

King Street: A little West Hollywood. A little Fifth Avenue. Uniquely Charleston.

by Joquita Burka

COMPLETELY APART FROM THE SEASIDE BEAUTY AND HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE OF CHARLESTON, THERE IS THE SHOPPING. AND IF IT IS SHOPPING YOU WANT, KING STREET IS ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING, CHARMING AND BEAUTIFUL AREAS ANYWHERE.



Beginning at **White Point Gardens** on the southern tip of Charleston, King Street proceeds northward with 16 blocks of shops that offer everything from one-of-a-kind antique maps and locally designed earrings to hand-woven fashions. Arm yourself with good walking shoes, several unhurried hours and, as they say, “bring your VISA,” because you’re sure to discover armloads of items that you simply must have.

One of the many attractions of the street is its lack of high-rise buildings and department stores (**Saks** is the exception). Recently many familiar names have cropped up on the street—**Benetton, Laura Ashley, April Cornell, Gucci, Gap** and **Abercrombie & Fitch** to name a few. However, much of the charm of King Street is the abundance of

ARM YOURSELF WITH
GOOD WALKING SHOES,
SEVERAL UNHURRIED
HOURS AND,
AS THEY SAY,
“BRING YOUR VISA”...

off-beat, one-of-a-kind shops where you'll find—well, you just never know what you might find.

You might want to start at **The Preservation Society of Charleston Book and Gift Shop** (147 King) for expert information and local books, maps and gifts. Where else could you find a Civil War sabre scaled down to open your letters?

Near The Preservation Society's shop is an antique lover's paradise. **Estate Antiques, The Ginko Leaf, Riddler Page Rare Maps** and a dozen other shops are filled with the range of antiques and collectibles that you would expect in a town so careful of preserving the past. **Hoover Watches and Jewels** (202 King) even offers a fascinating collection of vintage watches and telephones.

Keep walking because you're about to discover a shop that can only be called “fun.” Need a lamp in the shape of the classic Air-stream trailer? You'll find it at **Studio** (314 King). And you'll find it alongside the polka-dot party dress lamp, windup duck on a bike, “Rick the Piranha” wall rack and locally blown glass vases.

At **Worthwhile** (268 King) you can enjoy an eclectic mix of innovative designs from women's clothing and baby blankets to soaps, lotions, linens and shoes. This family-owned business features beautiful designer clothing for women and children and linens in all natural fabrics—all created by female designers whose small, inclusive lines are works of art. Local designers Amy Riggs and Dominique Cohen contribute their clothing and jewelry pieces to a treasure of fantastic designs. Worthwhile is not a store for the “fashion sheep.”

If the handbag you see in the window up the street looks just like the one you saw on the arm of Julia Louis-Dreyfus at the Emmys, you must be at the **Moo Roo** (316 King). From a whimsical evening bag decorated with silk flowers, Charlestonian Mary Norton has created a fashion phenomenon with her handbags covered in flowers, feathers, beads and jewels. While the bags are sold at specialty shops across the country, the only exclusively Moo Roo shop is the one on King Street.

Upper King Street is an area in transition. Here you'll find some

of the older retail establishments as well as new and exciting places such as **Raymond Clark Gallery** (429 King), **King Street Antique Mall** (495 King) and **Boomers Books** (420 King). By the 400 block, you are probably out of time and/or energy. That's no problem since you're just steps from the **Charleston Visitor Center** (375 Meeting St.), a great place to rest and take the trolley back to your hotel—or, perhaps, on to more shopping.

Shopping with your kids:



King Street has something for every age. However, shopping outside “the mall” can be tough on teenagers. In spite of their love of malls, my teenagers thought these shops were very “cool”—or maybe they were “hot.” It's apparently the same thing.

Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville (282 King). Check out the Hawaiian shirts.

Quicksilver (299 King). Great boarding—surf and street—clothes and gear.

Granny's Goodies (301 King). Need a Nehru jacket or leisure suit? Vintage clothes.

Half-Moon Outfitters (280 King). Great outdoor clothes, shoes, gear.

N Tassios (322 King). Diesel, etc. Cool clothes.