

## Painting the Town Green

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Browse a few businesses around Main Street and you'll realize that buying green means a lot more than stocking up on tofu, hemp sandals and patchouli. You'll find organic massage oils, all-natural cleaning supplies, recycled purses that look like they belong on a runway model's arm, unusual herbs for tasty teas and thongs (yes, thongs) that are as adorable as they are earth-friendly.

In fact, downtown is so flush with such wares that the shops selling them have banded together to promote downtown Concord as a shopping destination for environmentally-conscious consumers. Called Green Concord, the group promotes business practices its members feel are good for the planet and for the community.

"Concord really is unique," said Debby deMoulied, owner of Real Green Goods and the founder of trade group. "We have a lot of (green) stores all on Main Street. That's very unusual. It's nice to sort of market it as a destination. We want to let people know that Concord is a Mecca for green shopping."

DeMoulied's shop - purveyor of stainless steel stemware, organic clothing and candles that raise money for injured veterans - opened this summer, one of many earth-friendly businesses that moved into downtown around the same time. Instead of competing with like-minded neighbors, deMoulied decided the business should band together.

Right now, the roster includes 10 businesses: Your Home, Your World, Lotions 'n Potions, Gondwana, Sage Living, Earth Made, the Concord Cooperative Market, Bartlett Home Studio Design, Massage Therapy, Real Green Goods and the Indigo Café on Hall Street.

Members of Green Concord have agreed to support local and Fair Trade suppliers, stock sustainable products, recycle and work to improve the community. The group hopes to increase recycling downtown and to hold promotional events throughout the year.

Members will volunteer to recycle waste from the upcoming SNOB Film Festival and, on the day after Thanksgiving, the stores will host Green Friday.

"It's our answer to Black Friday. It's very low key," deMoulied said. "We're just trying to have a very relaxing atmosphere. We'll have some soft music, some green tea, cider, maybe some organic cocoa. The idea is let's get away from the mall."

Green Concord's members have eclectic collections, but here's a sampling of what you'll find:

- Elephant poop paper. Yes, we said "poop," and Real Green Goods scrambles to keep the stuff in stock. People love it for writing, for giving and for starting conversations.
- The world's best thong - at least according to regulars at Earth Made. You'll find the wonder thongs displayed among racks and racks of PJs and underwear. They're made of natural fibers, which owner Malissa Blasdell says makes them super-comfy.

"Women swear by these," she said.

- Festival beads. Green Concord plans to purchase strings of handmade beads from a group of Congolese refugees living in Concord. The necklaces will debut at SNOB and deMoulied hopes they'll be the first of many products made by refugees.

"Eventually, it would be wonderful if they could start their own cooperative that we could purchase from," she said.

- Yummy-smelling things for your skin. Many of the shops sell handmade soaps, lotions and oils. Blasdell has been making her own brand for a dozen years, and Lotions 'n Potions has racks and rack of all-natural massage oils. If you fancy something really unique, the folks at Sage Living will whip up a custom blend just for you.