

Part 1

# Up close and personal with Barbara Hulanicki

The wonder woman of fashion and design

HAROLD LEIGHTON

You might remember when I first wrote my introduction in The Epoch Times earlier this year. The years I described were at the time when my wife, Maxine, had her boutique in the Hampstead area of London, and she was going back and forth to Paris buying her French clothes from Sonia Rykiel, Chloe, Daniel Hechter, and other lines of the day. Maxine's boutique was above my hairdressing salon on High Street in Hampstead and was five miles from Biba, the Barbara Hulanicki boutique on Kensington Church Street.

Today I would like to introduce you to Barbara Hulanicki, one of London's greatest fashion icons from the Swinging Sixties.

London was the liberated city of Europe at that time. For fashion there was Barbara Hulanicki, Mary Quant, and Jean Muir—all wonderfully talented creative young women, all fashion icons in their own right.

The music had the Beatles, The Stones, Dusty Springfield, and Lulu. Hair had the incomparable Sassoon, art was by David Hockney, Nicky Butler made his jewelry designs, and a string of great photographers included David Bailey, Terry Donovan, Barry Lategan, and Norman Parkinson. And, of course, we had the two great models: Jean Shrimpton and Twiggy.

Jean was then linked to David Bailey, which created so much national and international news. What excitement, what press, and what a life it was. Twenty years after the war, London was really buzzing with so much young talent.

This creative era showed women how to dress. Wearing a miniskirt, and with a Sassoon haircut—this was fashion at its best, and the rage in London was going around the world.

Dressing symbolized the liberation of women, and they looked for new ways to express themselves. Sex and smoking pot was in! Fashion de-



LOGO DECO: The logo for BIBA store in London in 1960s and '70s. COURTESY OF BARBARA HULANICKI

signers like Barbara Hulanicki lifted the hemlines way above the knee. This was the time of the psychedelic look and Flower Power, with London swinging and leading the way like no other city in Europe.

Barbara's life has brought her many ups and downs. She married Stephen Fitz-Simon in 1961, and they opened Biba in 1964. After a great run, like many things in life, sadness came with the murder of her father in Jerusalem, and then the loss of her husband who died of cancer in 1997. He was the love of her life.

Now, 30 years after the British fashion revolution ebbed in the '70s, Barbara is still sought after for her fashion and interior design work. She is designing clothes for the age group she left way back in the U.K., too young to know her or understand what this fuss is all about.

Again Barbara's name is in most U.K. national papers, and her clothes are in all the fashion magazines. It's like a rerun but with 2009 style. Her clothes from her Biba boutique can fetch thousands of dollars, when the original price was around \$15.00. Her new designs, jackets, T-shirts, and dresses offer such great colors—duck-egg blue, coral orange, and bright blue—and her accessories, a

line of hand bags, and scarves that are covered with her original prints, are all at great prices from around \$40 to \$300.

Barbara's designs look as young and fresh as they did so many years ago. She says that 40 years ago nothing was designed for the teenager like it is today. She feels that this time around, small designer companies are the in thing as it is cheaper to promote a smaller company against a Prada or DKNY.

Barbara's designs are also being used by Chris Blackwell, the boss of Island Records, who owns a group of hip retreats in the Caribbean. She travels to London and L.A. for her clients on a very regular basis, enjoying every minute of every day.

Her office now is in South Beach, Florida, where she designs for one of London's top companies, Topshop (the same group that has the Kate Moss fashion line). She is also designing and consulting for an L.A.-based major apparel company and furniture designer.

Barbara is energetic but soft-spoken, always dressed in black with her large sun glasses (which was her look way back), and her white-blonde bob haircut. Her office is small by U.S. comparisons and her "team" is a young lady named Likrish. It's amazing, when you think of what she does and how much she gets done.

For many years there has been talk of a musical, "Biba," about her life. Barbara says that if it ever gets made, Polish-born Meryl Streep could follow on her "Mamma Mia!" triumph by taking the lead role. "The costumes would be gorgeous," says Barbara, "I can see them in my head!"

Next week: Barbara's design beginning

Harold Leighton started in the beauty industry in London and now lives in Boca Raton, FL, and writes about beauty and interesting people. He can be reached at [hleighton@bellsouth.net](mailto:hleighton@bellsouth.net).



TODAY: Barbara 2009. HAROLD LEIGHTON



POSING: A striking profile of Barbara with a foreground of flamingos. COURTESY BARBARA HULANICKI



FEEDING THE BIRDS: Barbara and penguins. COURTESY BARBARA HULANICKI

## CrosswordCrosswordCrossword

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
17				18							19			
			20				21		22					
23	24	25				26	27				28	29	30	
31					32						33			
34			35	36						37	38			
			39				40	41						
42	43	44				45					46	47	48	
49					50	51	52				53			
54					55					56	57			
					58	59				60				
61	62				63	64	65				66	67	68	
69					70						71			
72					73						74			

- Across
- 1 Lager
  - 5 Eatable
  - 10 Abundant
  - 14 Mammal
  - 15 Type of acid
  - 16 Chances of winning
  - 17 Surrounded by water on 3 sides (pl.)
  - 19 Fatigue
  - 20 Compass point
  - 21 Commander of "Deep Space Nine"
  - 23 Alkal
  - 26 Walk stealthily
  - 28 Twitch
  - 31 Female deer
  - 32 Closefisted
  - 33 Lodge
  - 34 Arises
  - 37 Bolts
  - 38 Ill
  - 40 Scratch
  - 42 Hamlet Beacher
  - 45 American tropical tree
  - 49 Legume
  - 50 Isomeric alkane
  - 53 Roman three
  - 54 Picnic visitor
  - 55 Forest cleaning
  - 56 Element
  - 58 Vivid
  - 60 Unidentified flying object
  - 61 Citizen
  - 63 Paper fasteners
  - 69 Came out of sleep
  - 70 Got hurt by a bee
  - 71 Fail to keep
  - 72 Due
- Down
- 1 Eat
  - 2 Southwestern Indian
  - 3 Newsman Rather
  - 4 Luster
  - 5 Flower jar
  - 6 Flightless bird
  - 7 Zero
  - 8 Bayer's competitor
  - 9 Trailing
  - 10 Reserve Officers Training Corps
  - 11 Stupid
  - 12 Former president of U.S.
  - 13 East southeast
  - 18 FBI association
  - 22 Space station
  - 23 Spots
  - 24 Child
  - 25 Body of water
  - 28 Wall support
  - 27 Edge
  - 29 Writing liquid
  - 30 Central nervous system
  - 32 South southeast
  - 35 Compass point
  - 38 Dig
  - 39 KAJ part
  - 40 Walking stick
  - 41 Causic substance
  - 42 Hotel
  - 43 X
  - 44 Flat baked oatmeal
  - 45 Not nice
  - 48 Big truck
  - 47 Rio de Janeiro
  - 48 Yang's partner
  - 51 Peas
  - 52 Diamond weight units
  - 58 American Football Conference (abbr.)
  - 57 Dinner breads
  - 59 Fibbed
  - 60 Suggest
  - 61 Pair
  - 62 In what manner
  - 64 Place
  - 65 East northeast
  - 66 Promissory note
  - 67 Pressure unit
  - 68 Scene
- www.CrosswordWeaver.com

## Victoria's Design District 'encompasses a lifestyle'

By BRETT FEATHERSTONE  
Epoch Times Staff

VICTORIA—At this time of year in particular, famous shopping zones such as London's Oxford Street or Rodeo Drive in Los Angeles are all aglow. But in downtown Victoria, with its quaint old-fashioned street lights, a unique area stretching six square blocks can make you forget about Rodeo's glitz.

It is the Design District, and it accommodates a variety of businesses including restaurants, hair salons, a boutique art hotel, and home stores that specialize in styles from modern cutting edge to old-world European to locally hand-crafted.

"You can pretty much find anything here. It's a very historic area and very unique," says Pamela Robert, director of the group of 24 merchants located within Victoria's downtown between Government Street, the Inner Harbour, and Yates and Chatham.

"The Design District is a great attraction. It encompasses a lifestyle," Robert says. "It's an eclectic group that offers everything you could ask for. Ocean River Sports offers outdoor sports, then you can enjoy entertainment, then there's all the eclectic merchants."

These merchants have their finger on the pulse of what's happening in the design world.



Design District member Miroirs offers an abundance of custom made and restored mirrors. BRETT FEATHERSTONE/EPOCH TIMES

Inside Out Homestore is offering a new and unusual service to people moving into Victoria's new condos: they will purchase, deliver, clean, and set up everything needed to move into a fully furnished, custom-decorated condo. The price for all this tedious legwork? An affordable \$600.

Dig This, a garden and home accessories store, has experienced an increase in business in the last three years from families interested in growing their own food and sharing plant cultivation with their children.

"We've seen lots more people buy furniture for their patio in the summers. Instead of traveling, people are using their yards

and entertaining," says proprietor Terry Wickstrom. Victorians can design their landscapes with what may be the best selection of seeds in the city at Dig This.

Another member store, Miroirs, in large permanent lettering across its heritage window panes claims to have "The Most Beautiful Mirrors in the World."

"It's our service that's the best," insists resident designer James Chief. "We're more like a destination no place like it. It's a lot of fun."

Since the inception of the Design District three years ago, "it's been amazing," Chief says. "We've made brochures and done ads. Now we have the same lamp standards [as the rest of downtown]," pointing to the street lamp outside. "We had nothing before."

Robert and the other merchants have brought about other improvements in the district, such as increased security, pedestrian crossings, a new harbour ferry stop, and green spaces.

"We're more like a destination now. Tours come through. It's fantastic," says Chief.

But the best part of the Design District is that "all the different businesses are so complimentary. We send people to each other. It's so nice."

Victoria's Design District will soon be getting its first condo development at 601 Herald. "It's very exciting and will change the face of this neighbourhood," says Robert.