



ELEMENTS OF LIVING
OCTOBER 2006



CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT: Lulan's subtle hand-woven silk fabrics, done up in accessories like bolsters, cushions and table runners, are also available by the yard. Robert Hines of Hines Studio-R-Squared expertly reproduces mirrored glass to fill antique frames as well as those of his own making. From traditional copper lanterns to sleek sconces, the lamps and light fixtures at Urban Electric Co. address all periods of decorating.

MIDDLE AND UPPER KING

Middle King (between Market and Calhoun streets) has been largely taken over by chain stores, but en route to Upper King, stop in at **ESD**, Elizabeth Stuart Design. The shop reflects the willingness of owner and interior designer Elizabeth Faith to layer color, style and period into a mix that feels utterly modern. Alongside a sixteenth-century secretary and oversize cork lamps from the 1970s are contemporary dog portraits by Heather LaHaise, cloudscapes by Sean McNamara and richly glazed oyster plates by ceramist Allison Evans.

Upper King (north of Calhoun Street) is the inventive yin to Lower King's traditional yang. Storefronts that were abandoned ten years ago have been reborn as restaurants and salons, shops, and the headquarters for the Charleston Ballet Theater.

Urban Electric Co., with its suave logo, theatrical windows and polished manner of displaying wares in a spacious showroom, sends a clear message that history can be a helpmate rather than a handcuff. Historically inspired lamps, sconces and chandeliers by creative director Michael Amato and designers Amelia Handegan, Mark Maresca and Justin Walling suit a contemporary loft in Tribeca every bit as much as a Charleston single house. Every fixture, including copper lanterns by master craftsman John Gantt, is handmade locally.

Lulan may be one of the newest additions to Upper King, but its hand-woven fabrics, in a palette both soft and radiant, have been years in the making. Under the direction of founder Eve Blossom, some 400 artisans in Southeast Asia produce textiles using techniques that have been passed down through generations. Ten distinct patterns (stripes, puckers, sheers and ikats) by designers Laura Guido-Clark and Michael Koch are sold by the yard and made up into pillows, duvets, table runners and lampshades.

Leigh Magar carries textiles as chinchilla, which she steams, shapes and stitches into hats that are utterly chic and becoming to anyone who tries one on. At **Magar Hatworks**, the South Carolina native sells cloches, fedoras, fanciful feathery headpieces and, in summer, sunhats made of panama from Ecuador, all made at the back of the shop.

For 25 years, Robert Hines has been perfecting the art of reproducing antique mirror at his **Hines Studios-R-Squared**. Starting with sheets of hand-blown glass that range from slightly wavy to heavily seeded, he applies gilding to produce effects that impress if not fool antique dealers who have spent years in the trade. More recently, Hines has extended his skills to the making of exquisite gilded frames and mirrored furniture. He also does leaded windows and stained glass. A visit to Hines' studio is one of the best ways to see that Charleston's artisanal heritage is as vibrant as ever.

THE URBAN ELECTRIC CO.