

WELCOME TO Houstonia.

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Sugar Rush: Lolli and Pops



It is not horrible in there.

IMAGE: [ALICE LEVITT](#)

MALL CANDY STORES ARE THE WORST. You just know unmonitored ragamuffins have been picking their noses, then reaching into the bulk bins. Not that it matters, when your options are mostly limited to waxen chocolate-covered gummies, tubs of multi-colored rock candy and sugary novelties you spray into your mouth like Bizarro World Binaca. You know the places I'm talking about. Imagine my delight, then, when I first wandered into Lolli and Pops in The Woodlands Mall a few months ago to find a store that works more or less on the same model, but with excellent, often quirky sweets from around the world.

And that's not the best news. That distinction belongs to the fact that there is now a Lolli and Pops in the Memorial City Mall. The bad news is that I'll now have to weave through slow-moving, tuberous mall people on a regular basis to get to the good stuff. It's worth it.

Every corner of the store holds its own unique wonders: There are the tubs of cotton candy in flavors such as matcha latte and salted chocolate peanut butter. There are shelves entirely devoted to candies from Asia (I'll leave my Ramuné gummy and Koala's March purchases for less expensive Asian grocery stores, though), Europe and Mexico. One island holds a display of artisan chocolates with cult brands including Dick Taylor, Tcho and Compartes.

There's an entire wall of nothing but British crisps, including haggis-flavored ones from Mackie's of Scotland. Hard-to-find sodas range from bacon and Buffalo wing sips that respectively taste like fake smoked chocolate and spicy orange Crush to Connecticut brand Avery's, which trades in bottles with labels like "Kitty Piddle," "Martian Poop," and "Monster Mucus."

But the gross-outs, intentional or not, will be forgotten at first sight of the case, filled with adorable, animal-shaped truffles from Moonstruck Chocolate Co. in Portland, Ore. Mice filled with toffee ganache and hazelnuts? Bittersweet chocolate cats with sunflower seed ears? Let me at 'em. It's a whole lot better than the cotton candy machine by the mall's carousel.