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Looking Good in Lamorinda

By Moya Stone



Marcia Brunning knits up samples for her shop Busy Stix. Photo Moya Stone

in style," says Del Monica, who has been selling out of her fascinators at recent shows thanks to the influence of this year's Royal Weddings. For information, visit haciendafoundation.org/hacienda-holiday-faire.

The Center for Community Arts Handcrafted Holiday Sale is happening Nov. 30 to Dec. 2 in Walnut Creek. Center for Community Arts offers classes throughout the year and hosts this annual show featuring the works of more than 70 students and instructors, many of whom are from Lamorinda. Program Manager Maile Ogasawara says there will be jewelry, ceramics, glass art, mosaics, photos, and much more. "We support local artists and community members," says Ogasawara, "giving access and opportunity to curated shows." The opening reception, with music, food, and a crafts table where shoppers can explore their own creativity, will be held at 5 p.m. Friday, Nov. 30. The first 50 attendees each day will receive a free tote bag. Center for Community Arts is located at 111 N. Wiget Lane in Walnut Creek: www.communityarts.org/handcrafted.

Tucked away near FedEx behind La Fiesta Square in Lafayette is Alicia Klein Showroom, which offers for sale handbags, briefcases, and small gift items such as key chains, card cases, luggage tags - just right for stocking stuffers, Hanukkah, teachers gifts, babysitters, or Secret Santa. Stop by through Dec. 23 for holiday shopping and some Moraga-made chocolates. Hofssi Chocolates will be passing out samples and selling their popular sweets. Alicia Klein Showroom is at 3541 Wilkinson Lane in Lafayette: www.AliciaKlein.com.

For a festive treat with plenty of sparkle, I recommend the current exhibition at the Legion of Honor Museum in San Francisco, "East Meets West: Jewels of the Maharajas" from the Al Thani Collection. On now through Feb. 24, this exhibit includes 150 items of stunning jewelry and other accessories from 17th century India to modern interpretations by western designers: legionofhonor.famsf.org.

Speaking of bling, local jewelry designer Natasha Grasso is closing her Moraga shop in the Rheem Shopping

As a knitter I'm always looking for quality yarn and in Lamorinda we have Busy Stix, which is located in downtown Lafayette. The spacious shop offers an array of yarns in wool, cotton, silk, and blends in bright and subdued colors by top-quality brands like Shiburi.

Owner Marcia Brunning was taught how to knit by her mother and she has been working in some capacity of the yarn business for more than 20 years. With her shop, Brunning has created a welcoming environment for experienced and novice knitters alike, who stop by with needles in hand, sit around the shop's large dining table and stitch away. "We encourage people to come in, knit and relax," says Brunning. Some arrive with questions, some are looking for new projects, others just want company while they make progress on sweaters, socks, or the latest hot item - shawls.

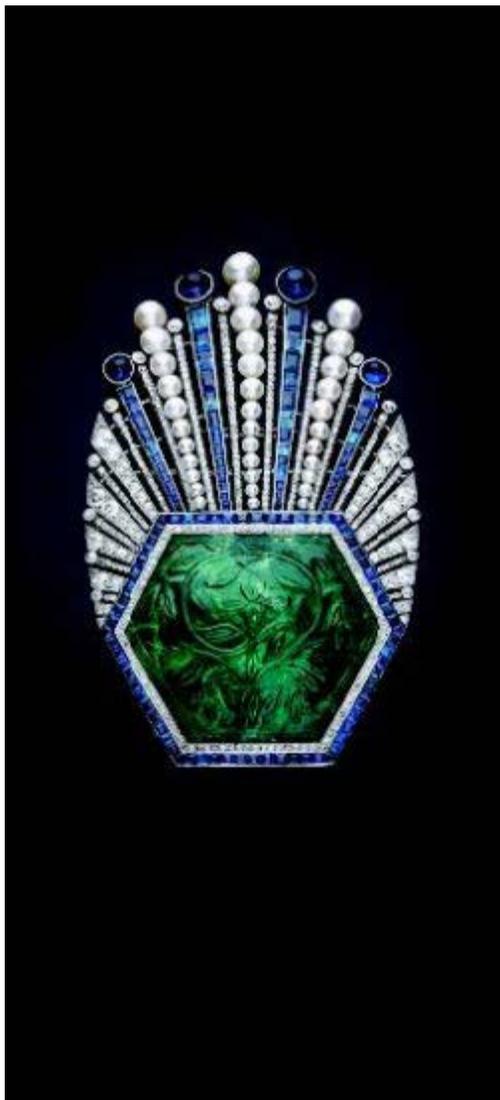
Brunning says that knitters have taken to the shawl and sport it in fashion-forward ways, like the back in the front. Other fashionable choices are knit hats, chunky sweaters, and tunics that layer well with designer clothing brands such as Eileen Fisher. For inspiration, Busy Stix stocks magazines and books. Also available are knitting kits by local business Bella Yarn, knitting needles, crochet hooks - anything a stitcher might need. Plus there's no shortage of gift items. Felt bags, soaps and lotions, shawl pins, and charming holiday ornaments. Think gifts for your favorite knitter or how about encouraging someone to get started? Brunning offers classes and often works with Lafayette children's bookstore, Bel & Bunna's, teaching both young boys and girls to knit. Busy Stix is located at 3409-D Mt. Diablo Blvd. in Lafayette.

Lafayette hat designer Chris Del Monica will be showing her festive wares at the Hacienda Holiday Faire (2100 Donald Dr.) in Moraga Nov. 30 to Dec. 2. hats are really

Center. Everything in the store is 20 percent off through the middle of December. The bricks and mortar may be going away but Grasso is still designing and selling her popular jewelry online at www.natashagrasso.com.

Enjoy a safe and happy holiday season and remember to go forth in style!

Moya Stone is a freelance writer and fashion blogger at www.overdressdeforlife.com.



How about putting this on your holiday wish list? "East Meets West" jewelry exhibit at the Legion of Honor in San Francisco. Photo courtesy Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco



Alicia Klein is a co-designer of the Taxi Wallet, available at Alicia Klein Showroom in Lafayette. Photo Moya Stone

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