



# Old L.A. News

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## DOMINIQUE DEROUEN'S "SOFT HUMANS VINTAGE"



Derouen with an Ellie Levy original.

Article & Photos by Christopher Nyerges

Just off the bustling traffic of Highland Park's Figueroa, on the side street of Avenue 58, you can find Dominique Derouen's shop, **Soft Humans Vintage**, which sells an assortment of vintage used clothing, vintage kitchenware, and music.

During the last three years since he moved into 112 North Avenue 58, he's developed a near-cult following of customers who like his brand of clothing and wares, the musical atmosphere of his shop, and his twice-a-month "flea market."

Originally from Gilroy, California, Derouen has lived in the Bay Area and other locations before moving into the Highland Park area. He began to run restaurants in the Silver Lake area, such as Sawyer and Kettle Black. He also opened a restaurant in Topanga Canyon.

But clothing had always been his hobby, especially vintage clothing. "I sell mostly used clothing, with mostly natural fabrics," he explains. "I like the fashions of the late '80s and early '90s, the mall culture," he says. He describes his cloth-

ing selections as what a teen might find going to the mall in the 1980s. Derouen also sells Japanese designer clothing and some rare items.

"This is a Miles Davis original," he says, smiling, holding up a black shirt with a Miles Davis print on it.

Where does his vintage clothing come from? "People sell me clothing, and I also hunt it out," explains Derouen. He also buys some at estate sales and sometimes buys in bulk.

When Derouen began his Soft Humans Vintage shop, he planned to have about half clothing, half music memorabilia, and kitchenware. But as things have progressed, he's selling maybe 75% clothing currently.

His kitchenware include some originals from local Highland Park artists, such as pieces from ceramicist Ellie Levy.

He also sells vintage vinyl records, and music is always on the radio when you're in the shop.

When Derouen decided to open a shop in Highland Park, he was looking closer to the York and Figueroa intersection but found a shop on Avenue 58 available. His shop had originally been designed as a dental clinic, and over the years, it has been a Zumba dance studio and a Christian church before that. Located on Avenue 58, where the Tuesdays, Old L.A. Certified Farmers Market occurs, Derouen said the current site is ideal for his business. Tuesday is one of his consistently better sales days because of the shoppers from the Farmers Market.

But Saturday is typically his busiest day because twice a month, on the first and third Saturdays of the month, he uses the



**Security**

**Q1 2023**

|                          |       |
|--------------------------|-------|
| Patrol calls for service | 34    |
| Patrol BID contacts      | 1,578 |
| Public contacts          | 748   |
| Vehicle patrol hours     | 1,446 |



**Maintenance**

**Q1 2023**

|                        |        |
|------------------------|--------|
| Trash Bags (removed)   | 2,632  |
| Trash weight lbs       | 60,536 |
| Graffiti tags removed: | 365    |
| Bulky items:           | 222    |
| Pressure Washing hrs   | 24     |



Derouen with a Miles Davis-painted shirt.

private parking lot to his immediate north to conduct a little flea market. There, he has a DJ with music, serves food, and various vendors sell potted plants, other goods, and his vintage clothing.

“The Saturday Vintage Craft Market has proven to be very successful,” says Derouen, “and we get our biggest crowds at that event.”

Shoppers sometimes assume that his business name, “Soft Humans Vin-

tage,” describes soft clothing. “Actually,” explains Derouen, “Soft Humans was the name of a band I was very fond of. They were British musicians, and the name Soft Humans was short-lived, as they changed their name to Cleaners from Venus.” Derouen also likes to think of the name of his store as referring to creative and sensitive types of people.

Soft Human Vintage is located at 112 N. Avenue 58.

Open Tuesdays through Saturdays from Noon to 5 p.m.

Phone is (310) 722-9449

He can be found on Facebook and Instagram by searching for SoftHumansShop.

Derouen in front of his shop.



## NFA Goals

- Provide Educational, Cultural, Artistic, Charitable, Social Service and public improvements.
- Increase economic well being for property owners, employees and businesses.
- Provide improvements and activities to assist in economic and commercial revitalization.
- Provide clean, safe and beautification programs to improve economic prosperity for property owners, businesses and the community.
- Bring about investment of public and private capital within the Business Improvement District and surrounding area for public benefit and charitable purposes.

## Mission Statement

North Figueroa Association is the management organization for the Highland Park Business Improvement District and is an advocate for the North Figueroa Property owners by empowering and aiding in the stimulation of growth, development, revitalization and maintaining the historic value of the North Figueroa Corridor.

The North Figueroa Assoc. will support an environment in which stakeholders can conduct commerce, live and play.

## North Figueroa Assn. Board of Directors

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Contact: 323-255-5030

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## Annual Budget 2023

|                                   |                     |               |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Public Right of Way               | \$376,854.64        | (65%)         |
| Corporate Identity & Organization | \$110,000.00        | (35%)         |
| <b>Total Annual Budget</b>        | <b>\$486,854.64</b> | <b>(100%)</b> |

## How You Can Help

You can help keep the district clean, safe and pedestrian friendly by:

- Making sure your businesses do not place their trash in the sidewalk receptacles. These receptacles are for pedestrians only.
- Keep windows & awnings clean
- Take down any old, torn or faded signs or banners.
- Sweep your store front. While the crews sweep the streets, they do not sweep private property
- Post store hours in windows.
- Call security with concerns. The number is: 800-350-1944. Report to LAPD, as well.