

## Shopping at TIFF (page 1 of 3)

**Jane Flanagan**  
Shopping

The Toronto International Film Festival means just one thing to many people: Celebrities. The thought of the glitterati of the silver screen descending upon the city sends many into a total tailspin of celebrity stakeouts and sightings.

For me TIFF is about shopping. As PR companies set up lounges to lure celebrities in, they also handpick some of the newest and freshest retail talent out there. So, it's in search of great new brands and products that I traipse down to scour the festival. Any sighting of celebrities will, I swear, just be a bonus.

### Kindred Spirit

You can imagine, that sometimes the whole celebrity / shopping combination gets a little too PR-driven. However, in Natasha Koifmann I've found the PR manifestation of my shopping philosophy. Natasha is, simply put, the most discerning and lovely of PR people I know. In the same way I only write about products I love, she will only promote products she loves. And we also share a similar mindset in our buy less / get greater value philosophy.

So, when Natasha called to say that she was creating a product lounge for the Toronto International Film Festival, I cast off my very-cynical shackles and knew I'd find some rare treasures there. And treasures were they ever. She had hand-picked some of the most exciting products from some of the most exciting brands and manufacturers around today.

And, for those of you getting antsy that this is yet another celebrity giveaway, rich-get-richer scheme, Natasha is working with Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Toronto, giving IT Lounge visitors the opportunity to donate gifts from the lounge to assist in raising money for this charity's schemes, as well as sign the "Moments of Mentorship" wall, shown above.

Natasha merchandised the lounge like it was her own personal dream-shop. She filled it with brands that she discovered and adored and who are doing something innovative. She recognizes that this could be the "lucky break" for some of these young brands who are getting up and running. These are my favourites from her favourites:



### Trove

First up is Trove. I "hotted" Trove some time ago and months later I am as in love with these tees as ever. You know that ultimate favourite t-shirt that you wear to bed? –Imagine your daytime tee felt as great. THEN, add on the whimsical creative touch of Canadian graphic designer Carly Mandelbaum and savvy (and rather dashing) business man Jesse Burnett. Presto, you have a delightful range that is Trove.

I know t-shirts are an any-age classic, but I had really stopped wearing them until I found Trove. Now casual Fridays get an injection of spice with their subtly risqué double-entendres. It's a fine line to juggle edgy and age-agnostic, but Trove do it with a wink and a nudge. A little wry, but not too cynical and lovely without being too sugar-coated, these designs strike a balance rarely found in graphic textiles.

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### The Right Hand Gal

Everybody knows that I am an accessories addict. Like many women, I have an on-again / off-again love affair with my own body, so clothes-shopping is sometimes unsatisfying. But accessories are unequivocally forgiving. Plus, I certainly do not subscribe to the mantra that a woman should not own her own jewelry. The Right Hand Gal comes from the same school of thought.

Their range is priced right in a woman's spend-on-self comfort zone (approx \$250-\$300.) Okay, to be clear, I'm not dropping that on jewelry every month. But remember how it goes? – Spend to invest. The fact is, for this price you're getting real diamonds, not costume jewelry and it's something you won't see on every woman at Starbucks (unlike that Tiffany ID pendant.)



At the end of the day, I'd much rather be getting something truly fabulous for a decent price than scraping in at the entry level of a big-name brand I truly can't afford. Plus, the designs are truly disarming. I couldn't keep my eyes off the two-sided "Love my Planet" pendant and had to be dragged away cooing like a pigeon.



### Moor Allure

Next, Natasha selected a brand she discovered through her aesthetician: Moor Allure. Moor Allure is the result of ten years of scientific research into the nutritional properties of Moor, a form of peat found in Northern Ontario. This is simply a magnificent brand with a great story that hails right from our own back door.

Remember when Crme de la Mer came out and we heard fantastic stories about the healing properties of this potion. Well Moor Allure tells a similarly fantastic story, but with a more grass-roots feel to it (and minus the obstructive price-tag.)

Many beauty products can feel good after one use, but then your skin can uncharacteristically break out 2 days later. So I waited until I tried Moor Allure three times. My skin just seems to lap this product up, like the way I down a glass of water after a good run. It seems obvious and unquestionable that this is good stuff for my skin and the proof is in the pudding: Glowing skin.

### Too Faced

Finally, no matter how great your skin is, we can all do with a little razzle-dazzle in the form of make-up. I've tried - and loved - plumping lip-glosses, but have always chosen ones with built-in pigment. Trying Too-Faced Plump Your Pout was a different experience.

It feels slightly disconcerting, like a thousand miniature bees are stinging your lips, but then you look in a mirror. All that stinging (which is achieved with some spicy cocktail) brings out the brightest natural hue of your lip colour. And natural tones always flatter more than radical pigments.

Then I tried my new favourite mascara: Lash Injection. Mascara can be problematic for me since my lashes curl back to my brow bone and the mascara sometimes rubs off there,





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leaving the impression that I applied black eyeshadow just under my brow. Lash Injection doesn't have this problem and it also has a yummy citrus smell, unlike any other mascara I've ever tried (and I've been through the gamut.)

### A Question of Trust

The thing about product recommendations is that you've got to trust the recommender. There are certain magazines, certain people and even certain stores that I repeat-trust because they never let me down. In my work, Natasha and her staff are those similarly trusted sources.

Whether you're the kind of shopper who wants whatever Sienna Miller is wearing, or the kind who really doesn't care about all that jazz, we all want the same end result: Products that work and that we love, not just on Day 1, but a month and a year later. Trove, Right Hand Gals, Too Faced and Moor Allure are all manufacturers who want the same for their customers. And, thanks to Natasha, brands I can now share with you.