

PEOPLE ARE THINKING by Evi Mustel

The shopping news

It began with Robson Street, but now many of Vancouver's street shopping areas are booming. The 'mall of America' throughout the 1960s and '70s turned many of Vancouver's previously thriving shopping areas into ghost towns. The high-priced rent within these malls was crippling for the small businesses in the neighborhood. Nevertheless, the shopping districts are making a comeback, returning stronger and more vibrant than ever. A recent Mustel Group survey showed that over half of all shopping visits in Metro Vancouver – two-thirds of all shopping trips in the City of Vancouver – were made to street-shopping areas.

This is a trend evident not just in Vancouver but across Canada, even in the less temperate climates.

What is driving this consumer trend? A lot of different factors, starting with...

People's desire for a more unique and enjoyable shopping experience. With the growth of no-frills, no-service big box shopping, many consumers are left feeling empty. Where is the adventure, excitement and personal touch of friendly staff?

Consumers also are starved for time and patience, with people working longer hours and often, in many families, both partners working. It is not as convenient to have 50 stores in a mall when you are only interested in one or two.

The result: "hit-and-shop" consumers – individuals who opt for the more expedient approach of pulling up in front of the store, running in, shopping and moving on.

Moreover, with the increase in traffic congestion and gas prices, people have less desire to get into their cars and drive. A recent survey showed that 84 per cent are shopping more locally for these reasons.

Also the growth of sustainable communities encouraging people to walk and the densification of our neighbourhoods with more mixed use developments (i.e., combined retail and housing) give people more shopping options than ever closer to their doorsteps.

Many local areas now offer the same retail categories and major retailers previously found only in shopping malls (e.g., clothing on South Granville, 4th Avenue and Kerrisdale). This trend has helped propel local independents such as Lululemon, Mantique and Aritzia from single location to multi-chain stores.

Malls also are responding to this trend with the development of replicas such as The Village at Park Royal and Newport Village in Port Moody in an effort to recreate the charm and feel of street front stores.

Retail is an ever-evolving industry, constantly seeking to tempt consumers with new experiences and the latest trends. Can the novelty of street shopping remain strong or will the move of major retailers to the streets affect the original appeal? You be the judge. **VLM**

"Evi Mustel is principal of Mustel Group <mustelgroup.com>, a leading market and opinion research firm in Western Canada."



Born in a hot tub

How Zazubean went from idealistic dream – healthy, organic, fair trade chocolate – to a half-million in sales

VANCOUVER INC. by Bonnie Irving

Start with four "socially-conscious" young women relaxing in a hot tub after a day of biking on Galiano Island three summers ago. They're eating chocolate and chatting about ... sex? Nope. Their hot tub banter is about the lack of choice in gourmet chocolate that is great tasting as well as "ethical" – "fair trade" in the lingo – and based on sustainable, organic production methods. These women are passionate about "corporate social responsibility," as you might have figured out.

The conversation shifts to PMS and those monthly cravings for chocolate, which is supposed to have some inherent qualities that are good for PMS. As well, studies are just starting to tout the cardiovascular benefits of antioxidants in pure dark chocolate. Wouldn't it be great, they think, if someone came up with chocolate that was organic, fair trade – and functional.

And with that an idea was born. Although they all loved the concept, only one, Tiziana Ianna, a physiologist and personal trainer, did something about it. The eventual result: a series of chocolate bars that met the objectives of the original hot tub dreamers – and were fun to boot.

Revved by the Galiano discussion, Ianna, then 37, threw herself into the world of chocolate – researching it, taking a chocolatier course and visiting chocolate shows. At the same time, she started researching herbs that could help ease

Women-run, pro-choice, fair trade, organic chocolatiers Zazubean have recipes to make a better Flirt or, as needed, to ease mood swings and other PMS nasties.

mood swings and other PMS nasties. Later, she searched out herbs to enhance sexual function and boost energy.

Next she started creating recipes to combine the herbs and chocolate. That's when she met her current business partner

See page 22



It begins with you and **what's important to you...**



- involve* Jennifer collaborates with you to develop a financial plan that you are comfortable with.
- inform* Jennifer speaks about investing in a language you'll understand so you can make informed decisions.
- inspire* Jennifer inspires you to experience a different way of looking at investing.

For information on fall seminars log on to www.jenniferfabre.com

Jennifer Fabre... "It's all about you!"

INVESTING *with* INTELLIGENCE

Jennifer H. Fabre BA CFP Investment Advisor T: 604.643.7655 F: 604.643.7437 E: jennifer_fabre@canaccord.com



INDEPENDENT THINKING



WE ANTICIPATE THE WORST BECAUSE YOU EXPECT **THE BEST**

At Norwalk, our designs are available in a magnificent array of stylish and easy-to-clean Sunbrella® fabrics. So now you can live your dream of a more beautiful, more carefree home with kids, pets and that occasional clumsy dinner guest.

NORWALK
THE FURNITURE IDEA
norwalkfurnitureidea.com

110-1655 United Boulevard, Coquitlam • 604.540.4733 • Mon to Sat 10 – 5:30pm, Sun 11 – 5pm

Many buyers in this class are demanding this feature and moving on to another vehicle choice if it isn't an option. Some time in the future?

Thanks to a suspension that's both supple and passenger-pampering, the Veracruz smoothes out road undulations surprisingly well. As with any utility vehicle, this rig shouldn't be driven like a sports car, but it does have impressive handling for its class.

Safety features include powerful anti-lock disc brakes with electronic brake-force distribution. You can stop a Veracruz very quickly indeed – just worry about the people behind with less braking capability! There's also a stability control system built into the roster of electronics. The all-wheel drive system uses a torque-on-demand arrangement that inspired a lot of confidence during one dramatic rainstorm I encountered during the media launch on Vancouver Island. Traction control is also on the spec sheet.

There are six standard air bags, including side curtain units for head protection in the T-bone impacts we all dread. This

should prove to be a very safe vehicle, both passively and dynamically.

From an overall point of view, the Veracruz deserves to find itself a solid share of the market. It's very competitively priced at a shade under \$40,000 in GLS form and just below \$46,000 for a top-of-the-line Limited.

There are just two trim levels, which buyers will like, given the complexity of some ranges these days. The Limited comes with leather and an upgraded sound system – plus rear seat DVD player and a long list of other goodies. Even so, the GLS is very lavishly equipped and should be the top seller.

The crossover segment is getting very crowded these days but there's no reason why the new Hyundai Veracruz shouldn't become a serious contender.

SPECIFICATIONS – Body style: Four-door crossover utility, four rows of seats. **Engine:** 3.8-litre V-6.

Transmission: 6-speed automatic. **Performance:** Zero to 100 km/h in approx. 8 secs. **Fuel economy:** 13.9 litres/100 km city, 9.0 litres/100 km highway.

Price: \$39,995 base. **VLM**

Vancouver Inc. from page 18

and co-founder of what would become Zazubean Organic Chocolates, Tara Gilbert, then 34. Gilbert showed up at one of Ianna's many tasting parties where 30 or 40 acquaintances had been invited to sample the offerings and rate them.

Ianna, the enthusiast, got lucky the night Gilbert showed up. And vice versa. The CEO of Small Business B.C. not only loved chocolate, she also knew a few things about business. And right off, she had trouble seeing a viable business model, although she loved the concept. She was impressed with Ianna's "primary research" and would assist with that later, but she couldn't see how they could produce the chocolate bars envisioned at a reasonable cost. And if production costs to use premium-priced beans and add the herbs meant they had to charge \$10 a bar, all bets were off.

Most secondary manufacturers work with chocolate base (not beans) shipped from producers in Belgium and Switzerland. But Ianna and Gilbert needed to be sure that any base they used came from beans grown by farmers who embraced the organic and fair trade concepts.

Says Gilbert: "We wanted to figure a way that we could lower our unit cost production and get closer to the source of production." They finally decided they needed to produce their own base from beans they knew passed the ethical sniff test, and started looking for a way to do that, short of buying their own plant.

They found what they needed just outside Seattle – a relatively new manufacturer that was the first Fair Trade Certified™ chocolate manufacturer in the U.S. Today, Zazubean buys USDA-certified organic beans from fair trade producers through a broker no forced labour and the business pays a premium that goes back to the cooperative in the form of good wages – primarily from Ecuador and Panama. From the beans, a 70 per cent pure base is manufactured and Ianna can be found chopping berries and various herbs as well as training others to make the special recipes she has concocted for a variety of bars that have expanded beyond the original PMS concept. The plant produces about 15,000–20,000 bars over three to four days.

Chocolate bars with names like PMS

bar Luna (tic), Zing, Ego, Nakid, Flirt and Hottie. The tags came after a lot of brainstorming, and each lively description of the bars' contents – "bada bing sour cherries" – as well as the catchy photos (check out Hottie and Nakid, ladies) take the concept from earnest – functional, healthy, ethical – to fun.

The partners have applied to Health Canada for certification as "neutraceuticals," which will let them make stronger health claims. And the words "organic" and "Fair Trade Certified™" on the labels are important to the 100 stores in Western Canada that stock the bars – places such as Capers and Whole Foods. Such terms help make \$3.99 chocolate bars saleable to the growing numbers of socially-conscious consumers.

A push into the rest of Canada is now underway. So far the duo has financed everything out of their own pockets. But that will have to change when they target the U.S. market next year, according to Gilbert. If they expect the company to succeed, they have to make it in the States; the Canadian market is just too small. And success in the U.S. comes hard for Canadian companies; the list of failed assaults on that huge market is long. Already, Gilbert says, the product is being mimicked by U.S. companies, so there is no time to lose mounting their campaign.

The two partners have done all the marketing themselves (they employ only a half-dozen part-timers) and both continue to hold down day jobs, something Gilbert, at least, intends to continue. In her opinion, the partners complement each other. Gilbert says she is probably more reflective, more strategic and has a broader vision. But Ianna, more impulsive, is a doer with the ability to get in there and handle all the details.

With sales this year expected to be under a half-million dollars, this is still a very small business, and despite a product that hits socially conscious consumers' hot buttons, the venture could still fizzle. No doubt it will come down to whether these two partners have the right stuff to convince Americans that Luna (tic), Zing, Ego, Nakid, Flirt and Hottie are the right products, at the right price at the right time. **VLM**

birving@citynetwork.ca



Did you know that 10 - 15% of people have trouble getting pregnant?

Infertility is defined as one year of unprotected intercourse without conceiving. Doctor's will usually start investigating at this point and may start earlier if the female partner is 35 years or older.

PCRM offers comprehensive infertility treatment to restore hope and renew possibilities.

INFERTILITY CARE

FIRST TRIMESTER SCREENING

IVF / ICSI



PACIFIC CENTRE FOR REPRODUCTIVE MEDICINE

500 - 4601 Canada Way, Burnaby, British Columbia, V5G 4X7

TF 1.866.481.PCRM (7276) T 604.422.PCRM (7276) F 604.434.5522

PACIFICFERTILITY.CA

Physician & self referrals welcome

Thinking of building?

Order your plan book or visit our show home at 8250 River Road in Delta.

LINWOOD custom homes
800-663-2558 • 604-946-5421
www.linwoodhomes.com

TIME FOR A LIFE U-TURN? | THE CLASH IN KERRISDALE

VLM Vancouver Lifestyles Magazine

What an activist looks like
Nazanin Afshar-Jam works to save the children, one life at a time

SUMMER HOLIDAY TRAVEL
Big on the holiday, with just a little-bitty bit of travel

RENO OR WRECKING BALL?
Heritage goes green, giving a West Coast walk-in a second life

Heatwave
How sexy can swimwear get?
About this town!

HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?
Are you ready to grow?

more VLM..more venues...
more events... more restaurants..
more of what makes vancouver great.

www.vancouverlifestyles.com

designs **blushing**

Let Your Girly Girl Out

blushing boutique

by Shelley Klassen

blushingdesigns.com

579 Richards Street
(At Dunsmuir)
604.709.3485