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Picture above: *Clay & Cotton (just inside the front door)*

Style Matters

One-stop shops

Find gifts with flair amid the fashions

By Christine Fellingham

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"One-stop shopping" conjures up images of rushing through a superstore, pushing an oversized cart stuffed with equally oversized, completely random merchandise -- gigantic rolls of toilet paper, economy packs of socks, cartons of light bulbs, double-wide rolls of wrapping paper.

Then you see your strange assortment lain out on the checkout belt and think, "Is this even mine?"

What if I told you there are a handful of local boutiques that are offering a very different, more mindful type of one-stop shopping?

No, you couldn't stock up on mega-rolls of Bounty, but these shops are ideal destinations for buying beautiful essentials for you and just about anyone you know.

"We decided we wanted to carry all kinds of things we love and use in our daily lives," explains Margie Taylor, owner of the recently re-located and expanded Clay and Cotton boutique.

"So we have Italian Modigliani pottery and handmade Irish table linens, but we also carry April Cornell clothing, beautiful pajamas, handmade soaps and all kinds of unusual gifts."

Her store is not the only one. Up and down Bardstown Road, you'll find new (or expanding) stores that offer an aesthetically pleasing alternative for multitasking shoppers. While snooping around for this story, I could easily have updated my wardrobe, crossed several birthday gifts off my list and spruced up my décor at the same time.

Here's a peek at several boutiques that could make for an afternoon of productive browsing.

Christine Fellingham, a Louisville resident, is a contributing writer for Glamour, Health and Shop Etc. magazines, and O: The Oprah Winfrey Magazine.

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Clay and Cotton
1341 Bardstown Road

Spouses Margy Taylor and David Schreiner are transplanted Wisconsinites who fell in love with Louisville and stayed. While both have other vocations (she is working on her Ph.D.; he has a traditional business gig), they decided to open a shop as kind of a sideline while she got through school.

They started in a smaller location up the street and moved into this large, light-filled space at the beginning of the year.

The stuff: Ultra-feminine April Cornell clothing plus a few well-edited selections from funkier lines, such as Mac and Jack and (soon) Putumayo. Also, one-of-a-kind semiprecious jewelry by designers like Holly Yashi, vintage-style purses, imported table wear (including Nicholas Mosse pottery from Ireland), candles, handmade soaps and linens.

(They also share some space with Dolls 4 U -- a store for both collectors and children.)

The style: The clothes and jewelry have an artsy, feminine flair, but there are sweaters and jackets that could suit more conservative types.