

# EXPLORE THE PEARL DISTRICT

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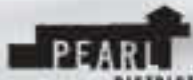
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## Sensing Spring

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PLUS: FINDING INSPIRATION IN PEARL KITCHENS

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## THE LOOK AND FEEL OF SPRING

Story by Michelle Trappen | Photos by Steven Gibbons

Ah, yes, spring's delights: daffodils, longer days, warmer weather. Well, maybe not so warm, at least not in Portland. And that creates a conundrum of sorts for Pearl District boutique owners, whose customers want out of winter leggings, sweaters and boots and into wispy dresses, sleeveless blouses and toe-showing sandals.

The compromise, shop owners say: lightweight clothing that can layer when needed, but stand on its own when temperatures — blessedly — jump above 70 degrees.

"Spring can be difficult in Portland," says Jo Carter, owner of Physical Element. "Our spring is kind of wet and cold. We have to wait for summer — which hopefully gets here by July. In the meantime, our spring involves sleeves and layers."

With summer just a Frisbee throw away, we asked Carter and five other fashion experts about the clothes they expect to see on Pearl fashionistas this season. From funky and comfortable to contemporary and retro, their answers (which continue on Page 16) should help brighten the neighborhood — and make the wait for warmer weather a little easier to bear.

*From Folly: Rebecca Palmer's navy-and-gold-thread "Gina" dress (left) showcases a twirl-worthy full skirt with pockets (\$175). Emma Roberts wears the flirty "Laurel" silk floral-print dress (right), which features a blousy peplum top (\$170-\$190). Both dresses cinch with an "Obi" belt (\$40). Dresses and belts designed by store owner Sarah Bibb.*



**F**olly (1005 NW 16th; 503-954-1334) is a funky-friendly boutique on the Pearl District's northwest fringe. Owner Sarah Bibb, who grew up watching her Nana sew, attended fashion school in Los Angeles and carved her niche designing one-of-a-kind garments.

Bibb thinks her shoppers, who span all ages, will be buying her lightweight chiffon wrap dresses and pairing them with vintage slips. The slips — which Bibb says she gets from a "secret source" — hail from the 1950s and 1960s, and pop visually because they're hand-dyed in Easter-egg colors.

"I think it would be a great date dress," Bibb says about the chiffon dress she calls the "Emily."

"It's comfortable and sexy, and it's versatile. You can just throw it on and go to lunch, but it would be just as cute with boots and tights."

She also hopes the "Hyla," a knee-length reversible wrap skirt that's stitched from snappy cotton prints, will be a summer hit.

Bibb says it's sometimes hard to predict what Portlanders will like. When she worked in Los Angeles, skirts could

not be short enough; in the Rose City, though, shoppers — perhaps accustomed to covering up in winter — are more modest.

Lace, which attracted shoppers last spring, should again be popular this spring, she says. And Bibb thinks a light-colored denim that debuted with modest success last year will make a bigger splash this fashion season.

"Portlanders are not at the mercy of trends, like in Los Angeles or New York," says Bibb, who designs about 25 percent of her inventory, including the "Hyla" and the "Emily." "The 'Hyla' has been the center of my line for eight years, and it is more popular now than ever." ■



*From Folly: Emma Roberts (left) is ready for summer sunshine in a silky, apron-style "Lucy" dress (\$120-\$145) and a vintage slip (\$30-\$50); her pleated ballet flats are by Matt Bernson (\$77). Rebecca Palmer (right) wears the "Emily," a chiffon wrap dress that also layers a vintage slip and features delicate back details (\$135). Dresses designed by store owner Sarah Bibb, top.*