



WESTERN LIVING
May, 2004

Life is a breeze. Here's where to catch it.

Westerly

Daiso at Aberdeen Centre

> Bing Thom was recently awarded the Marché International des Professionnels de l'Immobilier—the real estate Oscar, as some call it—for another suburban Vancouver development, and, in the scheme of things, the Aberdeen Centre strikes many as even more akin to Meryl Streep in *Sophie's Choice*.

For the moment only a few shops are open at the Aberdeen Centre, but that shouldn't dissuade people from dropping by, as among them is the first North American appearance of Japanese-based Daiso, probably the world's fastest-growing retail chain, with 4,200 stores and a new one opening every day. At Daiso more than 40,000 items are on offer, each selling for precisely \$2, a feat that is possible partly because the firm's buyers purchase goods in minimum multiples of one million. If Wal-Mart were crossed with IKEA and the dollar store on the corner, the result would look a little like this, except not nearly as cute. Spend 10 minutes walking the aisles and at least a dozen employees will chirp "Welcome to Daiso." Maybe the theorists were wrong. Maybe what we were craving was an *unnatural* shopping experience.

—Stanley Brunst

Counter Reformation

Got a yen for fabulous architecture and great shopping? Check this out.

In theory big suburban shopping malls are not what people are looking for in 2004. We're supposed to crave a more natural experience, hence the rise of what people in the business call village shopping as well as hybrid malls that incorporate elements of the outdoors into the design.

So who could have predicted that Vancouver's retail and architectural story of the year would be the opening of a great big suburban mall? Maybe Richmond's new Aberdeen Centre isn't quite the earth-shaking innovation the West Edmonte Mall was, but then again, maybe it is. Consider: when its 380,000 square feet of retail space is fully occupied later this year the Centre will house neither a Gap nor a Radio Shack but will contain flagship fashion, home furnishings and related chains from several Asian countries. Moreover, while the stores are drawing shoppers from all over B.C.'s Lower Mainland, the building drawing architectural tourists from all over the world. Archite

FIRST NIBS

Plastic Buddha inks a deal.

10 WESTERN LIVING MAY 2004

MAY 2004 WESTERN LIVING 9