

MY LOVE AFFAIR WITH...MARTA?

BY RACHAEL MADDUX

Welcome (back)
to Buckhead,
Kevin Rathbun!

A review of KR SteakBar

OPEN HOUSE

A Sneak Peek at
Modern Atlanta's
Fab Home Tour

Atlanta

Hidden Lakes

THE BEST GEORGIA LAKES YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF

Paradise Garden

The bizarre odyssey to save
Howard Finster's legacy

(You could be
here in two hours.
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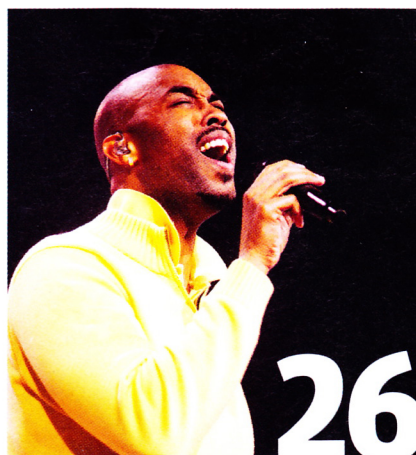
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THE ENDURING CULT OF
COCA-COLA
AN EXCERPT

Atlanta

6.13 DEPARTMENTS



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SHOPPING
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PICNIC BASKETS

arbiter

*Resplendent
Recycling*

Vintage saris
inspire lush home
accessories,
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GLOBAL GOODS

Worthy Wraps

A Decatur designer's entrepreneurial mission

IN AN EAST LONDON MARKET, Jen Soong first fell in love with a sari, a deep indigo silk sprinkled with gold flowers. Indian and South Asian cultures often use the elegantly wrapped garments for celebratory occasions, so the vibrant colors may be flecked with intricate metallic threads. Soong, a freelance journalist who traveled often, was soon collecting saris, batik prints, and exotic textiles from Thailand, Uganda, and Zambia.

When Soong, thirty-seven, decided to make a career change last year, she started a company that recycles used saris into accessories such as pillows and scarves. But having reported on many nonprofits and fair trade industries, the Atlanta-based writer also wanted her new venture to be a socially conscious one and chose to support the burgeoning local refugee community. "I was particularly moved by this cause because as the daughter of immigrants, I believe everyone deserves the opportunity for a fresh beginning," says Soong, whose parents are Chinese.

Soong named her company SOMA Goods—"SO" for "sewing," or "threading together a brighter future," and "MA" for "mother of invention." Through word of mouth and an email campaign, she has collected some 100 donated saris. She also transforms new and vintage saris, hand-blocked African batiks, and Japanese kimonos. A portion of company profits goes to nonprofits serving local refugees, and Soong also employs two sisters from Afghanistan and a woman from Iraq as independent contractors. "Because I wanted to create goods that are global in thinking but locally made, it was only fitting that the seamstresses who make them come from every corner of the world," she says.

One sari produces six to ten large pillows or up to twenty smaller ones. All designs are limited editions and incorporate sturdy fabrics like linen or cotton to create functional pieces of art. SOMA Goods sells its products at Decatur's Trinity Mercantile & Design Co., trunk shows, and online, for \$65 to \$150. somagoods.com —DANA HAZELS SEITH

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