



(left and centre)
Pigeonhole's Cabin
Fever cafe and (right)
main shopfront.



DOUBLE TAKE

Boutiques are beating the retail slump by going above and beyond to offer customers far more than the traditional shopping experience.

FORGET THE bookstore/coffee shop concept. Complimentary wi-fi? So 2011. When it comes to the retail shopping experience, customers want more. And boutiques are heeding their call, offering their patrons spaces in which to socialise, be entertained — and even learn.

Emma Soup in Newcastle, NSW (523 Hunter St; www.emmasoup.com.au) was opened by designer Emma Taylor in 2010, who opened the space as a store and art gallery to showcase local talent. The gallery itself also becomes a stage for touring musicians as well as a venue for the occasional film screening. “I look at the duo-concept store like a power couple feeding off each other, but still keeping it’s sense of self and speciality,” Emma says.

Meanwhile, Dagmar Rousset in Melbourne (157 Gertrude St, Fitzroy; +61 3 9419 2200; dagmarrousset.com) is

a boutique by day, moonlighting as an exhibition space and French language school at night, where classes are taught by owner, Julia Pound. “Retail is often boring and soulless on its own. I think the addition of an experiential component raises the profile of the store,” she says.

It’s a sentiment shared on the West Coast, too. Pigeonhole (Bon Marche Arcade, 80 Barrack St, Perth; +61 8 9221 9837; www.pigeonhole.com.au) is a boutique selling all manner of vintage fashion and quirky bric-a-brac. The attached cafe, Cabin Fever, has become a communal space for exhibitions as well as crochet and photography classes, and even vintage styling workshops. “I’ve always had a firm belief people want to be part of something, part of a community,” says Pigeonhole’s owner, Johann Kim. “This is how I’ve developed my business.”



(left to right) Dagmar Rousset's
shopfront doubles as exhibition
space; Julia teaches a French class.



HIGH-ALTITUDE STYLE

Last-minute packing has never been so easy thanks to this clever case.

Every now and then, a product comes along that makes you wonder where it’s been all your life. It’s hard to believe this stylish little vessel — officially known as The Shirt Sleeve — holds a spare shirt or garment and toiletries, and still leaves room for your iPad. Have one ready to go for a last-minute interstate trip, and you’ll be left with more time to network in the lounge. \$199; www.shirtsleeve.com.au.



TOUCH OF CHANEL

The label celebrates its classic couture with a new exhibition.

Since Coco Chanel created her little black jacket in 1954, it has stood the test of time. To celebrate, *The Little Black Jacket* hits Sydney this month, a collection of photos of fashionable types wearing the jacket, captured by Karl Lagerfeld. Not in Sydney? You can still purchase the accompanying tome. From 27 October to 11 November, 13 Hickson Rd, Walsh Bay; www.thelittleblackjacket.chanel.com.

Words: Rebecca Haddad