

NANA & BIRD

Where: Tiong Bahru Commons, 79 Chay Yan Street, 01-02 (enter from Yong Siak Street)

Open: Saturdays and Sundays, 11am to 7pm. On weekdays, call 9117-0430 to make an appointment. Visit www.nanaandbird.com for details

It might be tricky to locate this boutique, which is tucked away in a back alley in Tiong Bahru, but it is well worth your while.

Housed in what co-owner Tan Chiew Ling (left in photo), 31, says used to be somebody's bedroom, the 430 sq ft hole-in-the-wall boutique is a treasure trove of quirky clothing and accessories. The 20 or so indie brands are sourced from cities such as Shanghai, London and New York.

Prices range from \$50 for a ring to \$700 for a silk dress.

The location is a perfect fit for the store's philosophy, says Ms Tan.

"Just like how shoppers get a sense of satisfaction from discovering our boutique, we take pride in discovering obscure and upcoming designers."

The three-month-old boutique started out as a pop-up store in May 2010. Ms Tan and her business partner, Ms Georgina Koh (right in



PHOTOS: TERRENCE LIM, NANA & BIRD, 5:10

photo), also 31, wanted to "convert our passion for travelling and shopping into a business".

The pop-ups were held at Ms Koh's flat in Tiong Bahru once or twice a month and were attended by 30 to 50 customers each time through word-of-mouth.

Encouraged by the good response, they opened a permanent boutique nearby in September last year. But as the former schoolmates still hold full-time jobs, they have taken to opening the shop only on weekends.

Ms Tan, a creative services director at an ad agency, is based in Shanghai and returns to Singapore once a month for two to three days. Ms Koh is a freelance marketing consultant based here.

Ms Tan also runs the Nana & Bird pop-up in the French Concession area in Shanghai (No. 1417 Huai Hai Road), which will open till May.

Story behind the name:

"Nana" is the nickname of Ms Koh, while "Bird" is the pet name of Ms Tan because she "talks a lot and loves to sing".

URBAN'S PICKS

This chain, leather and python skin shoulder bag by Los Angeles label Heirloom is great for adding colour and texture to simple outfits. Bag, \$480



These fun leather clutches (above) by Los Angeles-based designer Marie Turnor look like regular brown paper bags and are sure-fire icebreakers. Clutches, from \$280



This range of hand-printed silk pieces (left) by Irish designer Natalie B. Coleman is a hit with fashion insiders. Dress, \$655

5:10

Where: 49B Kreta Ayer Road

Open: Mondays to Saturdays, 12 to 8pm; public holidays, 12 to 6pm; closed on Sundays

When she was a manager at hairdressing chain Toni & Guy, where she oversaw its hair and fashion shows, Ms Patsy Ang, 35, realised that many of the local designers she worked with were talented but lacked support.

So in December 2010, Ms Ang quit her job and opened 5:10 with two other partners to sell the works of 12 local labels, including Max Tan, Ready Made and Two of Us.

The 900 sq ft shop also stocks eight brands of accessories from countries such as Malaysia, Thailand and the United States. Prices start from \$22 for a ring to \$600 for a fur stole.

Ms Ang prefers to stock pieces from young and new designers who need support, such as local label Lucc, which launched its first collection at 5:10 in November.

Besides giving them a space to sell their pieces, she often finds herself counselling them.

"When they feel like giving up, I would advise them to find a regular job while giving their passion one last shot by finishing one last collection. I would then stock it at my store," she says.

In her free time, Ms Ang, who is single, also volunteers at their exhibitions and helps them to find hair sponsors for fashion shows and photo shoots.

Story behind the name: "It's a sign of our relationship with our customers – two high-fives make a 10. And we wanted something easy to remember," says Ms Ang.



URBAN'S PICKS

This purse by American design company Grain is made by Guatemalan women weavers using recycled fabric from traditional blouses. From \$78



Protect your smartphone with this calfskin leather pouch by Hong Kong label Zkin or use it to store essentials while on holiday. \$149



Keep warm and snug with this luxe fox fur stole by local brand Lucc. From \$477

