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GRAB A CLUTCH. Kate Spade's Pasadena Jocelyn Clutch is sassy and stylish. Made of patent leather, it's terrific for the girl on the go at night. And it's roomy enough to hold your wallet, cell phone, iPod and more. The price? \$268.95.



SHOP CRAWL

Rosalind Cummings-Yeates takes you to places worth a visit and your cash in **HYDE PARK**

Adventurous shoppers can explore the world vicariously through two eclectic Hyde Park boutiques.

Whether you're itching to visit Tibet or India, Kenya or Burkina Faso, **What the Traveler Saw** (1452 E. 53rd; 773-955-5055) and **Kilimanjaro International** (1456 E. 53rd; 773-752-2940) deliver the goods.

With colorful display windows that beckon with Japanese paper fans and hand-painted Indian tables, What the Traveler Saw offers a culturally diverse shopping experience. The daughter of a British mother and a Nigerian father, owner Laurel Stradford absorbed an appreciation for different cultures at a young age.

"I love how the beading from Mayan, African and Indian cultures have similar patterns," she says. There are embroidered Chinese mukluku, Japanese sushi dishes that can be used as dessert or salad platters and comical Mexican Day of the Dead finger puppets that Stradford uses as wine bottle stoppers.

Home decor plays a big part in the boutique's appeal; it's filled with show-stopping pieces such as a white leather

and red ultra suede Italian courting couch with a convertible piece that keeps the couple from touching, intricately patterned Moroccan brass lamps and whimsical Argentinean wire mobiles. From unusual gifts to stylish accessories and price ranges from \$300-\$800, What the Traveler Saw brings the world to you.

Bursting with the vibrant colors and rich designs of an African marketplace, Kilimanjaro International serves up jewelry, art and clothes from the African continent. Featuring the work of a collective of five artists, the store is run by Sister Rose, a jewelry and clothing designer who's a fixture on the local festival and art fair circuit.

From sumptuous Nigerian agbadas woven from glistening red, gold or purple aso oke cloth, to ancient shrine statues from the Congo, Kilimanjaro reflects a vast array of African art and style. Contemporary jewelry features necklaces with trading beads wrapped in sterling silver by Rose, funky resin ear plugs by Larry and amber earrings by Jameel. Clothing ranges from traditional, hand-embroidered sets to modern dyed mudcloth hats and denim skirts.

The boutique boasts paintings by William Carter and E.M. Nelson as well as rare Timbuktu, Dogon and Mende shrine pieces. Prices range from \$25 to \$55,000.

If all that second-hand travel wears you out, rejuvenate at the original **Dixie Kitchen and Bait Shop** (5225 S. Harper, 773-363-4943). Grab a plate of fried green tomatoes and peach-glazed chicken wings and savor the southern hospitality.

Getting Around: Take the Red or Green Line to the Garfield stop, the No. 55 bus will drop you two blocks from the shops on 53rd.

Rosalind Cummings-Yeates is a local free-lance writer.



TOP: Lauren Stradford. BELOW: Sister Rose. | KEITH HALE~SUN-TIMES PHOTOS

