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Hot List 2013

Our annual list of Richmond's 10 top innovators

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Beautifully Built

Neighborhood gentrification is a mixed bag of opportunities and costs for many Richmond residents. Neighborhoods are beautified — but often at the expense of longtime residents who can't keep up with the efforts of new neighbors.

Enter Storefront for Community Design — armed with the simple tagline, “For the Love of Our City” — on East Broad Street and North 25th Street.

The nonprofit is the brainchild of community-minded architects, preservationists and city leaders. It provides Richmonders with a host of tools, everything from assistance with architectural design to help with the labyrinthine process of applying for home or community improvements grants and loans. SCD helps residents take an active role in shaping their surroundings.

“Before Storefront, there was not really a way for people to express what they wanted in their communities,” says Giles Harnsberger, who has managed Storefront since its opening in 2011. “This gives people the tools to actually engage with the city and help determine what the city looks like — and what development looks like.” —*Chris Dovi*

Hot Neighborhood

With successful businesses like The Roosevelt, Proper Pie Co., Sub Rosa and WPA Bakery investing in Church Hill north of Broad Street, this area could be the next Brooklyn. Renovation can be expensive, but in this neighborhood, the old homes are selling (prices are still great), and young couples and families with that DIY spirit are moving in. (See stories on p.44 and p.52.) Will the sidewalks one day be so crowded with strollers that it'll be hard to get down the block to get a latte? Only time will tell. But if you're looking for the next up-and-coming neighborhood for residential real estate deals in Richmond, you've found the right place. —*Brandon Fox*

The Architect & the Filmmaker

As a successful filmmaker, Patrick Gregory is no stranger to the creative process. So when he met local architect Lothar Pausewang at a party in the uninhabitable Church Hill home Pausewang was about to renovate, Gregory was inspired to document the project.

“As an architect, his work is very client-driven,” Gregory explains. “I learned that this was one of the two times in his life that he has been able to create something without any client influence. This house is purely his own artistic expression.”

The documentary will juxtapose Pausewang's work on his home with scenes from his professional life as an architect with Glavé & Holmes Architecture. When completed, Gregory hopes to hold a local screening and show the documentary at film festivals. “I won't rule anything out,” he says. “Who knows? Maybe PBS?” —*Jessica Ronky Haddad*

Unexpected Abstractions

Richmond native Lindsay Cowles never imagined she could make a living from her abstract art. Cowles was working in the Los Angeles fashion industry when she discovered that her artistic

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inclinations might hold commercial appeal. She sold a commissioned piece for the Beverly Hills home of Tony Broccoli, son of James Bond movie producer Albert “Cubby” Broccoli.

Cowles returned home a year ago to open a studio in Plant Zero. In October, her raw, honest and bold art was tapped for an emerging designers’ sale and subsequent events on One Kings Lane, a curated Internet home and lifestyle site.

In addition to commissioned work nationwide, she’s developing fabrics and removable wallpaper through Spoonflower, a North Carolina company. She also has lines of notecards and prints.

“It takes hard work and determination, but it can be done,” Cowles says. —*Julie Young*

Sweet Nothings

The sweet simplicity of two vintage forks stamped with “Mr.” and “Mrs.” have prodded Sarah Parker’s craft career into high gear. Pieces from the Richmonder’s Milk & Honey collection have been featured in our sister publication, Richmond Bride, plus Martha Stewart Weddings, Southern Weddings, Belle and on numerous blogs.

Parker repurposes antique silverware and other vintage treasures into little luxury items, from tumbled marble coasters to cork stoppers topped with crystal drawer pulls. “My definition of a gift is something you’d love to have but wouldn’t spend your own money on,” says Parker, a stay-at-home mother of two. “A personalized silver-plate spoon just to stir your coffee is not something you need, but it’s a sweet thing to have or give as a gift.”

Milk & Honey pieces are sold on Etsy and in retail shops listed on Parker’s blog at milkandhoneyluxuries.com. —*JY*

Little Green Spaces

The next big idea in urban design is thinking small. Parklets are tiny public parks created from parallel-parking spaces or other unused swaths of land. With the help of a \$5,000 undergraduate research grant, Virginia Commonwealth University student Ricardo Hernandez-Perez hopes to create a parklet in Richmond this spring.

Hernandez-Perez, an interior design major, and Lauren Versino, a sculpture major originally partnering on the project, travelled to San Francisco last spring to visit parklets there and collect ideas. Hernandez-Perez is now working with the Storefront for Community Design, Richmond’s nonprofit design and building resource, to secure land and build the parklet.

“I feel like Richmond has a lot of potential for it to be successful,” Hernandez-Perez says. “Parklets are really becoming a trend in other cities.” —*JRH*

Exploding Color

For the past 20 years, interior designer Susan Jamieson of Bridget Beari Designs has been creating beautiful spaces for clients in Richmond and around the world. In 2011, she started her own paint line, Bridget Beari Colors, with Fine Paints of Europe. With a new line of fabrics and wallpapers debuting this spring, Jamieson will extend her design influence even further.

With the help of Sarah Rowland, a local graphic designer, Jamieson collected inspiration from the files of patterns she has collected from magazines and her travels. The resulting collection comprises 10 wallpapers in three colors, and different sets of 10 fabrics. Carter and Co., a local company, will hand-block the wallpaper. Her designs include a wood-grain pattern and Greek key motif in colors like lime green and cobalt blue. “Classic and traditional with a twist,” Jamieson says. Both collections will coordinate with Jamieson’s paints for Fine Paints of Europe and will be available through her website, bridgetbearidesigns.com, and at The Rue on Grove Avenue. —*JRH*

Meet the new queen of the First Fridays Art Walk.

Meghan Barbato comes with an impressive resume that includes an MBA from the College of William

& Mary and stints developing eco-tourism marketing for the Galapagos Islands and anti-smoking guerilla marketing for the innovative Y Do You Think campaign.

Now she’s stepping up to lead the popular downtown art walk, drawing on years of experience at the event as a vendor with her husband, artist Phil Barbato. As First Fridays’ first 10 years helped define the rebirth of Broad Street, Barbato hopes the next 10 will define the reconnection of the city’s core to the people in the counties as something that happens more than once a month.

“If we can build up First Fridays and build up the energy of people on that single night once a month, it’s going to spill over and it won’t be long before a Wednesday afternoon feels like [a] First Friday, too,” Barbato says, touting the things to do in the city’s new Arts District. “It can be the world’s cheapest date if you want — you can come, see all the art you want, maybe buy a cup of coffee ... or you can hop over to Lemaire, spend more than \$100 and stay at the Jefferson [Hotel].” —*CD*

Green Wizard

For years, the rusting, long-neglected warehouse on School Street escaped the attention of most Richmond residents — but Julie Weissend noticed. Rather than a corroded hulk, Weissend looked beyond at the city skyline in the distance and saw Oz. In that rusty hulk, she saw her Tin Man, waiting for a bit of oil.

She and husband Paul were searching for a new home for their 20-year-old company, Dovetail Construction, and Weissend knew, in 2006, when she came upon the building, that this was it. Discovery that the building was a 1907 electric trolley repair shed set the Weissends to dreaming big.

“The more we researched it, the more we were like OK, if we’re spending this kind of capital, we want to make a huge statement and ... walk the walk,” says Julie, recounting a million-dollar effort that resulted in the nation’s first LEED Platinum building that is also listed on the National Register of Historic Places. And for good measure, the couple invested in solar, geothermal and various other energy-saving measures to make the building net-energy zero. “It’s the trifecta,” she says. —*CD*

Antiques Inside and Out

After two years flying under the radar, Kim Vincze’s Verve Home Furnishing warehouse, tucked just behind Chipotle near Willow Lawn (4903 W. Leigh St.), has regular business hours: Friday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sunday from noon to 4 p.m. The warehouse itself features 12,000 square feet of Vincze’s collection of vintage furniture and accessories with mid-century and Hollywood Regency leanings, along with a few vendors.

“We have a real eclectic style,” Vincze says. “We try to find good items at good prices.” In addition to the store, many of the dealers from Antiques in Manchester set up outside with a range of items to browse and will be there through the winter. —*Megan Marconyak*

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