

# Other Events

Other types of events include product launches and concerts for clients such as the Blue Banana Market, International Female Ride Day and the English Beat.

HOT TOP  
SPECIAL SECTION

## That One Soul-Satisfying Role

Chris Stevens from *Northern Exposure*, Ian Mather from *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* Aiden Shaw from *Sex and the City* **John Corbett** from *Whering, W.Va.* Weekly recognition for his role in *Whering, W.Va.* and then, this shows country boy, justice to be recognized by the latter. "Music has always been central to my life, such as when so than acting," Corbett said on his Web site. "Acting is how I make my living. Music has always been a passion — it's something I love, something I can live without."

The most self-satisfied that shows, in Corbett's own second label, I'm Dave Navarro, ignored the country music genre with Southern rock arrangements, creative lyrics and Nashville music of artistry. Along with his bandmates gifted in country and rock music backgrounds, Corbett's voice keeps that seductive style and casual tone we have come to know and love but can stretch those singing chops to a film-soundly looking level.

Since hitting the music scene, Corbett and his band have opened for such groups as ZZ Top, Charlie Sheen and Black Sabbath, but on March 27 they headline at Sunset Station, when Corbett gets to bring his real passion to the people. — KICK MUYKATO  
SUNSET STATION, 7 P.M. MARCH 26, \$25 PLUS TAX, THE SHOW



## You Just Can't Stop 'Em

Blue Whaling is 34 years young, but the **English Beat** singer is still a full-on rock 'n' roller. "Things are going really well," Whaling said recently. "I'm doing 100 shows and hit the radio every night, where I used to be very hot and miss."

It's been a tumultuous and eventful ride for Whaling and his influential ska revival band. The band was unstoppable from 1977 to 1983, and while they've never since been that omnipresent, the band has also never really gone away. The band has reinvented itself several times, mainly because of the performers' public life agreements. But even The Police found a way to get along, so keep an eye out if Whaling and his one-time band mates reunite in the coming years.

BY CLAUDIO RACA  
HOURS OF BLUES, 7 P.M. DOWNS, MARCH 4, \$10-\$20 PLUS TAX AND FEE, THE SHOW



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Vertical  
(NON-BLEED)

Las Vegas Magazine – English Beat

MY TORONTO

## Blue Banana arrives

A Toronto contractor with a taste for art has opened what might be described as Toronto's first arts mall.

Michael Horowitz held a grand opening last weekend for Blue Banana Market in Kensington Market. The store is part gallery, part market; an eclectic showcase of artists who may rent as much or as little space in the converted warehouse as they wish.

"I always felt that I'd like to own an art gallery, but thought it might be a better idea to combine it with retail," he says. "For the last three years I've been conceiving the concept and trying to come up with how it should work."

Mr. Horowitz describes the old food warehouse on Augusta Avenue as a "disaster" when he first took it on. Wanting it to fit in with the surrounding buildings, he refaced it with natural clay brick

and added retractable awnings at the front.

Each small kiosk, wall or table is individually decorated, displayed, and priced by the artist, who can then leave the sales to the Blue Banana staff.

Wares include vintage door-knobs converted to wine stoppers, hand-made Italian wool hats, custom-designed Greek and Roman-style sculptures, and Yixing teapots, which absorb the flavour and scent of a tea after repeated use.

More traditional art pieces, such as ceramics and paintings, hang on the store's spare walls.

"Most artists do the festivals in the summer, and in the winter they have nowhere to go," Mr. Horowitz says. "It's nice for them to be able to showcase their work year-round."

Amy Smithers, National Post



PETER REDMAN / NATIONAL POST

National Post – Blue Banana Market

HOT SHOP TORONTO

## An indoor market with outdoor appeal

**BLUE BANANA MARKET**  
250 Augusta Ave.  
416-594-6600  
www.bluebananamarket.com

BY YUKI HAYASHI

Not everyone is a diehard shopper. Given a choice between trudging in fine leather boots during slushy February street shopping or hitting dreary post-holiday malls, many of us would rather stay home with *Big Love* reruns, thanks. But there is another option.

Blue Banana Market, a recent arrival on the Kensington Market scene, offers indoor shopping in a nifty modern bazaar environment. "Kensington Market is such an eclectic, diverse place, with people from all over the world," says Blue Banana owner Michael Horowitz, who wanted the market's appeal to extend beyond the hipster elite.

Blue Banana, it turns out, isn't a store per se. It's actually 80-plus stalls under one roof (though you won't notice this at first since the booths feature small cards with artist bios rather than signage).

The merchants, who rent booth and shelf space, sell everything from the requisite giftware, jewellery, clothing and accessories to the more arcane: handmade West African drums (\$99 to \$427), architectural salvage from the Mediterranean, and Technicolor-yet-eco-friendly sorghum- and-bamboo "lucky" brooms from Thailand (\$10 to \$25).

But there's lots for 100-milers, too. "We also wanted to have a strong focus on local talent, designers, importers and artisans from the local area as well as the greater GTA," Horowitz says.

Shoppers may recognize the mod dresses of Marmalade (\$60 to \$175), which closed its old Kensington Market storefront to move to Blue Banana, or the zany kid's wear of Kingly (who also maintain a shop at Queen West and Davenport). Other local notables include shabby-chic furniture refurbishers Rustic and Imaginative Spark, makers of hand-painted nursery-appropriate canvases (\$50 to \$70).

Blue Banana hires the sales staff and processes all sales



Toronto's Blue Banana Market offers both local and worldly goods. FRED LUM/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

transactions in return for a cut of sale proceeds, plus rent.

Merchants come in only to restock their booths. The benefit to them is they can spend their time working their magic, not staffing a shop.

For the consumer, it means you don't have to worry about looking cheap for not buying any of the dozen hats you tried on.

The chances of leaving empty-handed are slim to nil, though. While the mishmash of vendor offerings requires attentive browsing, shopping in Kensington has always been about the thrill of the hunt anyway.

A recent visit yielded gorgeous caftans, wrap skirts and dresses in Indian or African prints (average \$35 from Saphire, designed in Toronto, made in India); sexy little vintage-style aprons by Kitsch N Glam (\$39 to \$60, featured

on *Ugly Betty* last season); artisanal chocolates (\$7.50 from Winnipeg's Sweet Truth); and a huge fair-trade food, crafts and clothing contingent.

Horowitz and his store manager screen all prospective merchants. "We've turned a couple people down, who wanted to retail things like alarm clocks and running shoes," he says.

"This is the same community, after all, that hounded Nike out of the 'hood when it opened a sneaker shop in 2002."

At about 7,000 square feet, Blue Banana is still filling out as new merchants move in. Horowitz also has plans to open a coffee bar within a couple months. And when the weather warms up in spring, the huge sliding doors to the sidewalk will stay open to give the market an outdoorsy feel.

Special to *The Globe and Mail*

Globe & Mail – Blue Banana Market