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## ABERDEEN CENTRE: JAPANESE BUCK STOP

Keep a close eye on those toonies—here comes the Daiso two-dollar store invasion, part one. By Maureen Spencer

Anyone who has done that teaching English in Japan thing (would that be half the Vancouver population under 40? Or does it just feel that way?) will remember the Daiso 100 yen shop. The Japanese equivalent to our dollar store is in every neighbourhood; the oft-repeated statistic is that a new Daiso opens in Japan every day. Baffling.

Now Daiso has launched its first location overseas in Richmond's new Aberdeen Centre, from where it will expand like wild rabbits in North America. The concept is unchanged, except that Daiso's exclusive products (we're not talking junk here; mega buying power means Daiso gets decent stuff made cheap) are priced at \$2 to make up for the currency difference. The single price point contains anything you can imagine—dishes, photo frames, cosmetics, handbags, egg timers—plus stuff you never knew existed. Experience shows that it's the latter category that's most dangerous: Go in looking for tea



cups, leave with a tiny plastic spool meant to keep your MP3 player's cords from getting tangled. Right now, the two-level Daiso is the main attraction at Aberdeen Centre, retail-wise that is. The building itself is Vancouver's latest and greatest architectural landmark. Designed by Bing Thom Architect Group, the 380,000 square-foot mall was conceived as

“an urban lantern;” its exterior of swooping curved walls built from 2,300 panels of glass, some coloured. At night, the three-storey mall will glow with soft light, and buzz with action. That is, it ought to be humming once the 250 high-end fashion, furniture and lifestyle tenants have moved in—full occupation isn't due until summer. **v**



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