

THE VANCOUVER SUN
THURSDAY, AUGUST 17, 2006

THU 17
WED 23 ● WESTCOAST

DIVERSE destinations

An afternoon spent in Vancouver's multicultural markets can transport you far, far away from your daily routine
COVER STORY | D15

PLAYGROUND | D13
Trailblazer
Jean-Paul Drappeau-Bernau has a passion for zigzagging his way across the country.

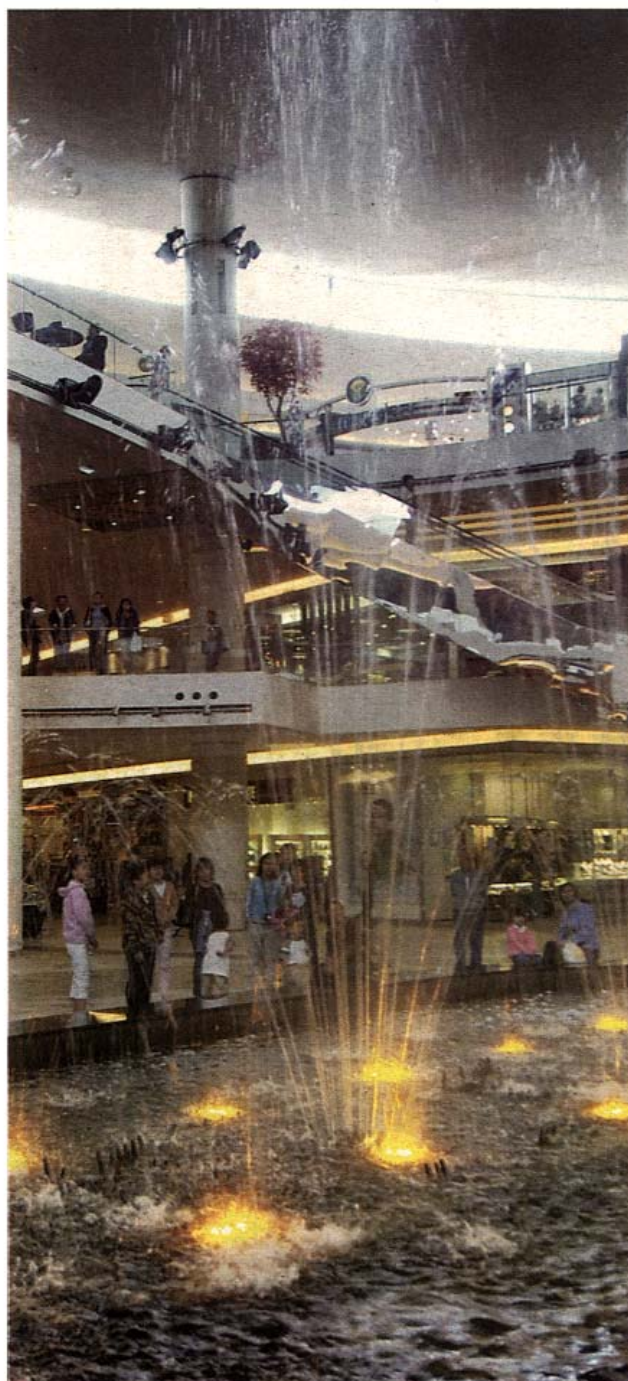
VISUAL ARTS | D18
World of art
Touring Emergency Biennale means art lovers don't have to travel to find inspiration.

STAGE | D7
Road trip fun
Let a shameless hussy take you on a rollicking cross-border journey.

MUSIC | D11
PNE passion
Tony Orlando? Glen Campbell? David Cassidy? The PNE delivers.

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT & WESTCOAST CULTURE

Take a trip around the world without leaving home



Aberdeen Mall in Richmond is filled with stores that evoke Vancouver's Asian connections. Spectators on three levels watch the fountain musical show.
PHOTO BY IAN LINDSAY/VANCOUVER SUN

GOLDEN VILLAGE — Richmond, No. 3 Road
The strip of Asian-influenced malls, restaurants, hotels and karaoke bars along Richmond's No. 3 Road are jointly referred to as the Golden Village by Tourism Richmond, which says the area provides "a sensory extravaganza of Asian culture."

Driving through the wide, treed streets of Richmond, the Asian cultural influence isn't immediately noticeable. But once you set foot inside Aberdeen Centre, you realize the mall is nothing like Pacific Centre or Oakridge malls. There is that familiar mall ambience of fluorescent lighting, tinned music (in this case, loud mall-ified versions of James Taylor and Cat Stevens hits) and slow-moving shoppers, but the wide walkways, large skylights and open spaces (designed by Vancouver architect Bing Thom) feel futuristic and unfamiliar. Add to that the fact there is no Banana Republic, Gap or Club Monaco, and you realize this is not just any mall.

Instead of the usual fare, there's Estherbella — a women's and kids' store packed with inexpensive, trendy clothes straight from China. There's a BMW Lifestyle store and even a women's clothing store called Itsy Bitsy Teenie, that indeed sells tiny miniskirts and tops (as well as clothes offering more coverage). Then there's Santa YaYa, where the slogan is simply, "we sell your items on eBay."

Contrary to what I was told before visiting Aberdeen Centre, everyone I met spoke English, and although there was plenty of signage and labels written in Chinese, everything was also written in English.

The food court has made an obvious effort to include as many types of Asian cuisine as possible, including sushi, Thai food, and at least one counter that seems to defy definition. (The Mambo Café offers curried chicken on rice, as well as fried spaghetti with ham, and baked Portuguese fish on rice.) There are several finer dining choices found at the restaurants on the outskirts of the mall and a few candy stores for those wanting a sweet chaser after dinner.

One of the biggest draws of the mall is Daison, a two-level store that offers men's ties, women's cosmetics, ceramics plates and bowls, as well as politically incorrect figurines — all for \$2.