

# Style



**P**est's main thoroughfare before neighbouring Andrásy opened up, Király utca, is still the main drag for decor in this city. For the last decade or more, fancy shops have been opening up here, displaying superior interiors in their windows.

They were encouraged by the commercial redevelopment of the Gozdsu Udvar, an atmospheric covered passageway that's been around since this street was the hub of the Jewish Quarter. The city also chipped in to assist the development effort, funding pedestrianisation of a good stretch of Király utca. The street's rejuvenation continued unabated until Budapest's speedy growth was slowed by the downturn in the world property market.

Now the shops on the street have banded together to keep 'King Street' a location fit for royalty. Their cooperation includes street-wide parties, with the next one scheduled for April 21: shops along Király utca will stay open late, encouraging a party atmosphere.

'It wasn't until about five or six years or so ago that activity here started dwindling,' explains Klára Landwehr, the founder of Király utca Design utca, a grass-roots cluster of local shop owners, and one of the business owners there. 'The local authorities wanted to sell the buildings on the street and they terminated the shops' leases. The shops then started closing down.'

Király utca Design utca consists of 21 businesses and counting, including such high-style furniture specialists as the relative newcomer KARE and old tenant VAM Design - which also holds events and exhibitions on its sizeable premises. Other trendy members are interior specialist Edit Kiss, opticians Orange, design shop art & deco, and the street's restaurants and other shops, like a canine wear boutique.

When they began in 2009, the organisation spoke to neighbours about keeping their pavements clean, and joining in special night-time events. 'We convinced fellow shop owners to stay open late one day and prepare some sort of surprise in the shops to attract

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**KARE,**  
design with  
an attitude

# The king of design

Stylish shops on Király utca are cooperating to make sure their street remains the city's main decor destination.

**Tibor Sáringer** preps for their April 21 party.



Onestop shop, high-end fashion and interior design



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Personal style, from local designers

more flowers and offering empty stores as rent-free spaces for artists.

'Falk Miksa is associated with art; there's Broadway (Nagymező) for restaurants, and Ráday is cult street,' Landwehr says. 'We'd like to make Király utca another theme street, around design. And it's not just that there are design shops on Király utca but we want to make the street more "designy".'

To that end, the organisation is encouraging decoration of the big plain firewalls facing the street. 'On April 21, our next event, we will unveil our design fire-

wall by Neo Paint, above the playground on the corner of Király utca and Kazinczy utca. The cluster will issue an international tender to decorate the street's other firewalls; the public will be asked to select its favourite of the finalists. We also have plans to wrap Király utca 40 in a Molino forest, and we have examples in Vienna of firewalls covered with ivy and plants, which we have also looked at - green walls.'

The organisation has already enlisted the support of local NGOs; the TOCEMA Europe network, which engages in city marketing; and the local governments

of Districts VI and VII, both of which border on Király utca.

For the future, they're ready to put the street on the map world-wide.

'I'm toying with a Guinness record for our event on July 1-3, which is when we pass the EU Presidency to Poland,' Landwehr says. 'What if we build a 700-metre long and three-metre wide stage, to cover Király utca, and we could have a dance competition on it?'

It may be just a dream for now, but with this energetic group of creative-minded businesses, dreaming and reality are not that far apart.

For more information about Király utca Design utca, and their next event on April 21, see: [www.kiralyutcadesignutca.hu](http://www.kiralyutcadesignutca.hu) and [www.facebook.com/kiralyutcadesignutca](http://www.facebook.com/kiralyutcadesignutca).

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people there. I invited the cast of (local theatre show) 'Vampires' Ball' for example. The whole thing cost Ft3,800: Ft2,000 for the posters and Ft1,800 for the balloons, which we stuck outside the nine participating shops.'

Today, after five such late shopping sprees, participating businesses also offer a loyalty card, which affords shoppers special discounts and an hour of free parking. If you're staying in one of the neighbourhood's hotels, you may also receive a discount card. The local government of District VII has been trying to pitch in too, promising to plant