



WE
September 25, 2008

CITY HOME STYLE

A NEW FRONTIER

Think you've exhausted all your shopping possibilities? Get thee to Richmond's Aberdeen Centre

By Mette Bach

Let's be blunt: Vancouverites — especially those who live within the city limits; not far-flung commuters who make false claims to their geography — rarely venture into surrounding municipalities and neighbourhoods, and not even the promise of heretofore unexplored shopping terrain will draw them beyond their urban safety zone. Most of us couldn't tell you much, if anything, about Coquitlam Centre or Lougheed Town Centre. And considering the ever-growing number of shops and services within easy reach, maybe that's fair enough.

But there are some items Vancouver shoppers simply cannot — and probably never will — find on Robson or Granville. For that reason (or, hell, just for the sheer fun of it), why not spend an afternoon at Aberdeen Centre in Richmond?

Named after Hong Kong's Aberdeen Harbour, the mall has primarily been associated with an Asian-Canadian customer base, but is deserving of wider cultural appeal. While even those who have never been to Aberdeen tend to know about its centrepiece — an indoor “musical” water fountain, which spouts elaborately to a synchronized soundtrack every hour — it should be one of the last reasons to visit. Quite simply, you'll find things here that can't be found anywhere else in the area — or, in some cases, in the country. And it's an especially ideal place to check out if you're shopping for the home.

Stop in for demonstrations of clever personal electronic devices at the Singapore-based **Osim** (Osim.ca). The cocoon-like uSpace massaging chair may be the last word in non-human pressure-point massage. While slightly less enjoyable than a trained masseuse, one also must consider the pleasure-to-hour-to-dollar ratio — unlike spouses or well-meaning friends, this chair can keep going and going and going. (And if the \$6,795 price tag gets you down, consider the amicable three-year payment plan.) Of course, no healthy lifestyle would be complete without a good workout. Enter iGallop, a fun, near-meditative workout that involves sitting on a seat closely resembling a mechanical bull (minus the horns). Disguised as a handsome



stool, it turns into a lean, mean, fat-busting machine at the push of a button, sending its rider on a trot, run, or full-speed gallop. Throw on a Clint Eastwood flick, don a cowboy hat, and forget about that pesky step class.

For household-décor items, head to the only North American location of **Daiso** (DaisoCanada.com). This Japanese take on the dollar store (most items are two dollars, some are less) is a bargain hunter's dream, featuring everything from kitchenware to stationery to children's toys and bath salts. It's hard to leave without bags of treasures.

Lastly, what part of the home is more important than the bathroom? Have a look at the sole Canadian retail outlet of China's **Lotus Seats** (LotusSeats.com), quite simply — and let's not take this lightly — the most impressive, futuristic toilet we've ever seen. A demo model reveals that, with a simple push of a button, a Lotus seat (which attaches to your existing toilet) releases a spout, otherwise hidden within the seat itself; it slides out to offer hygienic, paper-free spritz, like a bidet. Follow that up with its air-dry function, and voila! Or, should a leisurely visit be more up your alley, a gentle massage might feel nice. There's even an oscillating function (presumably for the ladies). Naturally, all of the seats are heated for extra comfort, and some even offer a healthy enema feature. And did we mention that some models come with a remote?

So, this winter, when the rain starts and you curse the very notion of going outdoors, consider spending the day indoors at Aberdeen. You could accessorize your home such that you never have to go outside again.

Info: AberdeenCentre.com