



**Your one-stop shopping destination**

# **SoWa is so WOW**

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**BARGAINS GALORE:** Find unique treasures at SoWa Open Market on Saturday and Sunday at 540 Harrison Ave.



# SoWa shines as mecca for smart shoppers

By **TENLEY WOODMAN**

**M**aybe you've been looking to buy furniture but you've been putting it off.

Your wardrobe could use some spring flavor.

And, of course, you'll need something to eat.

Skip the mall and step into the fresh air.

The SoWa arts and media district could be your one-stop shop for home decor, clothing and fresh food this summer.

The al fresco shopping season begins Saturday at the SoWa Open Market and the newly created SoWa Antiques Market and SoWa Food and Produce Market, between 500 and 540 Harrison Ave. in the South End.

"It's not just a crafts show. When people first hear about it they may think it is a flea market, and it's not," said Chris Masci, director of SoWa Open Market.

SoWa stands for the densely packed artist studios and businesses located



south of Washington Street.

The three markets fall under SoWa Sundays, a weekly promotion of the neighborhood that runs through mid-October.

"I think (in recent years) what everyone in this country is looking for is something that is not homogenized. What they are looking for now is the raw element, the real thing," said John Kiger, director of leasing for GTI Inc., which provides the space for the open markets.

There are no mass-produced trinkets here.

The open market (540 Harrison Ave.) is in its sixth year. It features clothing, jewelry and art from independent designers, as well as a small farmers

market that sells only locally grown fruits and vegetables.

More than 140 vendors are expected this weekend.

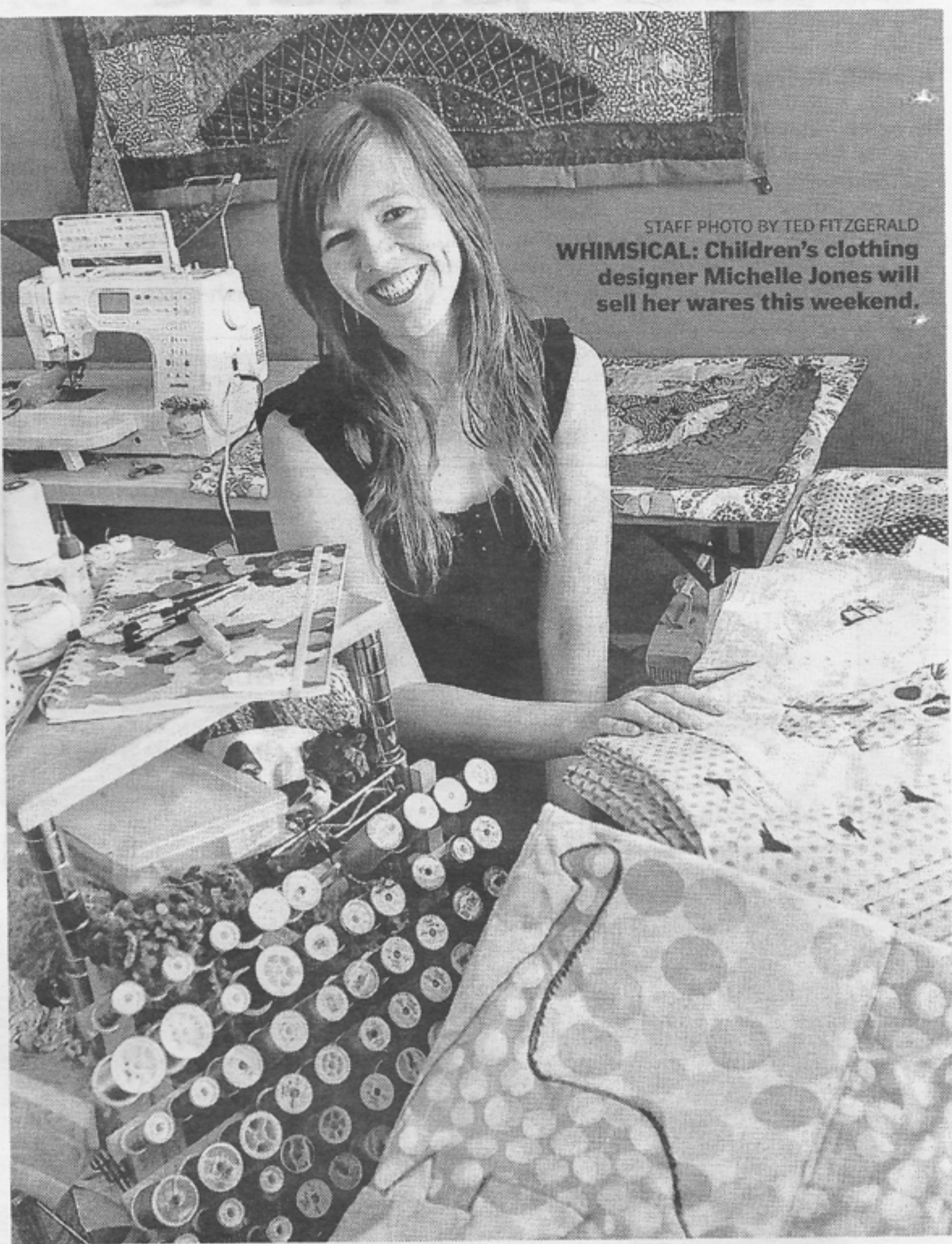
"It is the place to see the new thing. It's a fashion-forward sort of environment," said Michelle Jones, a returning vendor and children's clothing designer.

"It's a great, friendly place where you are meeting other artists," said Becky O'Neil, who has been selling her handmade bags and purses at SoWa for five years.

"I have always thought that Boston needs a market like the great markets in Europe. After all, we are a world-class city," said Marvin Getman, director of the new antiques market.

You can find antiques in the former trolley barn at 540 Harrison Ave. Getman said collectors and curious shoppers can find items ranging from \$5 to \$10,000.

Russo's, a specialty grocery store in Watertown, sells artisan breads, seasonal produce, cut flowers, plants and gardening materials at



STAFF PHOTO BY TED FITZGERALD  
**WHIMSICAL:** Children's clothing designer Michelle Jones will sell her wares this weekend.

500 Harrison Ave.

"It really feels like a little piece of New York or Paris. It's very professional," O'Neil said.

— [twoodman@bostonherald.com](mailto:twoodman@bostonherald.com)

**SoWa Open Market, SoWa Antiques Market and SoWa Food and Produce Market, 500-540 Harrison Ave. (South End), Saturday and Sunday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sundays through Oct. 25, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. [sowaopenmarket.com](http://sowaopenmarket.com) or [sowasundays.com](http://sowasundays.com). Parking at 365 and 500 Albany St. and 38 Wareham St. Admission is free.**



**LOAFING AROUND:** Get artisan bread for less dough at SoWa Food and Produce Market.

## More fun in the sun

The folks behind SoWa Open Market also help orchestrate artisan and produce markets in Mashpee and Providence throughout the summer. As with SoWa, parking and admission are free.

■ Mashpee Open Market, Mashpee

Commons. Fridays, July 3-Sept. 4, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., [mashpeeopenmarket.com](http://mashpeeopenmarket.com).

■ Providence Open Market, Lippitt Park, Providence. May 23, 30; June 6, 13, 20; Sept. 12, 19, 26; Oct. 3, 10, 17; 10 a.m.-4 p.m., [providenceopenmarket.com](http://providenceopenmarket.com).