, to assist local designers and brands in building their local businesses. angelajohnsondesigns.com.

BEST ANTIQUE, VINTAGE OR SECONDHAND STORE

>>ANTIQUE TROVE

This 23,000-sq.-ft. megastore in South Scottsdale is a vintage lover's heaven. Antique Trove has more than 140 vendors selling Victorian furniture, records, hats and clothing, paintings, mid-century collectibles and more. Patrons will enjoy local Southwestern items as well as those from areas of the world. Coins, clocks and automobile memorabilia are some of the most notable sectors in Antique Trove. antiquetrove.com.

2014 WINNER

BEST DISCOUNT STORE

>>NORDSTROM RACK

With numerous locations throughout the Valley, this discount luxury department store offers fine apparel and accessories at significantly marked-down prices. A favorite with fashionable Phoenixians, shoppers are drawn in by the extensive fine apparel selection including Ella Moss, Free People and Nanette Lepore, as well as shoes, handbags and accessories by notable designers. Those looking for an even better deal can peruse Nordstrom Rack's ever-changing clearance section. nordstromrack.com.



BEST LOCAL JEWELRY DESIGNER: FEMALE

>>JACQUELINE NERGUIZIAN, JN JEWELS

JN Jewels owner and designer, Jacqueline Nerguizian, has been in the business of luxury since infancy. A third-generation fine jeweler who grew up in Hollywood working with her father at Los Angeles's famed Jewelry Mart, Nerguizian now exhibits a flair for the edgy and unexpected in her creations. When not designing for celebrities like Jennifer Lopez and Sofia Vergara, Nerguizian enjoys hiking and spending time with her

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husband and five children. ijnjewels.com.

2014 WINNER

BEST LOCAL JEWELRY DESIGNER & BEST LOCAL JEWELRY DESIGNER: MALE

>>RANDY COFFIN, COFFIN & TROUT

Local jewelry designer Randy Coffin paired up with business partner David Trout to open Coffin & Trout in 1984, with a few vital principles in mind: to create jewelry that was well-crafted, stunning and unique to each client. Coffin & Trout's diverse and educated staff includes a gem specialist, certified gem appraiser, CAD/CAM designers and administration to attend to every requirement a client may have. coffinandtrout.com.

2014 WINNER

BEST SWIMWEAR SHOPPING

>>BEACH BUNNY SWIMWEAR

Founded by former swimwear model Angela Chittenden in 2004, Beach Bunny Swimwear has since grown into an international brand that's a favorite with fashion-forward women. At the helm is Chittenden as the brand's designer, who works tirelessly from her Orange County office to create new and exciting swimwear pieces for every body shape. Known for its innovative cuts, chic embellishments and unique hardware, Beach Bunny Swimwear has been included every Sports Illustrated's Swimsuit Edition since 2006. beachbunnyswimwear.com.

BEST WEB CLOTHING SHOPPING

>>CLOSET CANDY

This family-owned business based out of Scottsdale has taken the online fashion industry by storm. Launched in 2012, Closet Candy has grown exponentially since then, now warning shoppers that many of the popular items that arrive daily sell out within a few hours. Find colorful maxi dresses, adorable boots and chic outerwear at affordable prices on Closet Candy's site, with free, fast shipping offered anywhere in the United States. Owned by a busy wife and mother, Closet Candy's motto is to offer unique, affordable fashion. closetcandy.com.



AFM FAVE

BEST PLACE TO BUY DIAMONDS

>>ISAAC JEWELERS

Engagements. Anniversaries. Milestone birthdays. All are special occasions that have one thing in common: diamonds. When it comes to picking out that luminous, light-catching piece for such momentous events, locals with discerning taste turn to family-owned Isaac Jewelers—the exclusive dealer of Smart Cut Diamonds. Since teaming with Smart Cut exclusively in 2009, the Kierland Commons luxury shop has specialized in this new and smarter way of shopping for diamonds, which are up to 23 percent larger in appearance yet weigh less. (That means a client may choose a specific carat-weight diamond and be pleasantly surprised with a larger-than-expected gem.) Isaac Jewelers can sell these beautiful baubles at 50 percent less than its competition, keeping its customers in mind every step of the way. Isaac Jewelers carries diamonds ranging from .25 carat to 40 carats, in all shapes and sizes, colors and clarities. Customers seeking a one-of-a-kind piece can turn to these master jewelers to have their own wearable work of art—within two weeks, no less. First, customers can view a CAD design (done for free) to ensure complete satisfaction before the jewelers embark on crafting the piece. Reasonable price tags and personalized service is what has kept customers coming back for 15 years. isaacjewelers.com.

PHOTO BY DERRICK JONES-NELSON

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2014 WINNER

BEST SHOPPING CENTER: OUTDOORS

>>DESERT RIDGE MARKETPLACE

This regional outdoor shopping center has been offering more than 1.2 million square feet of retail space to Valley residents since opening in 2001. With stores like teen favorites PacSun, Hot Topic and Hollister and others including Barnes & Noble, Kohl's and even an Albertson's, shoppers can find anything they need at Desert Ridge Marketplace. A giant splash pad and children's designated play area offer entertainment for families, and an AMC Theatre and numerous restaurants define this center as a go-to for all-day fun. shopdesertridge.com.

2014 WINNER

BEST SHOPPING CENTER: INDOORS

>>SCOTTSDALE FASHION SQUARE

Serving as Arizona's largest destination for elite and exclusive brands for both Valley residents and visitors alike, Scottsdale Fashion Square epitomizes the luxury and versatility of the state's most fashionable city. Stores range from three-story department chains to Barneys New York, Anthropologie and H&M, and specialty shops like Sur La Table and Williams-Sonoma. When it's time to eat, Scottsdale Fashion Square offers an extensive food court as well as sit-down choices like the just-opened Thirsty Lion Gastropub & Grill. fashionsquare.com.

2014 WINNER

BEST OUTLETS OR DISCOUNT SHOPPING CENTER

>>THE OUTLETS AT ANTHEM

Conveniently located off the I-17, this hub for designer wares at discount prices is a must for Valley bargain hunters. Housing more than 60 retailers including Michael Kors, Calvin Klein and BCBGMAXAZRIA, The Outlets at Anthem offer a shop for every need. A shaded children's area and splash pad provide added entertainment for the family, and a food pavilion with seven easy favorites like Subway and Villa Pizza offer nourishment for more shopping. outletsanthem.com.



AFM FAVE

BEST SHOPPING CENTER: OUTDOORS

>>KIERLAND COMMONS

With a unique Main Street shopping experience, Kierland Commons in Scottsdale is a favorite among locals and visitors alike. Retailers like Banana Republic and Crate & Barrel satisfy shoppers looking for everything from a new outfit to fresh furnishings while restaurants like The Greene House and Zinc Bistro keeps their taste buds happy. kierlandcommons.com.

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AFM FAVE

BEST PLACE TO BUY A ROLEX

>>ROBERT C. WESLEY JEWELERS

Located in the historical 5th Avenue Shops next to Scottsdale's Waterfront at Southbridge, Robert C. Wesley Jewelers is a fourth-generation, family-owned and -operated fine jewelry store with a team that boasts more than 125 years of experience. Thanks to its large selection of Rolex watches, Robert C. Wesley Jewelers is the Valley's premier spot to pick up a new luxury timepiece. robertwesleyjewelers.com.

2014 WINNER

BEST LOCAL WATCH SELECTION

>>HAMRA JEWELERS

Serving Arizona for 27 years, Hamra Jewelers sets itself apart with an extensive and unique collection of watches and jewelry for Valley residents. Carrying such Swiss timepieces as Rolex, Breitling and Tudor, this fine jeweler is the only retailer licensed to sell Patek Philippe watches in the state. Desiring to maintain a lifelong relationship with every customer, Hamra Jewelers offers exemplary after-sales services including expert cleaning, polishing and repairs for every piece purchased. hamra.com.

2014 WINNER

BEST PET SHOP

>>OH MY DOG! BOUTIQUE & SPA

This grooming spa and specialty boutique was created by owner and operator Jackie Griffin to provide a relaxing, cage-free and spalike environment for pets and owners alike. Oh My Dog! Boutique + Spa has been setting itself apart from other pet stores since 2008, carrying organic treats, goods from local bakeries and accessories for any occasion. When not running her store, Griffin advocates for dog adoption through her program, Ruffs to Riches, and helps to raise money for therapy dog usage at Phoenix Children's Hospital through the charity event, Dine with Your Dog. ohmydogboutique.com.

2014 WINNER

BEST DEAL WEB SITE

>>GROUPON.COM

This deal-of-the-day Web site offers discounted gift certificates that can be used in local or national stores. Frequented by mainly female clientele, Groupon makes an effort to stock its database with offers for nail care, salons, beauty buys, fitness and apparel applicable all throughout the Valley. With a revamped Web site completed in 2013, Groupon now strives to create a "marketplace" atmosphere, recommending certain coupons to consumers based on what they've shown interest in previously.



BEST LOCAL JEWELER

>>LONDON GOLD

With three locations serving Phoenixians since 1979, this locally owned fine jewelry retailer specializes in providing carefully curated items for

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any occasion. Clients can expect to find an extensive selection of diamond engagement rings, gemstone jewelry, estate jewelry and loose diamonds, as well as custom design and jewelry appraisal. London Gold's trained staff aims to provide personal service and expertise with every purchase, and invites Valley residents to attend their various VIP events and trunk shows throughout the year. londongold.com.