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henry Galiano was a reluctant debutant to the world of commerce. A friend suggested he set up a stall in the local flea market, but Galiano doubted there would be many buyers for the odd collection of stock he had to offer. "I thought it would be too embarrassing to empty out a duffel bag of fossils and pigeon, rat and dog skulls, while the guy next-door was selling candles."

Despite such misgivings, when Galiano eventually followed his friend's advice, it turned out there were meaty profits to be made

new york

bones to pick

from old bones and stones. The first day's takings were about \$ 1,000, and the next weekend he made more than \$ 5,000. Soon Galiano was also selling from his apartment, and in 1985 he

The store is just a block away from the American Museum of Natural History, which played a pivotal role in Galiano's childhood. His father often took him to visit the museum, and Galiano later worked there for a decade as a curatorial assistant in the carnivore department.

The many browsers who are attracted to Maxilla & Mandible share Galiano's passion for bones, but for a variety of reasons. Artists may seek inspiration in the sinuous forms sculpted by nature. Scientists enjoy exploring a succession of skulls by touch, say from warthog to bison to human: "They like to feel our evolution," comments Galiano.

That's why he believes Maxilla & Mandible has a hands-on advantage over the average natural history museum... "Here it's all out in the open, not behind glass or ropes." For Galiano and many others, there's nothing like the thrill of holding a 300,000-year-old bone or fossil in your palm.

Not that it is easy to maintain a constant supply of palaeontological treasures. Galiano's years of museum work, and understanding of technical jargon, have helped him develop a network of contacts with "reputable suppliers" all over the world.

It's a grisly fact that most of the human skeletons, hanging around Maxilla & Mandible like spectral floor-walkers, come from corpses that were once dissected by American medical students. Sometimes Galiano's staff scrape the bones clean with a knife, sometimes this delicate job is delegated to a tank-full of carpet beetles. Bones are then boiled in a strong ammonia solution, bleached in hydrogen peroxide, and waxed to enhance colour at the same time as repelling dust. The crowning, Frankenstein-like moment comes when workers reunite everything into a complete skeleton, connecting the hip-bone to the thigh-bone, etc.

Galiano now has an international reputation. He is frequently called in by museums to help stage special exhibitions, and was recently asked to create a replica dinosaur skeleton for the Museum of Natural History in Beijing.

Yet he is still interested in boning-up on future business prospects, and his next venture may be to combine palaeontology with tourism. "If

you're interested in going on a specimen-hunting expedition in Wyoming or Kenya, just give me a call," says Galiano.

STEPHEN JERMANOK

Maxilla & Mandible, 451-5 Columbus Avenue, New York City, telephone 1/212/724.61.73. Open 11 am to 7 pm, Monday to Saturday.



Remains of the day...Shop manager James Waits, and takeaway tibia

opened his own specialist store on Manhattan's Columbus Avenue: Maxilla & Mandible, named after the bones of the upper and lower jaw.

Are you looking for a giraffe skull with mandible (\$ 1,800)? Perhaps a bison skull, with or without horns (\$ 195-760)? Or maybe a complete set of bony remains from *Homo sapiens* (\$ 1,800-3,200)? You can find them all and more at Maxilla & Mandible, which claims to be the only boneyard of its kind in the world.