

Get Out

WHAT'S HOT IN TOWN  
THIS WEEK? GET OUTALL-METRO  
GIRLS TRACK  
SPORTSTODAY'S PIN:  
LARRY WALKER  
COUPON IN SPORTS

## ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

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THURSDAY, JUNE 16, 2005

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 ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH  
**EVERYDAY**

## style matters

BY LISA JONES TOWNSEL | FASHION EDITOR

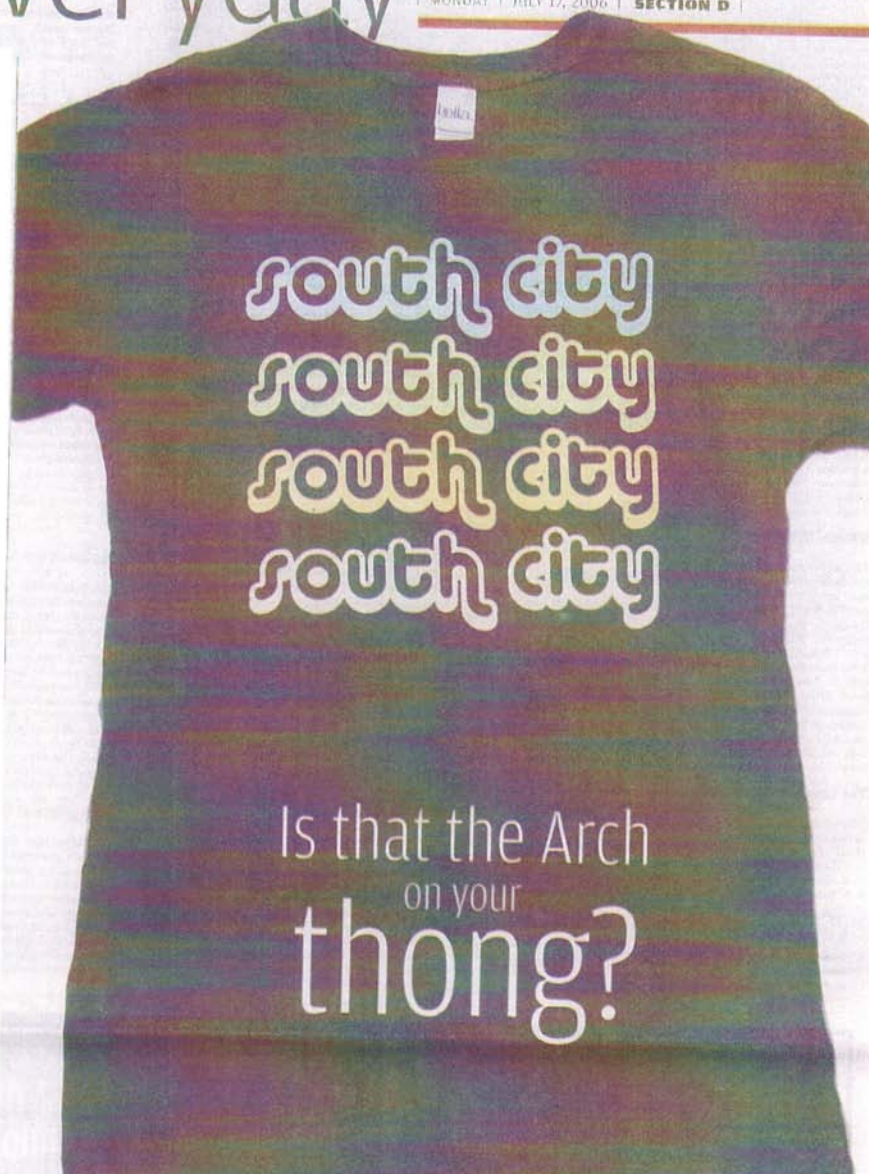

**These T-shirts rock with  
special St. Louis flair**

St. Louis loyalists Jeff and Randy Vines, twin entrepreneurs and ad grads of Bradley University, are celebrating their 27th birthday Friday by throwing a party to launch their latest line of St. Louis-themed T-shirts. But their tees aren't the kind that tourists are likely to swoon over. The Vines guys hope to tap the local insider market with logos such as "West End Girl," "South City," "Highway Farty" and "Where'd you go to high school?" They have some edgier sayings, too, but none publishable in polite company. The short-sleeved T-shirts, available in a rainbow of colors, retail for \$20.

The brothers sell their shirts at local music festivals, the Soulard Market and select stores, including Vintage Vinyl and Sole Survivor in the Delmar Loop area. Look for their merchandise come July online at [www.stl-style.com](http://www.stl-style.com). In the meantime, expect them to bring along a selection for Friday's free party at 10 p.m. at Llywelyn's Pub, 4747 McPherson Avenue. By the way, the Vines twins graduated from Parkway North High School.

# Everyday

| MONDAY | JULY 17, 2006 | SECTION D |



south city  
south city  
south city  
south city

Is that the Arch  
on your  
thong?

# Brothers promote St. Louis in unconventional ways

By Cynthia Billhartz Gregorian | ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Jeff and Randy Vines don't look old enough to ride Metro buses by themselves, let alone drink sake. But the baby-faced twin brothers were at Cha Yoon Sushi & Tea Bar in the Central West End one recent evening, putting away a couple of bottles of the Japanese fermented rice and talking about riding buses into the grittier parts of St. Louis when they were teenagers.

"The city has always had so much charm, quirkiness and, of course, great architecture," said Randy. "We've traveled enough to know that not every city has that, and we made it a point after college to move here as soon as we could."

Both Vines brothers studied advertising at Bradley University in Peoria, Ill., a town that offered them little in the way of an urban experience.

The brothers, who are 28 and grew up in Creve Coeur, remember their father giving them tours of his childhood neighborhood in north St. Louis, pointing out where the deli, the diner and the streetcar once were. The Vines boys were enchanted almost instantly.

Five years ago, they founded STL-STyLe, a company that designed and produced T-shirts printed with witty and irreverent slogans about the

"When we got interested in the city, we liked it because it was kind of forgotten and nobody cared about it."

Randy Vines



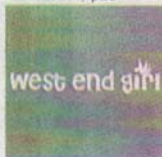
"I don't know how they hear about us, but 50 percent of our sales are from St. Louisans living abroad."

Jeff Vines

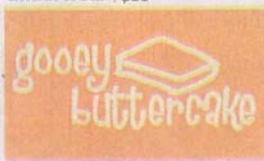


PLEASE SEE  
BROTHERS | D4

T-shirts | \$18



Underwear | \$10



**Want your own?**

Looking for some of this stuff? Try the following:

- On the Web: STL-Style.com
- Cruisin' USA; phone: 314-426-4886
- Vintage Vinyl, 6610 Delmar Boulevard, University City; phone: 314-721-4096
- Fifi's, 6172 Delmar Boulevard, University City; phone: 314-773-2234

**BROTHERS | FROM DI**

## Is that the Arch on your thong?

city. One reads, "Highway Farty;" another states, "Where the Mullet meets the River." The text sits atop the state of Missouri, which has been stylized to look like the profile of a hideously coifed male.

Recently, the brothers, who live in the city (though not together), expanded their line to include bikinis and thongs printed with double-entendres such as "Mound City" and "The Original Busch." The latter includes a rendering of the old stadium beneath the waistband.

The Vines thought such slogans would be a good way to recognize the gritty and weathered culture of St. Louis as well as the fierce pride among life-long residents. Besides, says Randy, St. Louis has a liberal underbelly that challenges the notion that St. Louisans are staid.

"But a surprise market for us is displaced St. Louisans," said Jeff. "I don't know how they hear about us, but 50 percent of our sales are from St. Louisans abroad."

The brothers, an odd mix of hipster cool and wide-eyed earnestness, never thought they'd see a day when St. Louis was gentrified with yuppies sipping lattes along Washington Avenue.

At age 13, they began hopping on Bi-State buses near their West County home and riding downtown where they'd wander among vacant and decaying warehouses on deserted streets.



Twins Jeff (left) and Randy Vines, 28, work on T-shirts in their studio, STL-Style in Soulard. | Katherine Bish for the Post-Dispatch

"It was really depressing, but we loved every minute of it," said Randy. "I remember going to the Knickerbocker building on Washington Avenue with a friend who needed a suit. And when we got down to the ground level, there was a seedy looking guy who said, 'Hey, you handsome guys with no girlfriends, you look like you need a date. You come back here tonight after dark, and I'll get you some girlfriends.'"

A week or two later, on a similar urban excursion, the brothers were in a chop suey joint on Tucker Boulevard when the same guy came in, opened his trench coat and offered to sell them the gold chains he had hanging from its inner lining.

"We love rubbing elbows with urban folk," said Randy.

Jeff, who works as a sales representative for Cruisin' USA, a vintage clothing and novelty wholesaler in University City, says he and Randy have urban-centric friends who went away to college, lived in cities such as Chicago, New York and Los Angeles for awhile, then moved back to St. Louis. They seem both happy and wistful about this, sort of like when a nerdy cousin and the rest of America suddenly discover your favorite underground band.

"When we got interested in the city, it was kind of forgotten and nobody cared about it," said Randy, who lives with his wife in the Central West End and manages a hotel there. Jeff lives in the nearby Skinker-DeBaliviere neighborhood. Both are working toward graduate degrees.

The brothers are active in the community. For a while they produced and starred in a live TV show that aired on KDHX-TV, Channel 21. They volunteer with a coalition to preserve the downtown Century Building. For a brief period, Randy was president of Metropolis, a group dedicated to bringing positive attention to living downtown, and has been quite vociferous in supporting the controversial design for an apartment building on the corner of Lindell Boulevard and Euclid Avenue.

The brothers have also made a hobby of traveling to other cities that are classic, but under-appreciated — cities such as Detroit, Cleveland, and Philadelphia. They skip sunbelt cities and those west of St. Louis, which are too new for their tastes. They do visit Chicago, but feel it's over-hyped.

"It's like a big St. Louis with a lot of coffee-drinking yuppies," said Randy.

The Vines still enjoy driving through north St. Louis and think it's a shame others don't see things their way.

"Delmar is such a physical and psychological barrier," said Randy, who loves seeing northsiders going to church, dressed in their Sunday finery. "The soul of the city is very much alive there."

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## BRING IT ON HOME

Include something St. Louis in your next vacation photo. The Cardinals are used often, so feel free to try something new.



In the private gardens of Prague Palace, Kathleen and Jim Leach-Ross show where they're from with their shirts by STL-style.com. And Team Tomato is the name of their son's band; its shirts are at [www.teamtomato.com](http://www.teamtomato.com).

**THE TRIP:** We spent six days in Prague at the end of a central European vacation in September. The city is very welcoming to tourists, the public transportation system is excellent and we found many English-speaking people in restaurants and shops. Prague is a city made for walking, but the cobblestone streets are very much like those in Laclede's Landing – charming and challenging.

**TRAVEL TIPS:** A good tour book will guide you to the major sites, as well as more off-beat ones, such as the Kafka Museum, Slovakia Cafe and the Museum of Communism. Trips to surrounding areas, such as Karlštejn Castle, are easy to reach by rail. There are many recitals and concerts in churches and lovely outdoor cafes. Many of these events even provide visitors with lap robes for cool evenings.

**Kathleen and Jim Leach-Ross** | Creve Coeur