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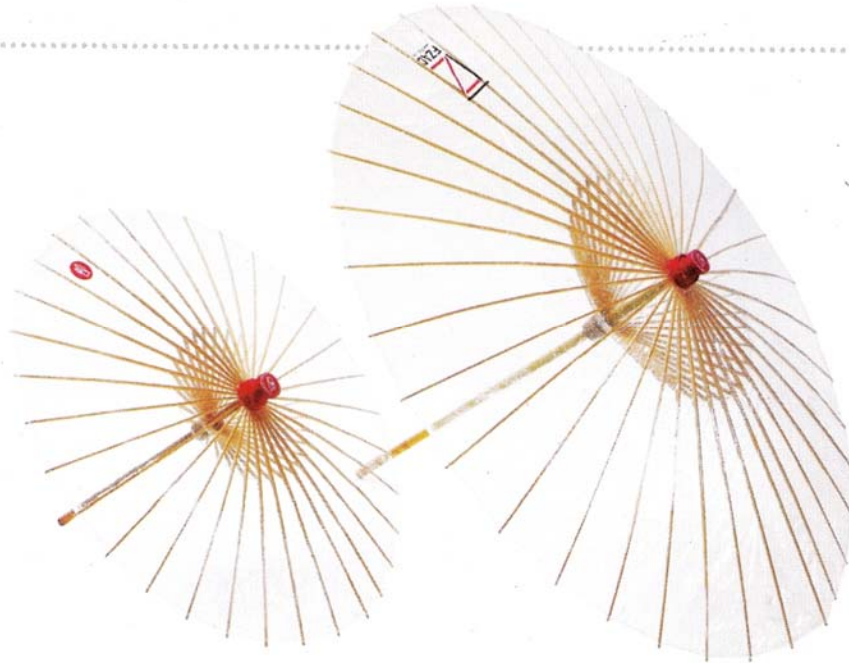
FORT LAUDERDALE

\$4.95



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Singin' in the Rain The Brelli is the brainchild of Pam Zonsius, a New York-based entrepreneur, businesswoman and fashion designer. Inspired by those lovely little parasols, which make tasty libations that much more pleasant, Zonsius decided to create a human-sized one in this cast, composed of a bamboo frame, cotton string and a clear 100-percent biodegradable film (heavy-metal-free PVC) canopy. While the idea for this umbrella had been brewing for decades, it was a friend's challenge four years ago that pushed her to create it. "I knew it had to be transparent, but no one needed another plastic anything," the designer, who created the technology for the biodegradable film, says. Weighing in at just 25 ounces, the umbrella is designed to withstand heavy downpours and high winds. The enchanting Brelli will last as long as it is in use, but once disposed of either in compost, where it will decompose like twigs or leaves, or an anaerobic landfill, it will biodegrade in less than five years. In an anaerobic (no oxygen present) landfill, the biogas created from its decomposing Brelli is typically captured and used as electricity or sold as energy. Now, that's what we call making a fashion statement work for you. —MA \$39 | greendwellers.com



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A Stylish Green Emporium

● ● "I don't believe that you have to overhaul your life, but everyone needs to do something," explains Mylene D'Arelli of her "light-green" style of living. It is a mantra that propelled her to open Green Dwellers, the first retail shop of its kind in South Florida offering exclusively green — and stylish — products for the home. You'll find everything from non-toxic baby toys and mattresses made of natural latex to Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified flooring or recycled-carpet tiles from Flor.

"I embarked on a mission," the Plantation resident says of her boutique in the same city. D'Arelli's husband is the first LEED-accredited attorney by the United States Green Building Council (USGBC) in Florida. After several dinner conversations devoted to the importance of sustainable living and development, D'Arelli decided to research ways to incorporate eco-friendly practices into her family's home. What she discovered was alarming: "Our indoor air quality is at least 10 percent more polluted than outdoor air, and cotton uses about 25 percent of the world's pesticides," she notes. Then she decided, she must do something.

Green Dwellers opened in July 2008 in the Plantation Village Shops. Since then, the 860-square-foot emporium has become a destination for other like-minded green consumers in Florida. "I had one woman come down from

Jupiter to do her baby registry," she says. The baby products — from organic cotton bedding and onesies to pacifiers, sippy cups and bottles free of Bisphenol A (BPA), phthalates and PVC — account for 50 percent of her business. "I only wish I had this stuff when my kids were little," D'Arelli admits.

D'Arelli carefully vets all of the products she carries, demanding proof of touted certifications and, when necessary, cross-examining her suppliers to confirm their products are as eco-conscious as they suggest. She is equally scrupulous about how her inventory looks. "I want things to be so stylish that you would want them even if they weren't green," she says. To that end, she stocks her store with unique, artful merchandise such as elegant 100-percent-recycled glass place settings, Fair-Trade bamboo bowls from Vietnam, clocks made from recycled bicycle parts and pendant lights made from old traffic-light lenses (a personal favorite).

In addition to her carefully curated goods for sale, D'Arelli also hosts Green Parties, where over wine and hors d'oeuvres guests are invited to explore her inventory and learn about ways to make their homes more environmentally sound. Eventually D'Arelli hopes to expand her brand with franchises in other markets, but for now she is happy to keep her green enclave and presence close to home in Plantation. —Megan Aquilina