THE GUIDE TO FINE LOCAL SHOPPING

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NOLA FASHION WEEK Oct. 13-20, Nolafw.com

When NOLA Fashion Week rolls out its runways this month, fans and industry folks should expect two big changes: an increase in the number of designers and greater access to them. Seventeen designers, five more than in previous seasons, will present their spring 2013 looks from Oct. 13 to 20. The majority of the shows will be held at one central venue: the Saratoga building at 916 Lafayette St., a building with a backstory as colorful as some of the collections. "It's been a lot of things, but I think the most interesting thing was an old brothel," said Andi Eaton, who co-founded NOLA Fashion Week with Nick Landry. The Saratoga, which currently is an office space being converted into a restaurant, will be the backdrop for four nights of shows. The building will have a 15-seat media room and a rooftop VIP lounge open between the shows scheduled an hour apart. For fashion lovers, the week offers a chance to dip a stiletto into the professional as well as the playful sides of the industry, with workshops and other events. Designers will have the opportunity to meet with buyers and the media at a pop-up office space. "A lot of people are working out of their home, and this gives them a professional setting," Eaton said. The Fashion Market, at the Ogden Museum of Southern Art, also returns, providing a chance to buy pieces directly from emerging designers. Among the designers making their debut in the shows this season

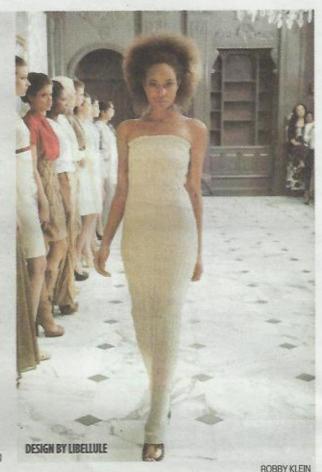
will be Heather Williams of Tallulah's Designs, a Birmingham. Ala.-based label that makes hand-sewn women's dothing and accessories from redained materials. Williams has been a past NOLA Fashion Market participant, and Eaton said she's happy to see her evolve. "Our mission has always been about supporting the up-and-coming southern bred and based designers."

For the full NOLA Fashion Week schedule and ticket information: nolafw.com.

- L. Kasimu Harris









KEVIN DELEON