



## DESPITE OUR ROLLER-COASTER ECONOMY, THERE ARE STILL PLACES TO GO WHERE ONE CAN FIND A LITTLE RETAIL SOLACE

By Susan Michals

These days, all we hear about is how much we're economically screwed. The governor has put California into a state of fiscal emergency; we've got a multibillion-dollar deficit and his way of closing the gap is to do things like closing state parks in order to save a few pennies. Fortunately, amid this economic doom and gloom there are still a few new places (and a few tried and true names as well) to get your shopping groove on. Be it Malibu, Canoga or that street that sets the bar for luxury, Rodeo Drive, here's your go-to guide for the next six months — just enough shopping fodder to keep you busy through the holidays — and carry you, hopefully, into the next economic upswing.

### WESTFIELD TOPANGA, CANOGA PARK:

The revamped Topanga Plaza opened last September right before Bernie Madoff's villainous swindling came to light. Not exactly good timing for luxification, but in Canoga Park, there's plenty of things to look at if that's all you can do at the moment. It's almost like a Rodeo Drive satellite location: Here you'll find the always well-heeled Jimmy Choo (1400 square feet of shoes — pun intended), Tous Spanish jewelry, Madison, Kate Spade, and my new favorite, Ladybugs and Dragonflies — an upscale children's boutique with items like gorgeous bright red tutu skirts and Classica prams reminiscent of something you'd find in the era of Queen Victoria (but updated for today's kid). It's a magical place, and I don't even have children.

*Additional chic sweet spots: Nicola Bertti, Burberry and Louis Vuitton.*

### LUXURY

### SHOP

### RODEO DRIVE, BEVERLY HILLS:

The Beverly Hills epicenter of chic has shown no signs of slowing down in spite of the financial front. As of last year, retail occupancy was a resounding 95 percent with additional expansions continually cropping up. A spokesperson for jeweler Mikimoto told me recently that 2008 was one of their best years ever. The same goes for Bijan — he had the best year of his career despite these economic doldrums. Rodeo seems impervious to the recession; Judith Leiber has just taken hold of the space adjacent to Tiffany's with her signature bejeweled clutches and an in-

terior that would make Prince purple with envy, while celebrity fave jeweler Fred Leighton even opened his first Cali store on the 300 block. Max Mara created its flagship location with an amazing 5,000-square-foot store (a tip: don't wear new heels as that floor can be on the slick slide).

*Additional chic sweet spots: Persol Eyewear, Miu Miu and Paul & Shark.*

### MALIBU LUMBER YARD, MALIBU:

Many a Malibuite was initially not too thrilled with the retail takeover, but since it's opening just a few months ago, the takeover has been anything but hostile. Intermix shouts its wares to the locals loud and clear with a great new shop, and J. Crew has created a fabulous upscale offshoot. Kitson continues its world domination with a new location there as well. Designer James Perse, known predominantly for his über comfy T-shirts, has expanded with a furniture line and soon will open an outdoor/athletic retail store — no longer will locals have to traipse out of town to get their tennis shoes and sporting goods if Perse has anything to say about it.

*Additional chic sweet spots: Maxfield, Alice + Olivia*

