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Oakland, CA: Sexy Lingerie at A La Folie
By Madeleine Zinn

It's easy to miss A La Folie if you're not looking for it. The upscale lingerie store is mysteriously tucked away in a rather nondescript area of Oakland, CA.

Far enough from the hustle and bustle of Cal Berkeley's main campus and not quite in Rockridge or Temescal, A La Folie is nestled securely near the corner of Alcatraz and Telegraph. In the three years Folie has been in business, it has flourished as a spot that caters to those looking for sexy, exquisite lingerie from such designers as Nina Ricci and Millesia.

A La Folie's owner will tell you herself that this area today is what Temescal was ten years ago. Thanks to businesses like hers, new and better stores are springing up in the area as well. Nafissa Tayebi, a proud 32F, opened A La Folie in August 2003 because she knew how hard it was to find lingerie to fit her proportions and wanted to offer beautiful pieces for women of different sizes. Whether you're a 32F or a 32A, risqué or demure, you will find something here that works for you. And that is what Tayebi emphasizes most: a comfort in one's self, whether big or small or somewhere in between.

While many large lingerie stores are plastered with images of beautiful but fairly unrealistic looking women in next to nothing, A La Folie's walls are pleasantly devoid of pictures of models in skimpy underpinnings. Instead, the store is decorated like a boudoir with dark chocolate brown walls, a chandelier, and tasteful black and white portraits celebrating all things beautiful, woman or otherwise. The intimate size of the store—and really, what is lingerie if not intimate—gives shoppers the feeling that they've entered into a 1920's Hollywood starlet's closet.

Recently, the boutique presented its new collection of Kenzo pieces (to be sold in the East Bay exclusively at Folie) with a trunk show, complete with a DJ, hand massages and delectable bite-size treats made by European gourmet confectioner Lulu Rae.

Whether you're looking for a barely there bra and panty set from I.D. Sarrieri, or something perhaps more functional but still sexy by Wendy Glez, A La Folie is your store. And it offers more than just bras and underwear. One can also find robes, loungewear, candles, French soaps, and some of the most decadent smelling perfumes by L'Artisan Parfumeur. Prices range from \$50 to \$500, and while the Christian Lacroix corsets cost a pretty penny, it would be a crime not to wear these pieces of functional art in the bedroom and out on the town.

A La Folie is a little treasure trove, hard to find but well worth the dig. And with a proprietor who embraces and celebrates the female form, you are in good hands and sure to be in good underwear.

A La Folie: 6395 Telegraph Ave, Oakland, CA 94609 (510) 547-6543

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