



Happy Threads

Stepping into the whimsical world of SKIF.

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PHOTOS BY ATTILIO D'AGOSTINO

In the heart of The Hill, among some of St. Louis' top dining destinations, lies an unmarked building a block wide with whited-out windows. While the outside is rather nondescript in comparison to The Hill's motley style, inside is an eclectic world of its own: the home of SKIF International.

SKIF has been a staple of the 'made in St. Louis' movement since its launch in 1994 by designer Nina Ganci, whose vision and early investment in fashion in STL created a thriving, collaborative design studio that specializes in knitwear. The space serves several purposes. It's a home base of operations and manufacturing for the internationally successful SKIF-branded knitwear line that is sold in well over 300 boutiques, an incubator for emerging St. Louis artists and designers like Michael Drummond, DJ Kennedy

and Qun Liu and a retail store where St. Louis shoppers can snag the latest and greatest by SKIF and friends just feet from where the garments are created.

The line consists of easy and creative pieces that showcase the artisanal spirit of Ganci and crew. The garments are free-spirited in style and in their nature—unsized, undone. "Everyone is a sweater designer for SKIF," Ganci has said. "Once you wear it, it's your design and distinctive to your style."

Inside, the spirit is creative. The vibe: good—very good for the many local artisans who head there every day to craft the thousands of pieces a month that make their way into the closets of some of the most fashionable (New York Fashion Week founder Fern Mallis is a customer).

The buzz of knitting machines marks the territory. Original artwork—much by notable 'Friends of SKIF,' including honorary resident artist DJ Kennedy—creates a colorful and eclectic backdrop. And racks upon racks of merchandise—from signature wide-leg trousers to patched jackets and knitwear of all types—fill the spaces.

For the creatives who work out of the space, the vibes are more than just good—they're inspiring.

"I love to work in a space with other designers," says Liu, whose personal studio and showroom are located inside SKIF. "We share information and technique and encourage each other."

Read more about SKIF online at ALIVEmag.com and at skifo.com.