



WINE SHOP

The Urban Grape

We're done wandering around wine shops, waiting patiently for a clerk to comb his mental archives for something we'll enjoy. Urban Grape sells wine the way we like to buy it: grouped by body and intensity—not by region, grape, or cheesy categories like “fresh and fruity.” Add in a tasting machine that dispenses samples of staff favorites, and you have a shopping experience worth toasting.

► 7 BOYLSTON ST., CHESTNUT HILL, 617-232-4831, THEURBANGRAPE.COM.

CLOTHING ★ WOMEN'S

BESSIE BLUE

There's no shortage of painfully chic, designer-heavy boutiques in the western 'burbs. But this four-year-old spot manages to be both artfully fashionable and charmingly approachable—no sizing up or talking down to customers here. The place is stocked with glamorous yet fun apparel and accessories, and the stylish staffers, including owner Lee Gaston, are happy to help you translate the trends to complement your personal taste.

► 21 LEONARD ST., BELMONT, 617-489-4900, BESSIEBLUE.COM.

DAY SPA

LA RESIDENCIA SPA

You *could* go to one of those fancy spas with the stark furniture and the green apples stacked perfectly so. But when you're in need of coddling, a place that's more welcoming than antiseptic is refreshing. La Residencia, located in a renovated two-story house with shabby-chic décor, has a cozy vibe. And a day there feels less like a clinic visit and more like a day with girlfriends—girlfriends who wax, extract, and massage, that is.

► 336 ELLIOT ST., NEWTON UPPER FALLS, 617-244-2280, LARESIDENCIASPA.COM.

FARM STAND

VERRILL FARM

Okay, so maybe this 200-acre farm's retail operation isn't exactly a stand (the owners unveiled a shiny new building in 2009 after a fire leveled the original structure). But that's what makes it so convenient for food-loving Concordians, who come for Verrill's selection of homegrown seasonal produce, farm-raised grass-fed beef, and fresh-baked strawberry-plum pie—but can also check off an entire grocery list in the process.

► 11 WHEELER RD., CONCORD, 978-369-4494, VERRILLFARM.COM.

FLORIST

DERBY FARM FLOWERS & GARDENS

Basic blooms may get the job done, but why stop there? Order one of owner Barbara Popolow's spectacular bouquets—a cluster of tulips and hyacinths, perhaps?—then add in little extras, like Chapon chocolates from France, to be delivered with the stems.

► 454 MASSACHUSETTS AVE., ARLINGTON, 781-643-0842, DERBY-FARM-FLOWERS.COM.

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