

ASIA AND FRANCE

Fusion of design at Lotus Bleu

What started as an interest for interior designer Jeannie Fraise has grown into Lotus Bleu, a unique store in San Francisco's Hayes Valley.

Fraise is a world traveler and got into the habit of picking up gloriously hued textiles on her excursions. It was a venture to Vietnam that caused her interest to blossom into a business.

"There are a lot of French designers and French influence in Vietnam," she says. "They are creating beautiful things."

Many of the textiles and artwork for sale in the Hayes Street store reflect both French and Asian cultures and, like a great fusion restaurant, the accessories and art use the best from both countries to make something delicious.

Walking in, you are surrounded by bold, clear, colors that recall Paris, and delicate embroidered patterns that bring Shanghai to mind. Pillows (hand-embroidered from Vietnam, shown lower right, \$140), napkins, light fixtures and furniture are unified by great colors, superior quality and intricate details.

For example:

► Chairs from the 1950s and '60s covered in bright fabric by Robert le Heros. "This furniture has really interesting shapes, and the upholstery gives it a lot of character," Fraise says (\$450-\$1,850).

► Gorgeous, handmade lantern light fixtures from Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam. When lit, the silk fixtures impart a beautiful glow (light blue silk, shown upper right, \$680).

► Brightly colored pillows with delicate, but modern, hand embroidery (\$85).

► Place mats that are as beautiful as they are durable. "They have great colors and bold patterns, but they are practical," Fraise says. "They have been plasticized, so they are easy to clean and maintain" (\$60 for a set of four, \$90 for a set of six).

Lotus Bleu is at 327 Hayes St. (between Franklin and Gough), San Francisco. (415) 861-2700. Hours are noon to 6 p.m. Tuesday to Sunday. www.lotusbleudesign.com.

— Mary Jo Bowling

