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Joy of shopping

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Joy Kraft shares her special finds and shopping tips:

Last week's Downtown Tour of Living and Dining introduced many condo and apartment hunters to the Gateway Quarter neighborhood near 12th and Vine streets in Over-the-Rhine.

We found a trio of shopping spots helping residents furnish and settle into the neighborhood. The first Tuesday of each month, Gateway Quarter merchants offer discounts, raffles, sipping and socializing 4-7 p.m., followed by drinks at below Zero Lounge before 8.

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City Roots bills itself as an urban garden shop, and the boxwoods, mums and handsome tools from Brook & Hunter are proof of its dedication. They'll help city dwellers green up their decks, lofts and mini-yards with a solid selection of bonsai, birdbaths from SPI Williamsburg, wind chimes, vases, pots and other necessities for the asphalt jungle. Our favorite find: the Mo Tool with wood inlay handle by Brook & Hunter, a hefty, stunted hammer-headed tool in a leather pouch that multitasks as a single slot screwdriver, Phillips screwdriver, sawing blade, serrated knife edge, file can opener, wire cutter, knife blade and a pair of really solid pliers. \$48. 1133 Vine St., 513-381-7668.

Park & Vine just marked its fourth month in business as a "green" shop with creative home furnishings and clothes that are easy on the environment. The furniture made from recycled bicycle parts will leave you stunned at the imagination involved, and the Mio Culture room dividers made from recycled double-wall cardboard will have you reinventing your living space as quickly as you can assemble the easy-fit parts. Several colors available. About \$56. 1109 Vine St. 513-721-7275.

Metronation, the gift shop with clever accessories, jewelry, cards and art relocated from Elm Street and expanded to include furniture, rugs and dishes, more purses and baby gear. The RTA Intersection furniture by Avenue Six is a no-brainer for the loft set with its mix-and-match styling. The ZZZ-Chest Cabinet Bed is a modern-day Murphy bed for tight spaces, and the star of the entertaining section is the Riverside Sea Glass dinnerware made of beach glass in 12 colors and free-form shapes that stack. \$135 per setting or \$22-\$56 per piece. 1213 Vine St. 513-564-0095.

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The Mo Tool found at City Roots is a screwdriver, hammer, pliers and more.

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