

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

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SHOP CRAWL BY KARA SPAK

A sign in the window of a West Loop business reads "Oprah! Don't forget to visit your . . . neighbors!" And while Oprah may not be shopping the L-shaded 1000 block of Lake Street, celebrities like Mariah Carey and Redman, as well as chic staffers from nearby Harpo Studios, are finding an abundance of style in this neighborhood known more for meat and produce warehouses than houses of high fashion.

SELF-CONSCIOUS 1021 W. LAKE ST. (312) 633-4000

This two-year-old "lifestyle" store is stocked with colorful sneakers, like the collectible \$2,000 crocodile and Italian leather Nike Air Force Ones, complete with an 18-karat gold shoelace ornament.



"We sell hard-to-find and expensive shoes, nothing you would find in the mall or at Foot Locker," said Cliff Castillo, assistant manager.

A favorite of Chicago Bears and Bulls players and the occasional rapper or R&B artist, you can shop at Self-Conscious for Adidas track jackets, T-shirts from Crooks & Castles and parrot-print Artful Dodger hoodies. They carry men's shoes up to sizes 15-16 and big and tall men's clothing sizes. There's also a small collection of women's clothing in the back.

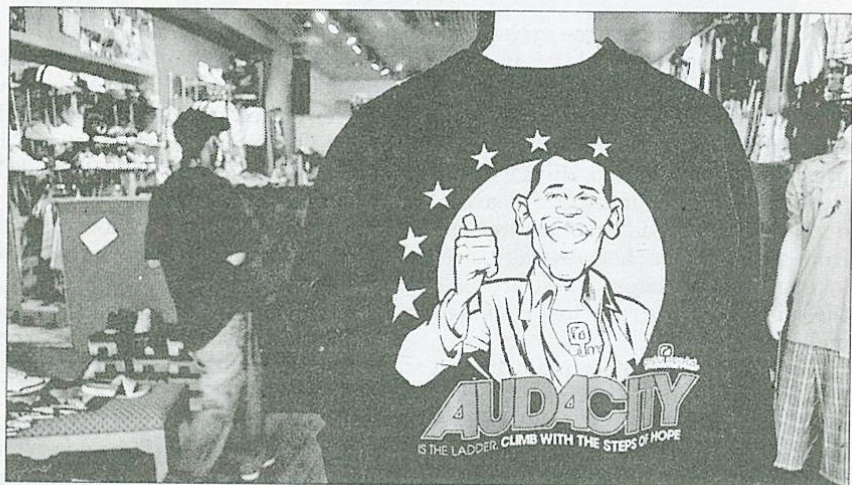
Hours: 10:30 a.m.-8:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday; 10:30 a.m.-midnight Friday and Saturday; noon to 5 p.m. Sunday.

KOROS 1019 W. LAKE ST. (312) 738-0155

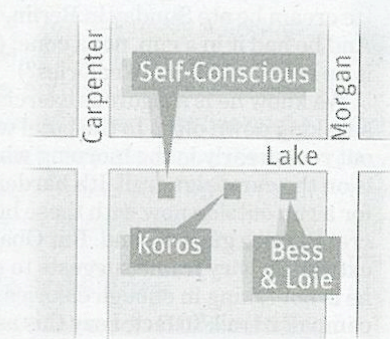
Kristen Skordilis selected the West Loop location for her koros boutique in 2005 because it reminded her of New York City's hip meatpacking district.

"There's all this creative energy happening with the galleries, there's so many great restaurants in the area and clubs," she said of the West Loop. "I liked that it was off the beaten path."

Skordilis draws energy — and inspi-



Get political and pick up an Obama sweatshirt at Self-Conscious, an urban fashion store at 1015 W. Lake Street. | JEAN LACHAT/SUN-TIMES



BESS&LOIE 1015 W. LAKE ST.

Walking into bess&loie should feel like walking into your grandma's house — if your grandma's house is stuffed with an explosion of handbags in any size, shape or color imaginable.

Owner Allyson Holleb was blessed with not one but two stylish grandmothers — you guessed it, Bess and Loie — and designed the month-old store to reflect their high style with a mixture of old and new.

Bess&loie sells dozens of handbags, jewelry, neckties and wallets, most costing between \$200 and \$800.

The Hershey's bars, Reese's peanut butter cups and Whoppers stuffed in the glass cookie jar, just like the one you'd find at grandma's, are free.

Hours: noon-7 p.m. Monday through Wednesday; 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Thursday through Saturday; noon-5 p.m. Sunday or by appointment

ration — off her store's gallery vibe, which features not only a rotating selection of clothing, shoes and jewelry but also a variety of artists' work.

When she shops for her store, she looks for things that are "different and unique and just kind of special that [customers] weren't finding locally."

Hours: noon-6 p.m. Sunday through Tuesday; 11 a.m.-7 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday