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# Best of Manhattan Services

## Best Women's Hats

Lola Millinery  
2 E. 17th St. (5th Ave.)  
366-5708

**Put on Her Top Hats.** We gave props to Lola's creative straws in this year's "Suddenly Summer" issue, and true to form, the store's fall collection is just as stylish and unusual. You'll find a pillbox-y beret (\$175), a Brandoesque biker cap (\$235) and a tall bowler (\$250), all fashioned out of leopard-print rabbit fur. The same styles can be made out of velour felt (supersaturated red, pink and orange, prices start at \$185). As always, just about any showroom piece can be made into another color or fabric for the same price.

If you're looking for something that's more casual and collapsible, Lola's floppy ultrasuede pieces can be folded and squashed into a pocket—the soft Daphne (available in navy, peach and chocolate, \$150) is right out of a Carly Simon song. When it gets colder, Lola will reintroduce similar shapes in wool jersey. For evening, there's a softer, slightly skewed version of the top hat (black velour felt with a patent-leather band, \$275), and it's rakish at any angle.

If you're still looking for a summer picture hat, Lola's new resort straws are even more dramatic than her earlier pieces—try on the one with the lace-pattered 10-inch brim (\$175). You'll feel like you're looking through your grandma's curtains. And it probably won't come off your head until the first frost.

## Best Animal Bones

Maxilla & Mandible  
451 Columbus Ave.  
(betw. 81st & 82nd Sts.)  
724-6173

**Bone Zone.** At a mere \$5 a piece, shouldn't there be a 500-million-year-old trilobite fossil in every home? For four grand, on the other hand, you could get a reconstructed tyrannosaur skull. In between are such goodies as a humble \$140 warthog skull and \$40 teeth



Hooked on Custom Tackle.

from megalodon, the great white's gigantic extinct relative of three million years ago. On your way out, pick up a bronze dinosaur skeleton and note the international array of skull-shaped beads, some of them carved from actual yak bone. Yeah, there are other skeleton shops around, but M&M was the first, and remains the best.

## Best Fly-Fishing Emporium

Manhattan Custom Tackle  
913 Broadway (betw. 20th & 21st Sts.)  
964-1590

**You'll Scare the Fish.** The cigar-chomping proprietors of this second-story shop lack the usual compunction to ratchet-jaw about the Madison or the last time they palled around with Lefty, which is merely an indication of their refreshing no-nonsense approach to the sport. They don't have their own line of spiffy streamwear, and unlike Orvis or Urban Angler, they don't have flies for every continent. But budget-minded anglers don't don dandy duds, and an increasing number of Walton's brethren tie their own flies and assemble their own rods, the materials for which MCT

has in ready supply.

Grandpa's bamboo rod coming apart? You'll get the materials and advice it takes to slap that willowy wand back together. If you're not the handy sort, just have the guys tailor you a Sage or Loomis blank to your exacting specifications for the price of an off-the-rack rod elsewhere. And say hallelujah! They also sell New York State fishing licenses.

## Best Leather Clothing

Primal Stuff  
189 E. 3rd St. (betw. Aves. A & B)  
674-1491

**Too Sexy for Your Skirt?** If Cher and Slash can't live without Ligia (*Lee-zha*) Stein's designs, neither can you. No fooling. For God's sake, Slash can't take those leather pants off. And when was the last time you saw Cher in a cotton shift? Ligia makes leather clothes comfortable and sexy, the way they should be. No fussy zippers or pinching snaps (unless you ask for them)—just lots of lacing, D-rings (the most forgiving fasteners in the world) and exquisite hides that Ligia selects by hand.

At the Primal Stuff store, Ligia's work table is right next to the clothing racks (she does all the cutting and sewing herself), and it's obvious that her designs are handcrafted works of art. The *extremely* body-conscious waist cinchers and corsets (\$250 and up) are finished with intricate hand stitches, and the skins are miles away from stiff cowhide. The effect is medieval-faerie fantasy—we're talking traditional body armor. One piece is made out of constricting buffalo skin (\$250), and the lacing and grommets allow you to squash yourself in as tight as you dare. On the other hand, a very sexy and revealing black gown, made out of air-thin lambsuede (\$600), is both clingy, loose and heavy on the décolletage. And her version of the wrap-around skirt (\$250) is a miracle in deerskin.

Give Ligia your favorite jeans and she'll make your leather pants fit the same way, with button-fly, lace-up, zipper-fly, whatever you like (\$350 and up). For a custom fitting (prices vary), Ligia takes your measurements, does a muslin fitting and a final adjustment on your bod, and only then does she cut. In addition, Ligia offers latex and rubber bras and panties (\$174)—they're unbelievably nasty, especially the condom-colored items.

These bikini sets might be waterproof, but it's doubtful that they're moisture repellent, if you know what we're saying. Wear all your Primal Stuff with care—you'll be irresistible.

## Best Left-Wing Bookstore

Verso Books  
128 8th Ave. (16th St.)  
620-3141

**Biblio-Syndicalists.** The big quote from Francis Picabia on the wall says: "One must be a nomad, pass through ideas as one passes through countries and cities." Verso is the perfect place for it, with its extensive and excellent collection of lefty books on all subjects arranged with library-like orderliness. Unlike the library, though, there's music in the air and food for sale.

Flaky volumes outnumber respectable ones, despite the display table of topical anti-Limbaugh and anti-militia tomes. A glance at the shelves reveals that the alphabetical fates have placed Wayne Booth's litcrit gem *The Company We Keep* next to Andre Breton's *What Is Surrealism?* The collection *Evolutionary Epistemology*, with contributions from Sir Karl Popper, happens to sit next to its philosophical opposite, *Objectivist Epistemology* by Ayn Rand.

Note: a glance inside the book *Mapping Ideologies* reveals that liberalism is a philosophy that has evolved "from Locke to Hayek." Since these men are both libertarians, the contents of Verso, which tend more toward the socialist and radical, should perhaps be seen as remnants of a 300-year philosophical digression, though one well worth visiting.

## Best Soul of Africa

Fareta School of Dance & Drama  
622 Broadway  
(betw. Houston & Bleecker Sts.)  
677-6708

**Jungle Boogie.** When we're feeling soulless and flabby and our gait takes on that particular shambling quality characteristic of the tired urban here to there, we like to go to Ferata Dance Studio for an African rhythm tuneup of our internal metronome. Step off Broadway and down into the sweaty dank-