

Tokyo, Milan, London and ... Medina?

You'd better believe it.

I'm smitten after visiting the historic Orleans County village last week. Its quaint, charming downtown Main Street on Route 63 is the kind of place Christmas shopping dreams are made of.

There's a Santa in residence, an outdoor sound system to serenade you while you shop, and an eclectic mix of locally owned stores with great prices. It's definitely worth the trip.

Here are just a few of the great treasures you'll find on the main drag.

The English Rose Tea Shoppe, 527 Main St. This romantic tea shop sells everything you need to make a good cup of tea, including loose leaf teas from England and Ireland, starting at \$1.19 per ounce. There are Victorian note cards (\$1.99), delicate handkerchiefs (\$6.95), tea towels (starting at \$4.95), aprons (starting at \$12.95) and a whole line of Downton Abbey products.

ellen j goods, 433 Main St. This is my new favorite store. Owner Lynne Brundage rescues "junk" and reimagines it in the industrial cottage, modern farmhouse style. There are new and vintage housewares of all kinds, staged exquisitely. Most things are priced under \$30, but there are bigger pieces priced higher, such as a gorgeous industrial drawer unit for \$1,150. Resident Boston terrier Winston is cool, too.

The Book Shoppe, 519 Main St. A lovely independent bookstore complete with an expansive children's selection. There are toys, games and puzzles for sale, too. You'll pay \$3.99 for a child's

paperback or \$28 for a new hardcover. Most toys are priced under \$15.

Just What the Doctor Ordered, 417 Main St. Hand-selected antiques and unique gifts from around the world. Owner Daniel Doctor has a real designer's eye. Stop in if only to see his ornate Christmas trees.

Blissett's, 447-449 Main St. I got my wedding gown and flower girl dresses here, but they also sell some of the cutest children's clothing and christening gowns you've ever seen.

Ashlee's Place, 116 E. Center St. Women's professional and casual clothing priced from \$20 to \$80. Come visit, even if just to meet Brenda Lindsey, the friendliest, bubbliest salesperson you'll ever meet. She lives to help you find clothes and accessories you'll love.

Canal Country Artisans, 135 E. Center St. A craft and vintage market with 45 vendors and 4,000 square feet. It's decorated like a winter wonderland at Christmas.

Wide Angle Art Gallery, 525 Main St. An all-media art gallery selling artwork from \$25 up to \$500. Shows change monthly. Hourlong art classes start at \$10 for students and go up to \$35. You'll be greeted by two giant poodles, Millie and Morty.

Creekside Floral and Design, 422 Main St. Beautiful gifts and flower arrangements. They will work with any budget.

A Lily & a Sparrow, 438 Main St. High-fashion women's clothing designs you won't see anywhere else. You'll find handmade jewelry for \$20, organic cotton clothing starting at \$50. There is a fragrance department with such scents as Tokyo Milk and Lollia.

Herbalty Cottage, 415 Main St. A foodie paradise. You'll find organic teas and herbs starting at \$1; organic, vegan olive oils cold-pressed in Italy in flavors such as parmesan garlic and toasted sesame

lemongrass ginger (\$24.95); and balsamic vinegars naturally infused with flavors such as fig and chocolate raspberry (starting at \$19.95). Yum!

A Knitter's Corner, 111 W. Center St. You won't find Red Heart here. People come from far and wide for their high-end yarns in exotic blends. They start at \$6 a skein and go as high as \$24 a skein for 100 percent alpaca.

Rosenkrans Pharmacy and Gift Shop, 526 Main St. In one half of the store, you'll find the kind of old-timey pharmacy you remember visiting as a kid. On the other side, you'll find an expansive gift shop with toys, collectibles, Yankee Candles and such brands as Willow Tree, Jim Shore and Kelly Ray Roberts.

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Rock Paper Store, 510 Main St. A modern edge mix of repurposed women's clothing in sizes 2 through 16. There are also men's items and artisan products such as candles, glass straws and drinking vinegar. Prices range from \$5 to \$40 and include gift wrapping.

The Blue Gill Trading Post, 541 B Main St. An always-bustling secondhand store selling furniture, books, DVDs and other home goods.

Where to eat:

Zambistro, 408 Main St., has delicious, upscale Italian dining. Try the Trio of Soups (\$6) and the Black and Blue Salad (\$8). Meggie Moo's, 114 E. Center St., is a retro diner and soda fountain with almost nothing priced over \$5. Rudy's Diner, 118 W. Center St., is popular for its down-home cooking. The Shirt Factory Cafe, 115 W. Center, is a hip little coffee shop that serves

fresh-pressed vegetable and fruit juices and sandwiches with fun names such as the Bob Hope and the 3 Stooges (\$6 for a half, \$9 for a whole).

810 Meadworks, 113 W. Center, shares space in the old Newell shirt factory. It has a gorgeous tasting room, where you can try three types of mead for \$5 or buy a bottle from \$7 to \$20. Avanti Pizza and Grill, 500 Main St., and Mark's Pizzeria, 549 B Main St., serve pizza and more. Country Club Family Restaurant, 535 Main St., offers American casual dining. Great Wall Chinese Buffet, 515 Main St., has a buffet and full menu. There are two bakeries, the Bread Basket, 513 Main St., and Case-Nic Cookies, 439 Main St. Della's Chocolates, 512 Main St., has shipped its sponge candy all over the world.

Where to stay:

I think Medina is going to be my new wedding anniversary destination. Hart House Hotel, 113 W. Center St. , is a jaw-dropping-beautiful boutique hotel starting at \$109 per night.

Don't miss:

Medina's Olde Tyme Christmas Celebration, from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m. Saturday on Main Street. There will be horse-drawn wagon and sleigh rides, wine tasting, fireworks, a tree lighting, crafts, face painting, ornament decorating, s'mores, a movie, a sing-along, an elf costume contest, an open house at the Medina Historical Society, 406 West Ave., a Polar Express ride at the Medina Railroad Museum, 530 West Ave., and much, much more. The Parade of Lights, with ornate floats, begins at 6 p.m.

Santa will also be at Rotary Park all season, at Main and East Center streets.

Be sure to check out the “Shopping Medina” photo gallery
(<http://galleries.buffalonews.com/default.aspx?id=5219#/0>) at
BuffaloNews.com.

Next week: East Aurora. email: schristmann@buffnews.com