

C'est Manifique!

LOCAL SHOPPING WITH A FRENCH TWIST.

By Kathleen Guthrie

Colorful table linens from Provence, soaps from Marseille, delicately trimmed *oh la la* lingerie from Paris—these are some distinctly French souvenirs we so carefully pack into our carry-on luggage after visiting France. They evoke *joie de vivre* and transport us back to beautiful scenes long after we've returned to American soil. But what to do when the soap runs out? Fortunately, there are many options for retail therapy—French style—close to home.

Sabine Brouillet imports the “sunshine” of her native France in the cheerful patterns of tablecloths, valances, dishware, and table accessories found in her Solvang shop **Pearls of Provence** (485 Alisal Road, 866-573-2757 or www.pearlsofprovence.com).

Every year or so Punky Soares (805-646-6626 or punkysprovence@aol.com) and her daughter Nancy Pierson (805-640-9428) visit their favorite vendors and bring home wares—from herbes de Provence to tablecloths and runners cut from the region's popular fabrics—for their company called **Punky's Provence**. These Ojai-based ladies display their offerings at trade shows and outdoor markets, including the Santa Barbara French Festival (July 12 to 13; www.french-festival.com) and Ojai Day (October 25). “Give one of us a call, if you happen to be in Ojai,” Soares says. There you'll be treated to a trunk-show-like experience. Be sure to check out the unique aprons they make, easily adjustable to fit chefs of any height.

At **Yves Delorme** (La Cumbre Plaza, 110 S. Hope Ave., 805-682-0894 or www.yvesdelorme.com) choose from Egyptian combed cotton and washable silk in a wide range of colors and textures to create romantic and elegant bedding. Family-owned for more than five generations, the company also offers French-made fragrances, baby items, furniture, and bath linens. To celebrate Bastille Day, the store will serve champagne, wine, and cheese; everything in the store will be 20-percent off from July 11 to 14.

A whiff of the scented sachets and oils at À la Maison in Westlake Village instantly transports you back to France; the store's decor makes you think you're already there.



Melissa Poster (aka “Poster Girl” of the Fashion Trend Guide; www.fashion-trendguide.blogspot.com) sings the praises of the French influences in downtown Ventura. For example, **Le Monde Emporium** (542 E. Main St., 805-648-7463) offers an ever-changing selection of contemporary and vintage home furnishings, clothing, shoes, and artwork in this charming, Parisian-style boutique. Just down the street at **B. on Main** (337 E. Main, 805-643-9309 or www.b-onmain.com), owner Carol Barchell, who was born in Chambley, features what she calls a “whole little Frenchy section.” Shop here for soaps, silk stockings and pajamas, cancan panties, and books on flea markets, bistros, walking tours, and classic French cooking. There's also a vast array of decorative Eiffel Towers.

The French know lingerie. Parisian Joelle Saxon, owner of **Mrs. Jones Boudoir Boutique** in Camarillo (2068 Ventura Blvd., 805-484-9800 or www.mrsjonesboudoir.com), has assembled a collection worthy of the finest armoire. Her charming shop is framed with fine and couture lingerie, including bras by Aubade, intimate apparel from Chantal Thomass, and the latest swimsuits by Eres. Be sure to stop in on “Men's Night” (call for the next date), when husbands and boyfriends are invited to shop between 6 and 9 p.m. while enjoying cocktails and food.

For French posters, vintage-style prints, maps and signs, as well as jewelry and an exquisite selection of home and garden accessories, visit Barbara Malmin's **Garden Memories** (420 E. Main St., Ventura, 805-641-1070 or www.gardenmemoriesgifts.com). The bubbling fountain, fresh herbs, and fragrant signature potpourri add to the illusion that



you've stepped off the street in Ventura and into a boutique in a French village.

Sachets, essential oils, lotions, and even Spa Lavender Dog Shampoo are available for purchase at the boutique of **Clairmont Farms** in Los Olivos (2480 Roblar Ave.). The family-owned farm is entirely organic and is a great source for lavender sea salt and lavender honey. Go for the merchandise, then stay for the scenery. With the Santa Ynez Mountains in the background, the picturesque lavender fields beckon visitors for strolls, picnics, or a leisurely afternoon of plein air painting. *Clairmont Farms is open to the public from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily. Call 805-688-7505 or visit www.clairmontfarms.com.*

At least twice a year, designer Mary Radenbaugh travels to France for home furnishings, accessories, and inspiration. Visit her showroom at **À la Maison** (31143 Via Colinas Drive, Westlake Village; 818-338-3301 or www.alamaisonwlv.com) to envision your home with custom and hand-carved furniture and cabinetry, as well as finely crafted French antiques dating back to the 17th century. Check their Web site for upcoming seasonal events.