



shop talk

The Best of All Worlds

NINA GRISCOM'S MANHATTAN BOUTIQUE EXUDES INTERNATIONAL STYLE

BY LINDSEY BROMLEY

TWO A.M. PHONE CALLS FROM HANOI AND LATE-NIGHT EMAILS FROM BOGOTA ARE RUN-OF-THE-MILL OCCURRENCES FOR STOREOWNER AND FAMED STYLE MAVEN NINA GRISCOM. SINCE OPENING HER PERSONALIZED AND UNIQUE HOME DÉCOR SHOP ON LEXINGTON Avenue last October, she has come to realize that it's all part of the job.

And to suit Griscom's well-known, well-coifed and well-groomed persona, not just any home décor items will suffice. In order to pick the perfect inventory for her shop, she set out on a succession of international trips to far-off destinations such as India, Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand, Argentina, and Ecuador. The journeys included endless hours combing through marketplaces in search of authentic exotic finds that now fill the treasure trove of Nina Griscom, Ltd.

"It's a collection of lots of odds and ends bought all over the world," she says of her handpicked antiques, decorative accents and jewelry items, all of which embrace a signature style that's truly her own. Artifacts Griscom discovered along the way include antique pre-ban ivory, a frog-skinned telephone desk, Argentinean fur blankets, coral table settings and a nickel plated lamp with tortoise shell shade.

For some, seeking out treasured items in mostly remote places would present enough cultural and language issues to create quite a quandary. But Griscom seems to be doing just fine on the communication front. "We somehow managed to overcome the language barrier," she says, with a raspy yet inviting



voice and decadent smile. "I'll have phone calls from vendors in the middle of the night who have dug up someone who speaks English and are calling from the post office in Hanoi to speak with me."

Though Griscom has always been a collector, it wasn't until a few years ago that she looked to explore her interests in a more professional sense. "I hadn't worked for a while, and I was talking with my friend Anthony Todd about what to do next," she recalls. "He loved the idea of opening a store together." As a result, the duo opened Nina Griscom/Anthony Todd in Southampton last summer, combining Todd's floral design talent with Griscom's

knack for décor and collectables. The boutique was such a success that Griscom set her sights on the Manhattan market. "Both stores have a similar sensibility," Griscom notes, "but the Southampton store is more casual."

As for how she goes about selecting items to showcase, Griscom is quick to point out that there really is no blueprint she uses to purchase merchandise. She simply attempts to snatch up pieces she finds particularly interesting or lovely. "I try not to pick things that are too predictable, or that everyone has seen," she says. "My tastes change, too, as I go along. Right now, I love French 1970s pieces that hadn't previously been my style. It's no fun finding furniture and pieces that are everyone else has."

It's also no fun, according to Griscom, to always be in the same place. She is delighted her line of business necessitates frequent jaunts around the globe. "I just love to travel," she says. "And this is as good a reason as any to do it."

Next up for Griscom is the summer launch of a scented candle creation she's developed, but beyond that she has no desire to predict the future. "I try not to look too far ahead," she says. Even so, it's a pretty safe bet that the late-night calls and international flights will not stop anytime soon. ♦