

SHOPPING IN FIVE

VIOLETTE BOUTIQUE

By Aimee Heckel

If you are looking for a new dress for a party, wedding or simply to twirl in, our favorite local store for September is hand's down Boulder's dress haven:

**Violette, 1631 Pearl St., Boulder,
303-443-3976**

This boutique opened last Mother's Day, and it is bursting with gorgeous dresses — all at reasonable prices. The average price for a dress is \$40 to \$60. And there are styles for any woman, any age (even tutus for the little ones) and any occasion: formal, trendy, beachy, twirly, vintage-inspired, casual. We're hyperventilating just thinking about it.

If walls and racks of ribbons and lace don't delight you, get this: The store is run by three generations of locals: a grandmother, her daughter and her four grandchildren.

Violette isn't limited to dresses (although we can't imagine why anyone would want to wear anything else). The shop also carries blouses, pants, bags, hats, scarves and cases of unique jewelry, some locally made.

It was nearly impossible for us to pick just five dresses to feature, but we struggled and toiled and drooled all over the store until we settled on our fave five.

And as if the dresses weren't beautiful enough, we solicited two local dancers who just opened a new aerial dance school this month to bring the gowns to new heights on the trapeze. Because softness — combined with strength — is what makes women like us so beautiful.



Renu Kansal

**First in line: Lucy Paris dress,
\$68**

Sharp and straight vertical ribbon accents balance out the flowy A-line cut and delicate camisole straps on this gown. We love the colors: robin's egg boning over a pewter blue. Renu loved modeling this dress that she couldn't part with it; she bought it on the spot.

Pair it with delicate blue rhinestone barretts, \$5, and square blue stone earrings, \$43.

**Models: Renu Kansal
and Heather Booth**

**Stylist: Angel Garcia, pinuppretty@
yahoo.com, www.pinupprettymua.com**

Photographer: Jonathan Castner

**Location: Apex Movement, 2250
Lawrence St. in Denver, www.
apexmovement.com**



**Timelessly feminine: Young Essence
dress, \$110**

The rust-colored lace overlay and thick olive green waistband gives this dress a vintage look. We paired this dress with a teal and orange bead necklace with a big rose charm, \$52.

Young Essence (www.youngessence.com) is a family-owned company based in San Francisco, Calif. Young Essence believes "In every woman lies the essence of youth, just waiting to sneak out and be that kittenish girl within" — or maybe that inner fairy floating on an aerial hoop.

All frills: Sans Souci dress, \$66

Two words: White and lace. It doesn't get more feminine than that. Yet the thick straps give this dress some umph. Dress it up with pearls (such as the multistrand we found at Violette for only \$20), or punk it out with beat up Docs and a cropped leather jacket. This dress makes us want to get married all over again, or at least sip (not red) cocktails on a cruise ship.

Heather Booth



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Maximized maxi: S-12 dress, \$84

This dress is as colorful as it is comfortable, with a polyester-Spandex mix. Front features rhinestone accents, and the T-back is knitted lace.

Light as a feather: RYU dresses, \$55 (on sale)

Butterfly print. Sheer multi-layered ruffles. Asymmetrical hems. Black lace necklines. This dress, which comes in different colors, will give you wings. Ryu is a fashionable, yet affordable, Dallas women's line.



More than a pretty face

Renu Kansal, 33, knows about beauty. Kansal is the owner of Bollywood West, a dance studio in Boulder that offers Indian dance classes. It's the first such studio in the state, and its growing popularity reflects America's growing interest in Indian popular culture.

As an extension of the studio, this month Kansal, 33, along with dancer, Heather Booth, 35, opened a new aerial dance school. They call the Cirque-style school Miraas Aerial Dance.

For Kansal, aerial dance epitomizes beauty.

"It moves me to tears, it is so beautiful," she says. "Anything that is true — pure to itself — is beautiful. Everybody finds babies so beautiful. That's because they haven't been clouded or made cynical; they are so pure in their joy. Same with animals: their purity and trueness."

Dance is a way of expressing that individual, deepest truth, she says.

You don't have to be strong or a gymnast to learn aerial dance, Kansal says. In fact, she began after having her daughter.

"It's great for addressing your fears, especially for women, and really appreciating your body — still having the ability at this age to impress yourself," Kansal says. "It's beautiful and feminine, yet strong within that gracefulness. A quiet power."

The goal is to make that strength appear effortless — a metaphor for the life of a busy modern woman, she says.

At the heart of everything Kansal does is her 2-year-old daughter, who regularly visits the studio and has been known to yell, "Mama, fall!" (Possible translation: "Mama, come down.")

"What kind of role model do you want to be?" Kansal says. "Strong, powerful, graceful? All of these are things that we need for aerial, as well as to be businesswomen. We want to show that to our daughters."

For more information, check out www.bollywoodwest.com and www.miraasaerial.com.

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