

M

Milwaukee's Lifestyle Magazine

2010 INSIDER'S EDITION

»» Architectural gems, like the MAM's Calatrava addition, set the standard for class and style in a chic city with the heart of a small town.



Deanna Inniss Retail Revolutionary

Deanna Inniss is scouting for pioneers. And the retail recruiter for the Milwaukee Downtown Business Improvement District believes they're out there. She's talking with retailers who want to bring something new, unique and exciting to downtown Milwaukee. Where some see empty storefronts, she's looking at a vibrant future.

Love at First Sight: More than seven years ago, when Kohl's Department Stores recruited her from New York, Inniss spent her first morning in town running along the lakefront. In that 90 minutes, she ran past the shoreline, the mansions along Lake Drive and the city's mix of historic and contemporary architecture. That's all it took.

What Works Downtown: Independent retailers who understand it's not just about the product, it's the shopping experience that counts, Inniss says. "People want to know where their things are made, they're interested in the story. Urban revitalization is happening because people want something different." The growing "buy local" movement is also working in favor of independents, she says.

Seeding the Streetscape: Pointing to success stories like the Third Ward and Brady Street, Inniss says it just takes one risk-taking retailer to spark excitement and convince the next few entrepreneurs to open their doors. The city and the BID are now offering an incentive package for building owners and business people to make those first steps easier.

Moving Targets: Inniss says she's looking for retailers who will offer an experience unique to the market and will complement downtown Milwaukee's existing assets — the riverfront, the cultural climate and the architecture. "I'm looking for visionaries," she says. "The ones that get it."