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Clothing & Accessories Article

A La Folie

Lingerie, Passionately

By [Jialin Luh](#) (Dec 07, 2006) [ShareThis](#)

- [A La Folie](#)
1816 Fourth street, Berkeley, CA 94710
510 845 1616

It's no secret that lingerie can work wonders in the bedroom, but quality, beautiful undergarments are also essential to the confident, self-indulging woman's wardrobe. Nafissa Tayebi's A La Folie serves up delicious concoctions in silks and laces that cover the spectrum from innocent to sizzling; prepare to be enamored. Though A La Folie is across the bridge in Berkeley's Fourth Street shopping district, the splendors that beckon should inspire a field trip for women who are tired of shopping for lingerie under the stony airbrushed stares of Adriana Lima and Giselle Bundchen.

It began at the age of 13: with the gift of an exquisite brassiere, Nafissa's aunt bestowed upon her an unquenchable obsession for the best lingerie.

While in France, Nafissa could indulge her addiction with reckless abandon. When she relocated to the States eight years ago, however, she found it near impossible to find lingerie that fit without compromising aesthetics. Thus A La Folie was born.

The term “lingerie” is derived from French *lingerie* for “things made of linen”, but did not catch on as an English euphemism for scandalous “under-linen” until later. At A La Folie, you will find undergarments that are functional as well as fashionable, and for all shapes and sizes. From 32A to 42G, the shop stocks something for every day of the week, and every mood -- whether you are looking for dainty and sweet or scandalously sizzling. Nafissa has effectively adhered to her vision of providing women of all sizes a comfortable haven to shop for their most intimate apparel.

Browsing in A La Folie feels more like frolicking in a friend’s well-decorated living room than an impersonal, mass-manufactured lingerie chain store. Photos adorning the walls depict beautiful, real women rather than airbrushed waifs. As you enter, a charming armoire greets you with gorgeous silk robes, gowns, and microfiber delights. After the holidays, the upstairs of the store will be converted into a lounge area in which partners and husbands can wait while their ladies shop.

But what really sets A La Folie apart from the pack is Nafissa’s collection of Bay Area exclusives -- high-end lingerie collections you will only find at this Fourth Street location. Some exclusives include Kenzo’s French-inspired lingerie, colorful floral shortie gowns, bras, boxer briefs, camisoles and belted boy shorts; Christian Lacroix, pin-striped bustiers, matching thongs and panties, silky camisoles and briefs with bright pink bow accents; and Dessous -- a French lingerie line designed by New York-based Sophie Simmons. “Dessous” is French for “under pieces” and was inspired by the feminine style of Sophie’s grandmother and mother: delicate and beautifully embroidered pieces that were comfortable enough to wear in and out of the bedroom. This collection includes silk viscose tanks with silk embroidery, viscose panties, camisoles with chiffon embroidery and *toujours* -- cotton one-piece rompers and cotton jumper dresses.

A La Folie also stocks the most complete line of Princesse Tam Tam over all the lingerie boutiques in the Bay Area. This wildly popular line offers cotton and silk camisoles with matching boxers, chemise dresses and silky lace bras. Princesse Tam Tam’s Spring 2007 Extravagance collection just arrived last week, so make sure to stop in and take a look.

The taste of high-end lingerie here is decidedly French, which translates to high-fashion yet tasteful pieces. Ravage is another popular line of French lingerie, with some of the more bold and daring designs. A La



Folie also carries two lines by LA designers: Wendy Glez and SalomaY. The extensive collection of bras, panties, robes, camisoles, wraps and slips make A La Folie a one-stop shop for lingerie appropriate for all occasions and settings (except maybe the less vanilla S&M scenarios).



In addition to lingerie, A La Folie also offers Seattle designer Jamie Joseph's jewelry creations, as well as fragrances and beauty products for home and self. A La Folie is currently Northern California's only Jamie J stockist. These pieces "whisper to you," Nafissa says. Looking at the hand-hammered, nature-inspired pieces, it's easy to believe. The designer works only with silver, 14K gold, diamonds and semi-precious stones. Her rings are most popular, being worn by many celebrities, and many of the stones are hand-carved using patented techniques by her husband in their Seattle studio.

I Profumi di Firenze fragrance collection is just one fragrance line A La Folie carries, and is made in Florence Italy. The fragrances in this collection are inspired by 16th century formulas rumored to be related to recipes concocted for the notorious Catherine de Medici, Queen of France as the wife of King Henry II of France. I Profumi di Firenze products are packaged in hand-labeled, antiquated boxes that evoke an old-fashioned feeling. Nafissa's favorite in this line is Zenzero, a blend of white ginger and vanilla. Be on the lookout for a lecture/launch party featuring I Profumi di Firenze's distributor, who is a fountain of knowledge on the late Queen and her influence in fragrances.

Also for bath and beauty, Vie Lux offers lovely crystal baths in several fragrances inspired by travels, aptly named Capri, Istanbul, Amber, Palm Beach, etc. These fragrances are also available as candles and votives.

Over the last three years, Nafissa Tayebi has given voice to her insatiable addiction to lingerie through her boutique. One need only ask her recommendation to see her eyes light up and the excitement entering her voice to see that she is all about providing the highest quality lingerie in the most charming environment.

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