



— JENNY FENIAK, Sun

Head Case owner Sandra Mattar, right, with her sister Marlo Steenman and just a few samples of Mattar's exceptional headwear at Northlands' Derby Day last summer.

Head Case deserves a tip of the hat

Whyte Avenue shop has got you covered

GREAT LITTLE places

JENNY FENIAK



Where and when: Head Case found a great location while looking for a permanent retail space. The store is located on the third floor, above Starbucks, at 301 10368 82 Ave. It's open seven days a week — from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Wednesday and Saturdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. and from noon to 6 p.m. on Sundays. You can also find the store online at www.headcasehats.com.

Who's in charge: Sandra Mattar doesn't have a business background or clothing design experience. Prior to starting Head Case as her first retail venture, Mattar was a schoolteacher giving social studies lessons to Grade 8 students. Although it did involve some creativity, she changed directions simply as a means of pursuing an entrepreneurial career. Enjoying hats on a personal level, she realized there was a void in the Edmonton market for great hats and struck out to solve the problem. Mattar officially opened the doors of her bright store in November 2004 and so far the retail concept has been a hit.

Cool 'cause: Although Mattar is the sole owner of Head Case, she gets a helping hand from her sister and another woman at the store who not only does in-house hat repairs, but has been working to construct some of Mattar's own creative hat design ideas. With only one other retail hat designer in town, Head Case is Edmonton's only hat store and Mattar has made the most of it. The store has a great selection of headwear that's bolstered by a unique collection of jewelry and accessories. Mattar has also adopted an ethical business practice, exercising fair trade buying and supporting Canadian-made products and designers. Many of her hats are handmade, while others are imported for authenticity from countries like Greece, Italy and Nepal. Hats have been an incredible accessory through

time, coming and going with different trends. Following the sloppy grunge looks of the '90s, and with the current economic boom, fashion is having a classy revival and hats are a definite part of the scene. They're also great for special occasions and theme parties, finishing off any outfit for fun or finesse, and are the best defence against the hot summer sun. If you want a fun experience with friends, Head Case also caters at home-shopping parties, suggesting a minimum of six guests for a great evening.

Pick o' the place: Being Alberta, there is of course a selection of cowboy hats from simple straw and crocheted lids to others decorated with woven flowers and ornate beads and feathers ranging in price from \$39.95 to \$84.99 for the U-Shape "Hailey" Bailey. The widest straw-brim sun hat in the store is a model called "Jennifer," selling for \$48, or pick out a simple sun and rain hat for \$10 or less. Kangols, made with ethical practices in China, are on sale right now for \$19.99 with a wide variety from which to choose. Other good summer hats are the camo and cadet caps for \$24.95. A couple of the great handmade Canadian lines are Lillie & Cohoe and Parkhurst, which features lots of cool, comfy cottons starting with headbands for \$14.95 and ranging to unusual, colourful designs like the "Tokyo Bucket" for \$42. The Greek fishermen hats come with a certificate of authenticity for \$42 while Australian leather outback hats are \$106 and a genuine pith helmet is \$49.95. There's also an incredible collection of men's hats including Litemelt top hats and slick fedoras. Fascinators are combs or headbands decorated with elegant feathers and start at \$32.95, while other accessories like a pair of Austrian crystal earrings is \$19.95. Demonstrating the store's chic edge, it has caught onto the recent Japanese trend and is selling purses, coin bags and pendants made of vintage kimono silk ranging in price from \$18 to \$31.

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