

BEST DENIM SHOP
DENIM LOUNGE



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When it comes to jeans shopping, variety is of utmost importance. The ass is No. 2. Thankfully, we have Denim Lounge in Roscoe Village (a miniature version exists inside the Gold Coast's Madison and Friends, as well). The store offers casual basics—Ella Moss, Splendid, etc.—for the whole family and a centerpiece collection, lining the length of a blue wall, that fills three shelves with 20 high-end denim lines, including DL1961, Fidelity, Hudson, J Brand and Paige Premium Denim, for \$120 and up. And because any denim purveyor worth his salt knows it's all about a good backside, a row of butt mannequins showcases the jeans' back-end business. For further analysis, a virtual fitting room connects four hi-def cameras to flat-screen TVs, so you can thoroughly check yourself out. *2004 W Roscoe St (773-935-2820, madisonandfriends.com/denimlounge).*—JH

Other nominees *Blue Jean Bar, Cityblue, DNA 2050, 1969 Jean Shop*

BEST COOKING STORE
THE CHOPPING BLOCK

No offense to Paula Deen, but there are only so many recipes and techniques you can learn by watching the Food Network. That's why epicurious Chicagoans craving hands-on experience sign up in droves for classes at the Chopping Block. The popular supplier of professional cookware and gourmet ingredients has an expert staff and a cornucopia of culinary classes. Students flock to the Lincoln Square and Merchandise Mart locations for daily, single-lesson crash courses in knife skills and more dish-specific education, such as Chicken 101, Steakhouse DIY and Cupcake Boot Camp. Home chefs stop in for items such as microplane graters (\$13), dough scrapers (\$6) and Le Creuset French ovens (\$185). *4747 N Lincoln Ave (773-472-6700, thechoppingblock.net); Merchandise Mart Plaza, suite 107 (312-644-6360).*—KA

Other nominees *Cooking Fools, Northwestern Cutlery, Woks 'n' Things, Wooden Spoon*

BEST SHOE STORE
LORI'S SHOES

Shoppers with a weakness for footwear find Lori's either a blessing or a curse—depending on the status of their bank account. The Lincoln Park emporium (there are two suburban locations in Highland Park and Northfield) stuffs a sizable space with American and European designer shoes, all marked 10 percent to 30 percent less than department-store prices. The selection includes everything from classics to trendy brands such as Jeffrey Campbell, Corso Como and Boutique 9, not to mention dozens of Italian exclusives. Better yet, you'd be hard pressed to find a physical shoe shop with a more complete e-commerce site, replete with weekly blog posts to keep you informed on the latest fashions. *824 W Armitage Ave (773-281-5655, lorissshoes.com).*—JH

Other nominees *Akira (State Street), City Soles/Niche, House of Sole, St. Alfred*

▶ BEST LINGERIE STORE
G BOUTIQUE

There's no shortage of penis-shaped paraphernalia (just wait till you see the phallic deli sandwiches at the in-store bachelorette parties) in the "accessories" section of this Pepto-Bismol pink shop. But when it comes to variety here, it's all about the sexy skivvies. Styles by brands such as Cosabella, Le Mystere and Only Hearts run the gamut from Marie Antoinette-style corsets and lace chemises to va-va-voom leopard-print bras and garters. Looking to beef up your bedroom education? The schedule of how-to seminars covers everything from giving great blow jobs to posing for pinup portraits. *2131 N Damen Ave (773-235-1234, boutiqueg.com).*—JH

Other nominees *Enchante, Isabella, Underthings, Wildflowers*