

## PRESS RELEASE

### A Good Sense Approach To Shopping

Fans of all things retro will be delighted to discover a new shop on The Pantiles, called 'Stuff & Good Sense'. Largely hidden, behind Mottram's kitchen shop and the Tourist Information Centre, S&GS is an inspirational surprise with its design classics from the '50, '60s and '70s, locally-sourced art and ethical home-made products, including natural skincare and homewares made from vintage fabrics.

"It's a retro, eco lifestyle concept store," explains proprietor Gaynor Edwards. Concept stores are more of a European phenomenon, although there are a few in London and they are now beginning to crop up in other locations. "I had an idea for a shop, a bit like Biba or a mini-department store, then discovered the 'concept store'," she explains.



Research included a recent fact-finding trip to Paris, where the concept store has been thriving since the '90s. Very much a modern shopping experience, instead of concentrating on one core product - shoes, for example - the concept store concentrates on a lifestyle or customer type. In the case of Stuff & Good Sense, it focuses on nostalgic/retro taste and eco values.

"Mid-century preloved furniture and crockery is the ultimate reusable eco purchase," says Gaynor. "We also stock locally handmade items, including a gorgeous range of cushions, both crocheted and made from vintage fabric; handmade dog collars, works by local artists; soy candles with organic cotton wicks in recycled glass jars; handmade soaps and bodycare products made locally using pure, natural ingredients.

"We try to look at every element and encourage our suppliers (mostly local or FairTrade) to produce things which are high quality, low packaging and as eco as possible. The skincare is packaged in recycled glass with an aluminium lid - both easily and widely recyclable," she explains.

"Our own packaging is as minimal as possible. We reuse cardboard boxes and bubblewrap, wherever possible. Where we have invested in new packaging, we use tissue paper, gift boxes and paper carrier bags made from recycled sources, and our new bubblewrap is biodegradable."

Gaynor is co-director with Jez Timms of creative agency Torpedo Juice Ltd, based below the shop in the basement of No 29 The Pantiles. Less of a departure from the agency than many may think, the shop is a complementary string to their bow. Torpedo Juice started life six years ago as an ethical PR and marketing company with the aim of 'promoting positive consumer choice'.

"We always championed using new media, wherever possible, for our client marketing," explains Jez. "Not only is it more cost effective reaching a potential global audience, but it's paper-free. Wherever traditional marketing materials were required we tried to steer the client towards more sustainable options - vegetable-based inks printing on recycled stock. We never thought that good design and an eco conscience were mutually exclusive."

"That's what the shop is illustrating," continues Gaynor. "Good design, strong branding, great products and a cohesive look with a warm and cuddly conscience. Retro and eco are a good fit because in the '50s people were naturally more environmentally-friendly. The war was still fresh in their minds, it wasn't a throwaway society, things were built to last."

Six decades on, Stuff & Good Sense is proof positive that things certainly were made to last. Solid wood furniture from Ercol, is on display next to a Kitchen Maid cupboard and formica tables, many sporting eye-catching crockery designs from Midwinter and Alfred Meakin. A recent addition of a yellow gingham kitchen table and chairs provoked tears in one customer, having stirred up memories of her grandmother's house which had the same table.

The design of the shop is really what brings the mid-century concept to life. Fellow retro devotee and local Interior Designer Louise Putman of Recreate Interiors was brought in to ensure that look was conveyed. "Gaynor told me that she wanted people to walk in and have the shop instantly remind them of their auntie's front room back in the day," she says. "Customer feedback would suggest we have achieved that. Happily, with mid-century style being so in vogue, '50s inspire wallpapers and fabrics are now widely available - as modelled by the shop's feature wall.

"The great thing is that the look will constantly change, according to the furniture and product lines brought in," explains Louise. 'The interior will however constantly provide a sympathetic backdrop and that suggestion that Doris Day could pop in at any moment."

The plan is for the shop to constantly evolve, with newly acquired furniture, sometimes reupholstered in vintage fabrics, coming through all the time and new product lines being discovered or developed.

"We hope to introduce a limited range of clothing soon and - now that we've got into our stride - have a little fun with the window displays," says Gaynor. "Visual merchandising is an area we've always wanted to develop through Torpedo Juice; now we have our own shop window to have some fun with."

Stuff & Good Sense is open seven days a week. Monday to Saturday 10am - 6pm, Sunday 11am - 4pm, with late night opening on Thursday nights during The Pantiles Jazz season.

For further press information on Stuff & Good Sense and high-resolution images please contact Gaynor Edwards on Tel: 0845 520 5250 or 07956 142214 or email [gaynor@torpedojuce.co.uk](mailto:gaynor@torpedojuce.co.uk).

Photo caption - Stuff & Good Sense at 29 The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells

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