

EARTH FRIENDLY AND TIMELESS: FOUR EAST VILLAGE SHOPS EMBRACE THE PAST TO SAVE OUR FUTURE

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Four adjoining businesses on First Street in Downtown Long Beach's East Village have discovered a like-mindedness that is benefitting the entire planet.

The four shops—The Academy Denim and Tailoring, BYO Long Beach, Burke Mercantile and 3 Women—are run by owners who create and sell products with Earth's healthy future in mind.

“Being in the East Village, with neighbors who also have eco-minded businesses, has really been a great way to establish our roots as an eco-hub in Long Beach,” said Julie Darrell, owner of BYO Long Beach. “We all tend to focus on unique but practical goods which serve a customer who wants to find a balance between sustainability, function, longevity, and

beauty.”

The DLBA Newsletter recently visited the four businesses and learned about each shop’s environmentally conscious products and practices:

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[THE ACADEMY DENIM AND TAILORING](#)



“Tailoring and repairing clothing is one of the oldest ways of making something sustainable,” said shop owner Sam Samreth, who learned the art of tailoring from his mother. Sam, a true student of his craft, also specializes in the manufacture of plastic-free men’s denim trousers. He works directly with cotton growers in the San Joaquin Valley to obtain the finest and softest cotton possible. His sewing machine is “period-correct for denim tailoring,” Samreth said. “It’s equipped with a certain thread that’s a little looser and gives the trouser a more old-school character.”

Keen-eyed Hollywood wardrobe stylists have noticed the authentic vintage feel of Samreth’s creations and have called upon him numerous times to enhance the look of their films.

Samreth's shop is decorated with items that convey old-school sturdiness: '50s table radios, boxing gloves, old bicycles, a '60s-era classroom map of the world.

"I want to motivate the customer with well-made objects, and I want to compliment that feeling with our denims, our t-shirts, and our shirts," said Samreth.

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[BYO LONG BEACH](#)

Single-use plastic is one of the world's biggest banes: Americans alone use over 100 billion plastic bags a year, and recycle less than 10% of their plastic packaging. Counteracting these grim statistics is BYO Long Beach, which carries a comprehensive line of Earth-friendly household cleaners and personal grooming products which are available on a "BYO" Basis: Bring your own container and BYO will fill it.

"When I first started my business two years ago," said shop owner Julie Darrell, "the idea of zero waste wasn't quite mainstream yet. But the past year has seen a huge influx of customers who are already aware of the concept and much of our

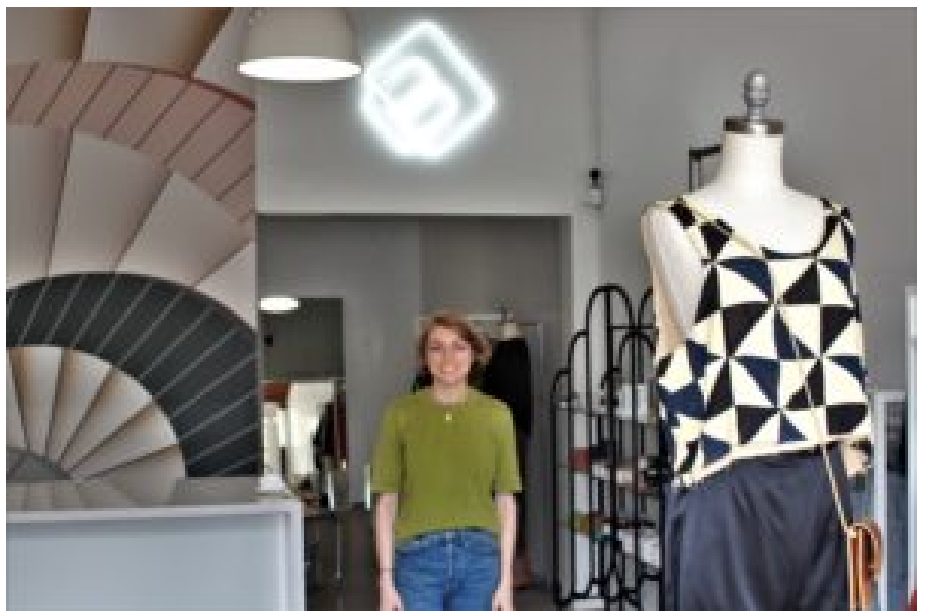
customer base tends to be people who have sought us out, looking for refills and alternatives to single-use items.”

Store manager Emily Lou gave us the tour of BYO Long Beach’s plastic-smart alternatives, which include re-usable metal straws, plastic-free brushes, and “DIY” ingredients such as beeswax, which can be melted onto fabric and used as a saran wrap alternative.

“Our products are good for the planet and good for the body,” said Lou. “We’re eliminating a long list of unpronounceable chemicals, and keeping our inventory as local and affordable as possible.”

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[BURKE MERCANTILE](#)



Shop owner Maggie Stoll has infused her environmentally conscious approach to clothing with eight years of experience working for a major fashion brand. Stoll, who describes herself as the shop’s curator, looks for modern yet timeless garb that can be worn in all seasons, surpassing trends.

Stoll's wardrobe staples—jeans, trousers, t-shirts, jackets—are everyday-wear items that can anchor a look and can be dressed up or down.

The shop carries only organic fabrics, said Stoll: "Linen, organic cotton, wool, anything that's a natural, biodegradable fabric. No polyester, nylon, anything that has micro-plastics in it."

Stoll presents her modern-yet-classic garments in racks arranged in "color stories."

"Part of having a sustainable wardrobe is buying pieces that are going to last you a long time," said Stoll. "I think that muted, earth-tone colors that aren't super trendy are timeless, and will go with a lot of things."

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[3 WOMEN](#)



Environmental consciousness is a built-in feature for shops that purvey vintage clothing. Shop owner Crystal Early looks

for classic, durable vintage garments with natural fibers—cotton, silk, linen. There is no polyester in her stock of statement dresses, blouses, and timeless casual wear.

Early, who worked for the U.S. government for many years, is using her retirement funds to finance her business. In addition to her shop on first Street, she sells her wares once a month at the Rose Bowl Flea Market. In addition to vintage clothing, Early creates distinctive garments utilizing rice bags and flour sacks.

“It’s a tradition that’s been carried on since the depression when women made clothing out of flour sacks because of the fabric shortage,” said Early. “It’s emblematic of making the best with what you have, but the garments are very chic. We’ve sold lots of pieces recently. We have open-back pieces, pagoda sleeves...yet you could garden in these clothes. They’re very practical, with resilient fabric, but you can also go out on the town....You’re certainly going to stand out if you’re wearing a fitted dress that’s made of rice sacks.”

It was Early who summoned her eco-conscious business brethren for a group discussion about business practices and getting their Earth-friendly word out to the community.

“We want to have a conversation to match the energy of new people coming in, people willing to be there for the community, collaborate and help each other,” said Early.

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For more information about each of these businesses visit:

[Burke Mercantile](#)

[Long Beach BY0](#)

[The Academy Denim and Tailoring](#)

[3 Women](#)

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