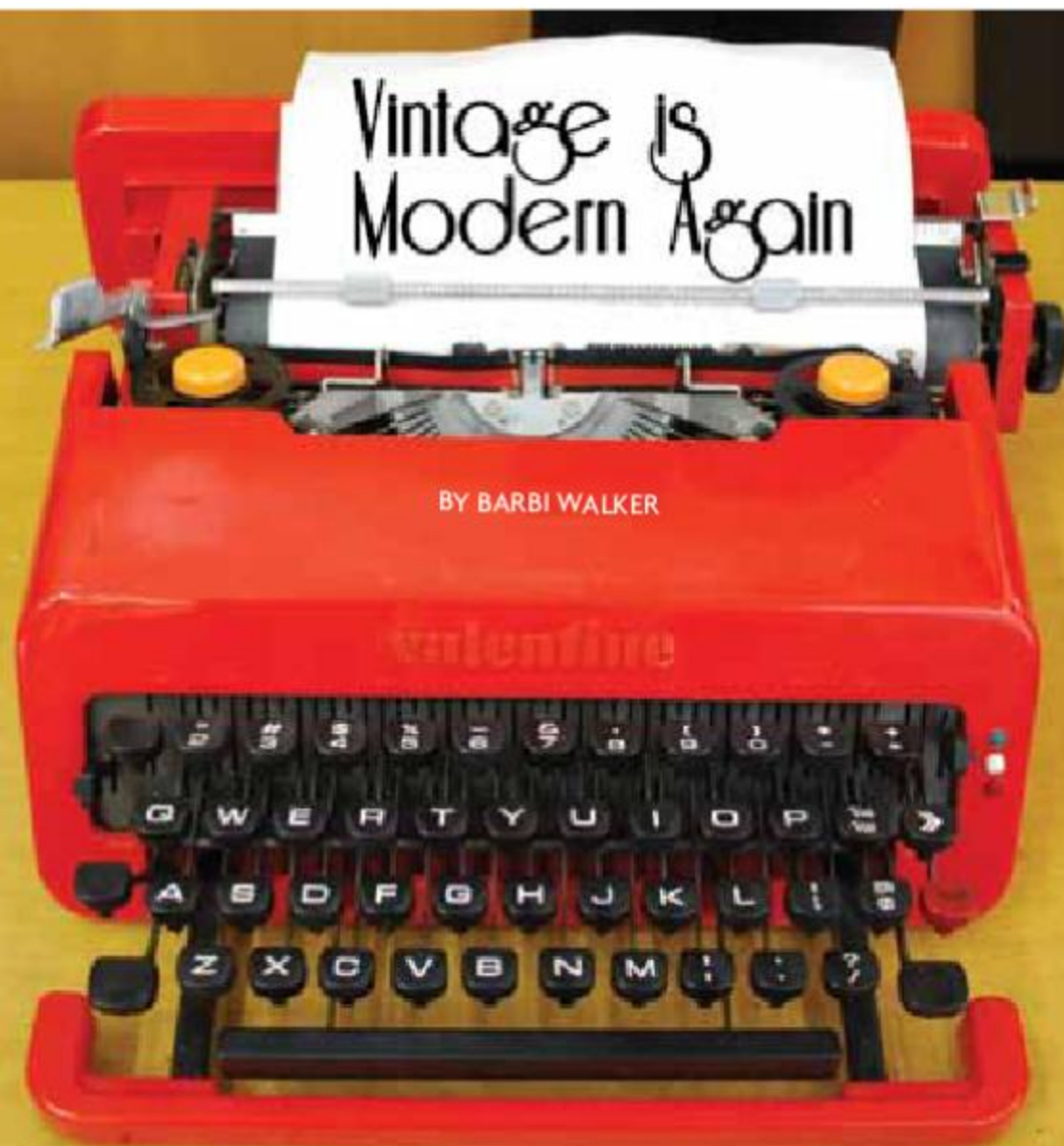




Phoenix is at the forefront of a major trend toward vintage furnishings – a trend as hot and hip as the Rat Pack in their heyday. Today, vintage isn't just an affordable way for homeowners to add style to their homes. Businesses and interior designers are embracing the trend for the style, minimal environmental impact and affordability. Start your journey for all things vintage by taking a drive south of Camelback Road along 7th Avenue's "vintage-esque" Melrose Place. You'll experience a piece of Phoenix's history and get a glimpse at the cutting edge of design.

When you think of vintage, what comes to mind? I think of cars, clothes, furniture and styles; smooth-molded Eames chairs, the once iconic Cine Capri at 24th Street and Camelback Road, with its curved and molded concrete entrance. I even think about my mother's beehive hairdo (circa 1968), but that's just the tip of the evolving vintage genre.

"People are making up terms left and right, they're snagging these terms and making up new names, like new-age-retro-modern-vintage," said Joe Livingston, co-owner with partner Brian Spear, of the Motor Lodge in Prescott.

Livingston says their tastes tend toward eclectic and vintage. While their intention wasn't to make the Motor Lodge a vintage, hip and modern spot, as business evolved and in an effort to save money, the style morphed into what it is now. Its hip, cool and vintage style wins raves from customers and neighbors alike.

"When we bought it, it was like all the other places in town; it was all doilies and antiques," Livingston said. "But we'd remove

a little doll or bear and then it wouldn't look right, so we'd go on a major shopping spree. Even the name Motor Lodge is a throwback," Livingston said.

Most experts agree that vintage items are at least 20 years old (anything over 100 years old is considered antique). Today, people consider items from the '50s, '60s and even '70s vintage.

In the early part of this decade, vintage shops in downtown Phoenix were sparse and small, and quality items were hard to find. Today, with customers focused on cost, style and environmental awareness, the shops are everywhere and overflowing with quality goods.

It may not be Madison Avenue, but Phoenix's 7th Avenue certainly is making a name for itself in the style and design world. 7th Avenue and Melrose has long been an iconic destination in central Phoenix, with business owners and residents working to keep the area true to its vintage roots.

The "7th Ave," as it's known, vintage market thrives between Camelback and Indian School Roads. It's lined with small locally owned shops in the business of buying, selling, educating and designing everything vintage.

"7th Avenue is becoming a destination," Lani Griffin, of Olive In Paris, said. "Girls are grabbing their girlfriends to go shopping on 7th Ave."



Griffin joined forces with Laurie Lavy, owner of Paris Envy, known for French-inspired furnishings, to create Olive In Paris, a vintage clothing and furnishing store. One of Griffin's favorite lines is the Kara-Line from Tumbleweed Company in Portland, Oregon. "The designer has taken an old flannel shirt, like from your dad's closet or grandpa's, and made it into great

mommy and me dresses," Griffin said. "You can only get these here in Phoenix; recycling at its best."

If you prefer retro, many local business owners are buying vintage items like countertops, bars, chairs and artwork. Owner Bill Sandweg of Copper Star Coffee is a community leader in the vintage trend. The coffee shop is a salvaged, repurposed and vintage gas station that has become a major hot spot for politicians and artists alike. The morning coffee rush alone is a veritable who's who of local politics. Sandweg loved the vintage gas pump and kept it as part of the decor for the coffee shop's drive-through. Inside, furnishings include repurposed items, and local artists line the walls with for-sale photos and art at affordable prices. It is a great place to start your "7th Ave." shopping day.

After you're done exploring, take a drive farther south to the heart of downtown Phoenix and find The Duce, located in the historic warehouse district. The Duce owners, Steve and Andi Rosenstein, migrated from Chicago and bought and revitalized the 1928 brick warehouse in 2007. In its heyday, "the Deuce" as it was called, was a produce shop by day and a speakeasy by night. The Rosenteins have managed to marry both histories – fresh food and Prohibition-style fashionable drinking – into a unique vintage shopping, dining and drinking experience. They've got it right, right down to prohibition-era cocktails like the Tom Collins and the Rusty Nail, and even a 1968 yellow school bus that's used to shuttle patrons to downtown events for free.

The idea of buying and using vintage and repurposed items continues to grow, as many people, including local merchants, rethink spending. Tie that cost-consciousness to the movement of going green, and it makes sense to look at products that have already made their carbon footprint, says Ryan Durkin, co-owner of Metro Retro. "Going green is more popular now," Durkin said. "People want something that is unique, cool, not Ikea. They want old and well-made and vintage."

The Phoenix Metro Retro is an old brick warehouse filled with mid-century furnishings that exemplify the streamlined Scandinavian style. Here you'll find pieces from H.P. Hansen,

Curtis Jere' and Borge Mogensen, as well as countless "no-name," great mid-century vintage pieces.

"People are interested in the art of mid-century vintage," Durkin said. "During the war, architects weren't using their skills to build houses, so they built furniture. What you have are these beautiful pieces that have stood the test of time and are considered art."

Collector and Copper Star regular Mike Artega and his wife attribute this comeback to "Mad Men." Fans of AMC's hit TV show love the sleek, cool factor and the show's furniture.

There are over 30 different shops within central and downtown Phoenix that carry, sell and use vintage. What makes these businesses unique are the independent local business owners – not corporate America – in and around downtown Phoenix who are working the American Dream.

Buying and shopping at these local spots supports our local economy. By buying locally, you help keep the carbon footprint small and help sustain local businesses.

With so many places in Phoenix that carry vintage, the decision to buy something cool, hip and eco-friendly is easy, but deciding what to buy is going to take a lot of Copper Star coffee, shopping trips and thinking and planning over Rusty Nails at The Duce.

Enjoy! 



7th Ave

WHERE TO GO

Paris Envy | 4624 N 7th Avenue

Olive in Paris | 4624 N. 7th Avenue

Copper Star Coffee | 4220 N. 7th Avenue

The Duce | 525 South Central Avenue

Phoenix Metro Retro | 708 W. Hazelwood

Motor Lodge | 503 South Montezuma Street, Prescott

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Photography by Tishin Donkersley, M.A., Heather Fulton and Marshall Shore