

TRI-STATE Boutiques TODAY

And Select Specialty Shops



Leading you to boutiques in
the tri-state area of South
Dakota, Minnesota & Iowa.

Style guides, hot buys, map
of locations, sales & more

A LOOK INSIDE THE DOORS OF:

The Porch on Main PG 4
Creekside Antiques PG 10
Posh Boutique PG 20



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Media Group

Cover photo courtesy of The Paisley Pod

A Note from the Publisher

It's difficult to believe that we will soon be turning our attention to math problems and Friday night football games, and a few months later, Santa Claus and candy canes. But we don't have the power to stop time, so we're plunging ahead with our next installment of the *Tri-State Boutiques Today & Select Specialty Shops* magazine.

Back-to-school through the Christmas holidays is the focus of this issue of *Tri-State Boutiques Today & Select Specialty Shops*. From past experience, it's one of the busiest times for boutiques and destination businesses, and it is our intent to help draw shoppers to these participating businesses.

The staff and I are truly excited about this issue. We've taken a peek behind the doors of The Porch on Main in Sibley, Iowa, Creekside Antiques in Beaver Creek, Minn., ReBorn Home Furnishings in Luverne, Minn., Posh and Ellie Stone Bride in Sioux Falls. We're giving you tips from an expert on how to consign. There's tidbit stories, our "Reasons to Shop ... If You Need One" calendar, Hot Buys and more.

The tri-state area boasts a wealth of boutiques and select specialty shops filled with personally-selected fashions, furniture, home décor, gifts for friends and family, gourmet foods and kitchen trinkets. The best part, is that the owners and staff of these destination shops provide you with a whole lot of personal customer service.

It is our intent to publish fall/winter and spring/summer editions of *Tri-State Boutiques Today & Select Specialty Shops* magazine. We welcome all boutiques and destination shops in the magazine's coverage area (60-mile radius of Brandon) to be part of future publications. As always, we welcome story ideas and content suggestions that you'd like to see or referrals of new boutiques and destination businesses.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *Tri-State Boutiques Today & Select Specialty Shops*, compliments of the participating businesses and Brandon Valley Media Group.

Happy reading & shopping!

Jill Meier **BVG**

Jill Meier - Publisher of *Tri-State Boutiques Today & Select Specialty Shops*

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On The Map



SOUTH DAKOTA

BEAUTIQUE

513 N. Splitrock Blvd.
Brandon, SD 57005

HEIDI'S DECOR & MORE

2101 West 41st Street
Sioux Falls, SD 57105

KIDS & KABOODLE

1700 W. 33rd Street
Sioux Falls, SD 57105

MAYME JANE'S

313 N. Main,
Lennox, SD 57039

THE PAISLEY POD

ThePaisleyPod.com
Brandon, SD 57005

FIERCE 605

Sioux Falls, SD
Fierce605.com

SMALL TOWN GIRLZ

203 S Egan Avenue
Madison, SD 57042

SOUTH DAKOTA THREADS

1517 W Holly Boulevard
Brandon SD 57005

GYPSY TRADING CO.

515 N Splitrock Boulevard
Brandon, SD 57005

UNIQUE BOUTIQUE

Brandon, SD
UniqueBoutiqueBling.com

MINNESOTA

DRAGONFLY

206 E. Main Street
Luverne, MN 56156

FIREFLY

210 E. Main Street
Luverne, MN 56156

REBORN HOME FURNISHINGS

219 E. Main Street
Luverne, MN 56156

TYANA'S BOUTIQUE

211 E. Main Street
Luverne, MN 56156

CREEKSIDE ANTIQUES

539 County Road 4
Beaver Creek, MN 56116

IOWA

THE PORCH ON MAIN

307 9th Street
Sibley, IA 51249

THE LANTERN

304 9th Street
Sibley, IA 51249

ECHTER'S GREENHOUSE

1018 3rd Avenue
Sibley, IA 51249

GRACE BOUTIQUE

320 9th Street
Sibley, IA 51249

The Porch on Main is a mother-daughter affair

Home décor, fashion, gifts and ice cream draw in shoppers

Story and photos by Jill Meier

It's a Wednesday morning in Sibley, Iowa. Traffic – both foot and four wheels – is brisk in this rural community of about 2,500, situated just below Minnesota's southeastern border.

On the corner of Main and Ninth, a few of The Front Porch regulars are positioned at the counter, sipping on hot coffee and catching up on the town's hot topics. It's business as usual for the mother-daughter team of Julie and Allison Ackerman, whose relationship also extends to that of "business partners."

"I love it!" exclaims Allison, 27. "Of course, we have our days, but most of the time it's really good. We see eye to eye on a lot of things, which definitely helps."

Allison was in the second grade when her mom, Julie, opened The Front Porch in March 2000.

"It's crazy to see how much it's changed," reflects Allison, who literally grew up with the business.

Julie had been working as an assistant to a local photographer when she dared to dream of starting her own business. The building, which originally served as a JC Penney store, then Willie's Department Store and next a fabric store, needed rescuing after it had been charred by fire.

"When we took it over, there was not much of a roof left," Julie recalls, "and it was a struggle. There were

many times that I was going to give up on it."

The need, she stresses, was more so to help keep Sibley's Main Street vibrant.

"There was a need for something in our community and I knew the ice cream parlor wouldn't make it on its own. I knew the gift shop wouldn't make it on its own, and I knew the deli lunch wouldn't make it on its own," she said.

So, she launched the business selling gifts and ice cream. The deli lunch was added the following year.

"It was good," Julie says. "I don't know if it ran its course, but I couldn't keep up with doing everything. I'd be here 6, 7 o'clock in the morning prepping for the deli lunch and by one o'clock you were done with the deli but you're not really done cleaning up until 1:30, quarter to two. Then I could finally get started on my weddings, because we also do weddings."

Allison helped her mom at the store through high school, then ventured off to the Twin Cities to gain a degree in music business. But each summer, she returned to work there, eventually picking up more shifts while working in Sioux Falls at the same time. She also tagged along to market with Julie and over time, began seeing more and more clothing there.

On Allison's suggestion, The Front Porch ventured into fashion.



"I started picking up more hours and have been here full-time, probably five years," shares Allison, who also operates a sideline deejay business.

It was about five years ago that the deli lunch counter was trimmed down to make way for clothing and shoes and more home décor and gift items on the sales floor. At the same time the



Julie Ackerman



Allison Ackerman

THE PORCH ON MAIN

www.theporchonmain.com

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(712) 754-2300

Monday - Friday: 8am - 5pm

Saturday: 8:30am - 2pm

Sunday: Closed

store also underwent an update. The black and white tiles were replaced by hardwoods and carpet.

"We added a little more room. We redid the floors and the layout of where the register sat. So, to see everything we've added, the décor stuff we've been carrying to how busy we just keep staying, is just crazy," Allison said.

A small chunk of the lunch counter remains in place in addition to tables and chairs inside and out on the store's "front porch." In the warmer climate months, groups of locals gather for morning and afternoon coffee – and a whole lot of "table talk."

On this particular Wednesday morning, a group of men who've

taken up temporary residency outside, summon the store's owners for refills with a phone call.

"Jerks!" Julie teases, as Allison grabs the pot and heads outside.

The Front Porch serves more than just coffee. A variety of ice cream flavors, shakes, malts, muffins and an assortment of coffee drinks keep



them busy. They scoop up familiar flavors of Blue Bunny and Kemp's ice cream, along with the Ashby's brand from Michigan.

"There's lots of flavors; it's the dangerous part," warns the soon-to-be-bride.

"I love ice cream. I probably eat too much," adds Julie.

If the fashions and home décor aren't enough to entice you through the doors of The Front Porch, perhaps their ice cream challenge – The Mound – will.

The challenge has been achieved by a wealth of Sibley residents and others who've dared to dig in. The Mound is a six, "big-scoop", \$9.50 challenge and those who gobble it all up earn the right to autograph "The Mound" wall of fame.

"You used to get your own block, but now you have to share because we didn't think it was going to take off like it did," informs Allison, giving a nod to the hundreds of signatures. "We just had a kid last Friday – Toby – and he was determined to eat The Mound."

Allison forewarned the youngster that six scoops is "a lot of ice cream," but that didn't deter Toby.

"I scooped up three, and asked, 'Are you sure you want three more, because they're big scoops?' And he's like, 'I'll take six.'"

Although Toby didn't conquer The Mound that day, he surely had a tasty time trying.

Since its start more than 19 years ago, The Front Porch

owners have had to diversify to survive. Baby gifts, bridal registries, clothing, shoes, home décor, artificial floral arrangements for weddings, funerals or any occasion and more, adorn the store's walls and display tables.

They can even help decorate rooms in your home.

"We've been decorating a gal's home and we ship to a gal in Minnesota. Now with phones and the quality of pictures you can take, we have people who are redoing a room in their home. They'll take pictures and measurements, come in and show us and we can help them decorate that wall," Julie explains.

Allison owns The Front Porch website, and only clothing is only sold on the site.

"There's a lot more people shopping online, so to be able to have a website you're able to hit that market, but we see a lot of people that like to pick out the gifts. They like to see what they're getting and be able to try it on," Allison tells. "I like going into little gift stores, and I think small businesses are getting more and more popular. People like to be able to go out into the small towns and find those cute little shops. I know that when my mom and I travel, we try to hit small towns and stop to be able to see their layout and support them, too, because everybody has a dream."

Julie said she ventured into the wedding business by default after a friend asked her to create bouquets and boutonnieres for her daughter's wedding.

“Are you kidding me? I don’t know the first thing about it,” was her initial response. But Julie gave it the “old college try” and from there, the business snowballed, “Because I never planned on doing weddings.”

Sibley residents have proven to be faithful to their Main Street businesses, such as The Front Porch, and in exchange, The Front Porch does it best to carry a variety of décor, gifts, fashions and more.

“For being the only gift shop in town, we do have to carry quite a variety in order to be able to provide things for them so they don’t have to go out of town,” Allison said.

This past summer, their gift registry listed nine events, including bride-to-be Allison herself, who’s excited to walk down the aisle Sept. 28.

“Customers often express their gratitude to be able to shop local for special occasions, like weddings, bridal showers, anniversary gifts, birthday gifts, baby showers and more. And for the last-minute ones that maybe forgot to grab a gift, we do a lot of Secretary’s Day, birthdays, people that are in the hospital, because we deliver to them, and we do a lot of funeral arrangements and memorial pieces, too,” Allison informs.

Travelers also stop to take a peek inside The Front Porch.

“We get people that stop here when they go to The Lakes (at Okoboji, Iowa) or when they come home from there. We just had some people from California who were heading to Minnesota but his wife had never been to Iowa, and so they chose Sibley to stop in. They stopped in and got some t-shirts because they were made locally,” Allison said.

The Ackerman women get all of the graphic tees they sell from Sibley-based KM Apparel. That business relationship has allowed them to offer a t-shirt-of-the-month club through the store’s website. Club members receive a t-shirt and either a pair of earrings or a necklace shipped right to them.

“It’s nice to work with another local company to be able to support that business,” Allison said.

Sibley folks also seem to be appreciative that folks like



the Ackermans took a leap of faith, and in a sense, are helping to keep the town’s Main Street alive and well.

And the feeling seems to be mutual.

“It’s nice to be in a small town and it’s nice to have that community support,” Allison

says. “It’s really important (to be ingrained in the community) to me, because without the small businesses that support community groups, we wouldn’t be able to do that. Our community is so lucky because we do have a lot of offer. There’s a lot of great businesses here: a movie theatre, a bowling alley, a new swimming pool that just opened, so many things that other communities don’t have, and we need to support them to keep them going.”



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Reasons to Shop... If you need one

WEEK OF AUG 11 | Back-to-School Sale in Brandon | Unique Boutique

AUG 21 | Fall Open House | The Porch on Main

AUG 23 - 24 | Crazy Day Sale in Brandon | Unique Boutique

OCT 5 | Wine Walk | ReBorn, Dragonfly, Firefly, Tyana's

OCT 6 | Christmas Open House | The Porch on Main

OCT 23 - 25 | Autumn Festival - Sanford Premier Center | Unique Boutique

NOV 7 - 9 | Open House | Mayme Jane's

NOV 9 | New Ulm Show | Unique Boutique

NOV 9-10 | Holiday Open House | ReBorn, Dragonfly, Firefly, Tyana's

NOV 11 | Holiday Open House | Dragonfly, Firefly

NOV 16 | Holiday Event at Harrisburg High School | Unique Boutique

NOV 23 | Holiday Vendor Event at Brandon Lutheran Church | Unique Boutique

NOV 30 | Shop Small Saturday | Dragonfly, Firefly, The Paisley Pod, Gypsy Trading Co., beautiful

NOV 30 | Small Business Saturday / Sibley Christmas Parade / Wine-Tasting | The Porch on Main

NOV 30 | Small Business Saturday / Brunch & Fashion Show | The Lantern, Grace Boutique

DEC 6-7 | Winterfest | ReBorn, Dragonfly, Firefly, Tyana's

DEC 7 | Holidazzle at Brandon High School | Unique Boutique

DEC 13 | Shimmer & Shop Holiday Pod-Tacular | The Paisley Pod

**CHECK THE BOUTIQUE
FACEBOOK PAGES
FOR DATES ON THESE
UPCOMING EVENTS**

SEPTEMBER

Unique Boutique

Try It On Tuesday's TBA

NOVEMBER

The Porch On Main

Fall Style Show

JANUARY

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BAILEY'S LODGE: A SAFE SPACE FOR TEENS

PHOTO & STORY BY JILL MEIER



Out of heartache over the loss of a son, a safe gathering space for teens in Sibley, Iowa, has come to life.

And that space is Bailey's Lodge.

Tucked away in the back of The Lantern, a non-profit coffee shop and roastery located along Ninth Street in Sibley, Bailey's Lodge was named after Bailey Hoyer, who was 17 ½ and a senior in high school. On Aug. 14, 2018, he chose to take his life.

"He had a very bad day," shares his mother, Brenda Hoyer, who took ownership of The Lantern in 2008. "In this pain we are doing something to help our community, and it helps our pain to know we are helping others. We just really want to help people, let them know to push through the hard stuff: call a friend, go for a walk, take a nap, whatever you need to do ... and then get some help."

Bailey's Lodge offers space for teens to play ping pong, foosball, watch TV or simply to sit, do homework and read or talk with friends. It's also a space where youth groups from all avenues can meet.

"We're about the living now," Brenda said. "We're about having a place, a safe place for young people to come, feel welcome, have some fun, feel like they

belong. It's about letting people and the kids know that this is for them. And then hopefully, just turning that around to what does the community needs and bring the kids around to have them help others to not only be takers, but givers."

Brenda was inspired to name the space "Bailey's Lodge." Her son, she tells, had a huge passion for hunting, fishing, trap shooting and animals.

"He loved people. He loved to laugh and he made people laugh," she said. "I love saying his name. I love seeing his picture, and I don't ever want to forget him."

Bailey's Lodge was funded from memorial money given in her son's memory and a small life insurance policy, Brenda said. And the community and friends chipped in, too, donating the game tables, a TV and a corner storage unit.

"When we talk about it, then they (donors) understand," Brenda said. "I just think this is a place of fisher of men, so it's a lodge because Bailey fished and hunted; he loved to do that. I guess the underlying theme here is that we are fishers of men."

The Lantern, which operates as a non-profit, specializes in small batches

of roasted coffees from all over the world, which they also serve along with baked-from-scratch pastries and cakes, including cheesecake, fresh salads, soups, paninis and wraps. Profits cover staff wages, supplies and will now help to fund Bailey's Lodge.

"It is for Sibley and the people in our community to have a place to come," Brenda said.

Although The Lantern dates back to 2000, the building itself dates back to the early 1900s and has served as home to a variety of businesses, including a Coast-to-Coast Store, an independent hardware store, a thrift store, a plumbing shop and a fabric store.

"We hear bits and pieces and I write things down because I'd like to compile the history of the building," Brenda said. "One man that was here said his dad bought it from Coast-to-Coast and said he used to have to oil the (wooden) floors."

The Lantern has a true homey feeling, with an eclectic grouping of tables and chairs, comfy couches and chairs on a raised platform alongside a piano where the ivories are just waiting to be tickled.

"We just want people to feel welcome, so I only hire people that smile and say 'Hello,' and I want them to have a heart for others," Brenda said. "We wanted to make Bailey's Lodge more teen friendly. It's not a huge space, but we want this place to be used, and now, it's just getting the kids used to coming and knowing it's for them."



Travel back in time at Creekside Antiques

Story and photos by Jaime Hult

Avid treasure hunters might consider checking out a new spot in the area antique shop landscape – Creekside Antiques in Beaver Creek, Minn.

Nestled just half an hour from Sioux Falls in a renovated 1926 two-story, southeast Minnesota's newest antique store opened in April.

Owner Sue Beyenhof invites customers to step back in time and have fun in the process.

"I want to keep this place very special. I want it to be more of an experience than a shopping trip," said Beyenhof, a former children's therapist who's been collecting antiques for more than 20 years. "I want people to feel welcome and step back in history. Maybe they step back into their grandmother's or their mother's, depending on their age."

Creekside Antiques is open Thursdays and Saturdays, and every Thursday at precisely 7 a.m., Beyenhof pops a fresh

batch of homemade chocolate chip cookies into the oven for the day's customers. She also offers clientele freshly-brewed coffee and mini-bottles of water.

Beyenhof encourages shoppers to browse the two stories of antique and vintage items, just a fraction of the collection she's been amassing from auctions, estate sales and secondhand shops since the 1990s.

"I have enough things to refurnish this store probably three times," she said. "Every week I try to add a couple of tubs of new things and move things around."

Antique and vintage Fenton glassware is one of Beyenhof's favorite finds. And while she's got a store full of items and a lot more in storage, that doesn't stop her from heading out, usually once a week, for new finds.

"That's the fun part – the hunt, looking for treasures," she said.

The 1940s and 1950s are her favorite decades. Besides vintage kitchen items, Beyenhof loves one-of-a-kind art from the era, roosters and chickens, and 1960s and 1970s records – although if she found a mint Michael Jackson album, she admits, she'd buy it. She's also got a 1950s red chrome dining table and chairs in storage that she calls “gorgeous.” She's not sure if she's ready to part with it yet.

“That's the difference between having regular retail merchandise and antiques. Sometimes I'm sad to see some things go out the door,” Beyenhof said. “When you find it, it's just such a find, and even though you don't have a place for it in your own home – I just can't quite part with it yet.”

She keeps a freestanding kitchen cabinet and a stove for sale in the store, with backups in storage for when the current ones sell.

Beyenhof also has a 1912 piano that's not for sale, though she plans to make use of it at Christmas time.

“It's a statement piece ... kind of a dream piece for me. I just love it,” she said. “I picture around the holidays playing the piano for people.”

She likes to change displays every so often. She'll redecorate for the fall, and again for Christmas. She's picked up a lot of holiday décor at summer estate sales, when trees and ornaments aren't in much demand.

About 90 percent of the shop's inventory is from her personal collection. Some of the Coca-Cola items and the Waterford crystal come from friends.

“I don't really want to consign yet. I have enough inventory,” she mused. “Unless somebody has something spectacular. I can't think of what that would be. Something Fenton.”

Creekside Antiques also offers weekly discounts on specific categories or colors of items. For the week of Beyenhof's mother's birthday, she gave 15 percent off everything green, her mom's favorite. She's also held sales on cookbooks, wall décor and pink and red items.

“I don't know what I'll do next. I don't plan it. It's kind of whatever strikes me,” she said. “My favorite color is blue, so I don't know when I'll do that, because probably half of what I have in here is blue. I love blue Fenton and blue bulb jars.”

She also loves Red Wing crocks and old cookbooks, especially church cookbooks.

“They fascinate me, to think all of those ladies are possibly not with us anymore and left behind their

“I want to keep this place very special. I want it to be more of an experience than a shopping trip ... I want people to feel welcome and step back in history.”

- Sue Beyenhof, Creekside Antiques -



CREEKSIDE ANTIQUES

539 County Rd. 4
Beaver Creek, MN

Thurs: 1 - 7pm

Fri: 10am - 5pm

Sat: 10am - 3pm

Sundays: Sept 8, Oct. 6,

Nov. 3-4, Dec. 1 1-4pm

605-366-9171

sbeyenhof52@gmail.com

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Creekside Antiques



treasured recipes,” Beyenhof said. “There, again, I’m a little sad to part with some of them.”

The inventory is rounded out with a few new and non-vintage items – greeting cards, homemade soy candles and used books, which she stocks to draw in different customers.

“I just love the line, so I chose it for my shop. I sell a lot of cards. People come in and say, ‘Oh, you have cards. I need a card for such-and-such,’” she said. “It’s worked out well.”

Beyenhof inherited her love for antiques from her grandparents. Her grandfather liked to “dumpster dive” and restore found items, and she enjoys restoring old pieces, too, while preserving their original integrity.

After she retired from Children’s Home Society as a therapist in 2018, Beyenhof and her husband bought the house and acreage, which they’d admired for years. The former owner, a bachelor, hadn’t updated it in years, so Beyenhof and her family set to work painting and ripping out linoleum and carpet.

She’s currently working on turning a second-story room into mid-century modern – not her favorite era, she admits, but she wants it represented.

“Things change and come back around, sometimes for the better, sometimes for the worse. It depends on the era, and it depends on the opinion of the person,” Beyenhof said. “I’ve met some wonderful people and touched base with people I hadn’t seen in years. I’d like to reach more of the avid antiquers.”

Though she doesn’t consider herself particularly unique, there’s something endearingly quirky about Beyenhof that sets her apart from the average retailer, while fitting in perfectly with the treasure trove quality of her own shop.

She likes vintage hats, for instance, and recently found the latest addition to her collection on eBay. It’s made of acorns.

“I can’t wait to see it. It’s got to be funny,” she said with a laugh. “I’ll wear it with some goofy dress.”



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**LET US BE
YOUR STYLIST**



Old things gain new life in hands of ReBorn partners



Ron Vander Lugt, John Wade, Becky Feikema, Kathy Vander Lugt, Kristi Stroeh, Larissa Caspersen

- Luverne Main Street business hits 10-year mark -

STORY BY JILL MEIER • PHOTO BY STEPHANIE VAN DYKE OF VDS PHOTOGRAPHY

It all started with a, “Mom, if you’re ever going to have your dream job, then you better get started” remark.

So that’s what Kathy Vander Lugt did. And she invited her daughters, Becky Feikema and Abbie Fey, to come along for the ride.

Thus, ReBorn Home Furnishings was, well, born.

This month, the Main Street business in Luverne, Minn., celebrates its 10th year, and the mother-daughter partnership have no regrets. They’re in the business of reincarnating old furniture into new, purposeful furniture.

“It’s always been my passion to re-do furniture,” Kathy shares.

She shared that passion with her daughters early on in their lives.

“Those girls, growing up in 4-H, did it for years,” Kathy said. “We would find junky furniture, take a before-picture, do the whole project and then they’d bring it to the county fair. They’d win purple ribbons almost every year; we all loved it.”

When Kathy reached her milestone 50th birthday, it was Becky who told her that if she was ever going to realize her dream, she’d better get cracking.

“So, she found us some real estate on Luverne’s Main Street,” Kathy tells.

They considered Sioux Falls, but instead took a gamble on setting up shop in Luverne, despite a sluggish business economy.

“We questioned if we were totally nuts for jumping into a business, but we did,” Kathy says.

They also were cautious in the early months, opening just one Saturday a month and Thursdays from 4 to 7 p.m.

“I had an infant and a 2-year-old at the time, and one Saturday a month and Thursday was all we could do,” Becky tells. “As our business grew, we added every Saturday, then we added Friday and then we added all day Thursdays. We just kind of grew into our business and now we’re open Tuesday through Saturday.”

As their business developed, they also grew their team to hunt for treasures, restore them and sell them. Today, that team includes Kathy’s husband, Ron, her shop assistant, Larissa Caspersen, boutique associate Kristi Stroeh, who also helps with the website and social media, and treasure hunters, Becky, her sister, Abbie, and Larissa.

“My husband says we haul furniture everywhere. From everywhere. And to everywhere,” Kathy said. “Wherever we are, we love to go to garage sales and auctions to find treasures.”

They also purchase furniture and home décor from those who are downsizing, moving or have estates to close out.

A retired uncle, John Wade, who lives in Sioux Falls, makes the rounds at auctions, thrift stores and garage sales in search of treasures, too, Becky adds.

“It takes a team. To be at the store, at the shop and out



looking for stuff, you can't do it with one person," Kathy emphasizes.

Furniture is refurbished in a shop on the Vander Lugt farm, where Kathy and Larissa perform their magic.

Becky's main focus is the store, the business end and inventory management.

"She does all of that," Kathy said. "I just get to paint furniture. I'm living the dream."

"I get to take care of the fun stuff, like unemployment, work comp and insurance," Becky chides in.

Kathy said her daughter's ability to stage and design is her "gift".

"I sometimes think I bring it from the shop, plop it down

and she just works her magic and makes it look gorgeous. We all have our different gifts," Kathy said.

Ron Vander Lugt serves as the "fixer" for the business.

"When I was growing up, it was my dad, but my husband has taken that on now. His passion is making sure everything works. Drawers slide. Doors close. It's not wobbly. Everything's reglued and screwed tight. He's meticulous to make sure it's a good piece that we're proud to sell," Kathy says.

Kathy adds there are times that she envisions exactly what the piece is going to look like when it's done.

"Other times, it's a process."

Kathy also garners input

from Larissa, who is about the same age as Becky.

All of the first pieces they turned out 10 years ago were painted black.

"Black was in and everybody wanted black," Kathy remembers.

That trend held true for a few years before switching to colorful hues of paint.

"That was probably harder to decide color-wise what's going to appeal to customers," Kathy said. "Now we've moved to the neutral stage where everything is light or cream or white, very neutral. It's probably not as hard when everybody wants neutral, but once in a while you want a pop of color."

Becky said it's important to

stay on top of what the next trend is going to be.

"We're trying to be a trend-setter rather than a follower," adds Kathy.

The store's merchandise is forever changing, and rarely are two pieces the same. Between custom work and repurposed endeavors, Kathy and Larissa churn out four to five new pieces each week. Kathy takes charge of spraying all of the furniture at her shop, and from there, everything is hand-distressed and hand-waxed.

"We do have a sprayer, which cuts down on time and has sped up our process somewhat," said Kathy.

All of the finished pieces are posted on social media "so people always know what we have," Becky said. "We post price and measurements, so they know what they're getting into. They kind of know if they want it before they even get here sometimes."

The rising popularity of home fix-it shows on TV also keeps shoppers coming through their doors.

"I think it's because for \$250 you can buy a really good quality piece of furniture in comparison to that same price point what you're going to get in a furniture store today. This is all wood, good construction, solid. What you get in a furniture store at that price point, it's not wood – it's pressed cardboard. It's not going to last," Becky explains.

Both Kathy and Becky admit they watch "a lot of HGTV."

"We're always looking for inspiration," Kathy adds.

Another draw to ReBorn Home Furnishings is the Annie Sloan chalk paint they use and sell.

"That is the product that we use on all of our furniture, but we also sell the paint, the wax, brushes, pretty much anything that you would need," Becky informs. "You can walk in and say, 'I have a dresser that I want to paint,' and you could walk out with everything you need to complete your project, plus expert advice. We will walk you through every step that you need to do to complete your project."

Annie Sloan chalk paint is the original chalk paint, Becky said. She describes the trademarked product as user-friendly, quality chalk.

"Even the person that's never done a project before can get good results," she adds.

Becky says the product requires very little prep: no priming or sanding.

"You just clean the piece, usually apply two coats of paint and one coat of wax," she said.

The product is water-based, has low VOC and bonds to a variety of surfaces.

"You can paint wood, metal ceramic, vinyl floors, fabric, flower pots, shoes, leather chairs," lists Becky.

While the paint name contains the word "chalk," Becky said there's no chalk in the paint itself. Instead, the name comes from the chalky, matte finish it provides.

Becky is elated when a customer comes in looking for that piece and they spy it at ReBorn Home Furnishings. "Their face lights up and they know they've found the perfect thing for their home," she said. "Or walking them through the entire painting process and then they come back with pictures on their phone and say, 'Look how it turned out,' and they're so excited. That's very rewarding."

Kathy's favorite part of the business is working with her family and their team.

"We just have such a great relationship. We don't call any of them employees; they are just

TIPS FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO REPURPOSE FURNITURE

- Use a good product, not a cheap product. Cheaper is not always inexpensive.
- Pick a good piece that has good bones. If you pick a piece that has a vinyl coating, it's just as much work to do a cheap piece than a good piece.
- Your time is valuable.
- You don't want to have to do multiple coats because it didn't cover well. If you're going to put your time into it, choose good products.

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so much a part of our lives. Kristi and Larissa, they're totally unrelated, but their heart and passion is in this store and what we do. I think for all of us, it's just a real passion and we just love what we do."

Kathy, Becky and their team all have pieces of repurposed furniture in their own homes.

"I moved to a new house about three years ago and I completely redid my entire kitchen with the chalk paint – all the cabinetry – and it's held up really well and I'm very pleased," Becky says.

Her home also features a chair she refinished when she was 12. It earned her a trip to the state fair through 4-H. "That's been recovered again and is now in my living room. ... I would say my house is an eclectic mix of painted and repurposed furniture, some family heirloom pieces, some modern abstract art type pieces."

"There's a couple that I haven't sold and put them in my house," Kathy confesses.

Just as Kathy's father shared his passion for repurposing, the mother and daughter are passing on that same passion to Becky's daughters, Catheryn, 12, and Jackie, 10.

"They both have pieces in the store that they have painted, so they have their own little business," Becky said.

Catheryn also sews and sells table runners.

"We're teaching them the business as they grow. You've got to buy your inputs, you've got to pay grandma, keep track of your own checkbook, all of those kinds of things," Becky said.

Catheryn also helps out at the store and both girls delight in finding treasures with Kathy.

Ninety percent of the décor on the sales floor at Reborn is hand-crafted, welded, designed or painted.

"All of our signs, pillows, towels are not mass-produced where 49 other people may have the same thing. They're very unique and hand-crafted," Becky said. "That makes us unique, because we don't just go to market and order stuff that everybody else has."

"And we can't order anything," Kathy reminds. "If we run out of something, we can't call and say, 'I need this next week.' We have to literally make everything."

ReBorn posts all of their merchandise with pictures, prices and dimensions, but they do not sell online.

"People just need to call with their credit card and they can purchase sight unseen," said Becky, who once sold a bedroom set online at 10:30 on a Saturday night.

"We're always open, and now days, that's how people want us to be," she adds.

ReBorn has also steered away from shipping any of their merchandise. Kathy said they tried that avenue, but found it to be "outrageously expensive."

The business name – ReBorn Home Furnishings – was inspired by their faith.

"There's so many pieces that are dead and worthless and

they are reborn to a new life. Part of that is our commitment to Christ. We are broken, ugly pieces of furniture and we are reborn in Christ, forgiven, we're washed in his blood and we're given a new life," Kathy explains.

The store's theme verse is 2 Corinthians 5:17 – *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"*

"We hope that people see past the brokenness in people as well, the new life in Christ that we hope shines through. And that's our furniture as well. Many people have given up on these pieces of furniture and we haven't. We've given them new life and that's how God looks at us."

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Story by McClane Archer • Photos by Jill Meier

A dorm room is a temporary home, but a home nonetheless. So, it should feel like one. Because college can be a difficult transition, it's wise to make you or your child's residence as welcoming, cute, functional, and comfortable as possible.

I would also argue that it's important to have a plan ahead of time. I speak from experience: hindsight is 2020, people. My freshman dorm at South Dakota State University was a medley of whatever I could fit in my Honda Civic at the last minute and my randomly-assigned roommate's cow-themed knick-knacks. It goes without saying, it was no HGTV room.

Luckily, you can avoid my mistake thanks to Ellison Cutrer, owner of Gypsy Trading Company in Brandon, S.D.

Gypsy Trading Co. specializes in repurposed and upcycled furniture and antique and vintage home decor. The 4,500 square-foot showroom is stocked with unique pieces that can help bring a hometown feel to a new place like a

university.

"It's all about storage, where you can hide things," Cutrer says, "Hide all the things."

One option for hiding books and notebooks is a vintage trunk. The smaller size trunks slide right under your bed, and the ones with flat tops can double as a side or coffee table.

Another storage option at Gypsy is wire baskets. They currently have a stock of them that once served as lockers at the local swimming pool. Now they are perfect storage solutions for a small room.

If wire baskets and trunks aren't your cup of tea, you can find vintage suitcases, resurfaced medicine cabinets, and woven baskets to tuck away your clutter. It's more than just milk crates; "that trend's gone," Cutrer states.

Once you have hidden what is not meant to be seen, you can focus on decor that displays your personality.

"You want to bring in your own character and flair," she says.

You can display who and what's important to you in a cute picture frame.

Anything a Command hook or two can hold can be put on display.

"We have people buy oars, canteens and just hang them up," Cutrer says. "You can hang non-conventional stuff on your walls."

One popular wall decoration found at Gypsy is macrame. Macrame is art made from knotting cords into patterns and it adds a sophisticated and cozy atmosphere to any room.

You can also bring a bit of home with you to college. If you are from South Dakota and are attending an out-of-state university, Gypsy has plenty of "little So Dak things" including mugs, shadow boxes, and pillows.

"The bed is the biggest thing in the room, it's the focal point of the dorm," Cutrer says while showing off the cute and comfy pillows in the showroom.

Another aspect of college life is keeping up with a busy schedule. It's vital to have a to-do list in an easily readable spot. As pictured, Gypsy is home to some practical yet unique paper note rollers. Some even have chalkboard backing or pencil holders to add even more function.

'It's all about storage, where you can hide things'

Hot Buys

Swedish dishcloths & tagua nut jewelry are popular purchases



Mayme Jane's owner Tonya Ringen can't seem to keep her supply of Swedish dishcloths and jewelry made from the tagua nut from disappearing off the shelves of her Lennox, S.D., boutique.

But it's a good problem to have, she says.

"We've carried them (the dishcloths) for three years and they are our best seller," Tonya said. "The Swedish dishcloths bring the beauty of nature indoors to brighten up any kitchen or bath."

And because of the various designs – from flowers to animals to tractors to nature and more – there's a design tailored to all, even including the bachelor in the family.

The dishcloths are made from 70 percent wood cellulose and are not only good for wiping away the grime, but they look chic displayed as a work of art in a frame – also available at Mayme Jane's.

The dishcloths, Tonya shares, are replacing traditional dishcloths and sponges in kitchens, bathrooms and laundry rooms. They're printed with eco-friendly ink, are biodegradable, extremely durable

and have the ability to absorb 15 to 20 times their weight in water.

Priced between \$6.75 and \$9.99, the dishcloths can replace approximately 15 rolls of paper and are far more hygienic than a sponge. It air-dries quickly, too. The dishcloth can clean up things like coffee and jam, and the pretty picture on the front remains intact, not to mention hides any stains on the back.

For those who have granite countertops and stainless-steel appliances, you'll love that it leaves no streaks behind.

Keeping it clean is easy, too. It can be washed in the top rack of the dishwasher, the washing machine, boiled or microwaved for one minute.

It also can be placed on the countertop wet, stabilizing pots that need scrubbing. The pot doesn't move and the countertop keeps from being scratched.

There are other uses, too: Lay the cloth over the sink divider and wipe off knives and utensils as you prepare foods or dampen the cloth to wipe cat hair off of furniture.



Janice Ramert and Tonya Ringen

"And when they get to the point that it doesn't look as nice, people put them in their car to clean their windshield with," Tonya said.

Tagua Jewelry

"I haven't been this excited about jewelry for a long time," Tonya says of the hand-crafted jewelry made from the tagua nut (pronounced TAG-WAH).

Tagua by Soraya Cedenio is the company behind the jewelry, which is made by 102 skilled artisans in Ecuador. Over the last seven years, the artisans have created more than 5 million sustainable handmade pieces, which are sold today by more than 3,100 retailers, including Mayme Jane's.

The tagua nut grows from a palm tree found mainly in Ecuadorian rainforests and is also known as vegetable ivory. It takes 12 to 18 months for the fruit to dry in order for it to become the hardened, natural nut that is used in the jewelry.

The process starts by gathering nuts from both the rainforest floor where they have fallen or harvesting them directly from the palms. The material used from the nut is hidden in the very heart of the fruit. After harvesting, the seeds are dried in the sun for up to eight weeks.

The carving process is a skill that has been handed down from generation to generation. Most of the artisans use their own handmade tools in the jewelry design.

In large batches, the newly-shaped tagua pieces are submerged into vats of Italian, certified organic vegetable dyes where the tagua seeds absorb the color. The process takes from 10 to 14 hours, depending on the desired color. Once dyed, the tagua nuts are laid out in the sun to dry, a process that can take up to five days.

The dyed pieces are next put into tumblers, another 10 to 14 hour process. This step is what gives the tagua its smooth and shiny appearance without the use of any chemicals.

Finally, artisans assemble the tagua into fashionable jewelry. Each artisan can assemble up to 100 pieces per day.

The jewelry provides the artisans with a safe work environment and a fair living wage.

Tonya introduced the jewelry line at Mayme Jane's in May. Earrings, which are all hypo-allergenic, are \$10.95. Necklaces range from \$20 to \$50. Tonya points out there are no metal clasps on the necklaces. Instead, these necklaces feature a button or pull clasp, the latter which allows it to be worn shorter or longer.

"They are so creative and the pieces intermingle," Tonya adds. "The jewelry can elevate a top to a whole new level. It's just fun, fun, fun!"

Mayme Jane's is located at 313 N. Main in Lennox. Open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturdays, Tonya works alongside her mother, Janice Ramert. The store was lovingly named after her maternal grandmother, a woman strong in her Swedish heritage.

"She was such a neat lady and loved color," Tonya says of her grandmother, who sold eggs so she had "pin money" to spend.

"She would've loved the jewelry and she would've loved the store."

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‘POSH PACKS’ BRINGS THE BOUTIQUE TO SHOPPERS

Story & Photos by McClane Archer



Posh's new owner, Alyssa Nix, and her business partner, Alex Hartman, are bringing Sioux Falls' staple boutique to your front door with "Posh Packs".

Posh Packs is a monthly subscription style service launched by Posh Boutique in April. The idea came to Nix a year after purchasing the store in February 2018, which originally opened in 2007.

"We wanted to expand the business into the online e-commerce world, but my favorite thing about having a boutique and being in the store with people is having that personal connection," she says, "so we kind of thought rather than just making an online store, we'd find a way to still personally connect with our customers, learn about them, help them with styling."

"A lot of people come from out of town and they don't live here, but they love shopping here," Hartman says.

Nix, owner of Visuals by Nix, and Hartman, owner of Lost Souls Creative, met working as freelancers under the same client and now they have a common focus.

"We are focusing on the packs right now. Every month we get a couple more and a couple more," Nix says.



They will ship to all 50 states and currently, the furthest subscriber lives in California.

"Our goal is to expand the reach," they say.

The packs come in three tiers: The Dawn for \$65, The Mezzo for \$125, and The Boss for \$280. Nix says the value of what you get always exceeds what you pay, and with free shipping, it's a great deal.

"Each pack is a different price point so we just go off that price point and off of what their style quiz is for the brands included," she explains.

The style quiz is an indepth questionnaire customers fill out online when they first sign up for the monthly mailings. They can update it at any time. The quiz includes sizing information and,

after feedback from beta testers, a question about skin tone.

"Some colors will work well with some skin tones," Hartman explains, "some colors will work differently with others."

Hartman said the style quiz only takes about 10 minutes to complete; but if you are in a rush, some questions are optional.

One optional question is, "Who is your style icon?"

"There's a lot of musicians that were people's style icon, which

is cool because you can really base it off that," Hartman informs.

Hartman handles the technical side of the Posh Packs business model – things like marketing, photography, collecting customer data, and filing records of what is sent out.

"The boring stuff," Hartman summarizes.

"Fun for him, but boring for me," Nix says, "He designed our entire website, which I would not have been able to do."

Where Nix has fun is the actual styling of the outfits. She says she spends anywhere from 15 to 30 minutes styling each of their Posh Packs subscribers.

"Since I personally pack each one of them, I include a handwritten note that gives them different styling advice or

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maybe advice on what kind of shoe you could wear with it," Nix says, "Also, I know which pack went out the month before and I look back at my records like 'OK, what piece can she pair with, not only with the outfit that I'm sending her this month, but the one received last month.'"

Nix is dedicated to giving her customers what they want. She says she carefully reads the style quiz each time she creates a pack.

"When you say 'no' on our style quiz, it means no. If you say 'no long cardigans,' you will never see a long cardigan," Nix promises, "That is some people's issues with other larger companies that do kind of the same thing, you don't have to worry about that with us."



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Beautique expands footprint with warehouse construction

Amanda Christopherson first sold boutique clothing from the basement of her home in Brandon, S.D. Not long after, she moved beautique into the garage. Soon, her growing business out-grew the garage and she ventured into her first brick-and-mortar retail space in Brandon.

Two years later, she took another entrepreneurial risk and moved into larger quarters in the Brandon Retail Center situated along Splitrock Boulevard. The store, however, wasn't big enough to house all of beautique's merchandise, so she leased space in a 3,400 square-foot warehouse.

And now one year later, she's about ready to take occupancy of her own 10,000 square-foot warehouse.

"I knew we would out-grow it eventually, but not that fast," Christopherson said.

The warehouse should be ready for occupancy in early August.

"Time cannot go any slower," says Christopherson, who employs a staff of 10 there. "Nobody has space to work. I work at home more than I work up there because I don't work well with so many distractions."

The new warehouse features offices, a studio room for photography, and a glass overhead door that will provide natural light for fashion photo shoots.

Although Christopherson is nearly tripling her warehouse space and knows it will take some time to fill it, she didn't want to find herself in the same lack-of-space situation in a year or two.

"I'd rather have too much room and find out a year from now that we didn't need that much room than to get into the situation where we have no room again and have to move again," she said.

Christopherson believes the new warehouse will be a game changer for beautique. All of their online sales are packaged for delivery there and all of the store's stock passes through there, too.

Online sales remain the bulk of beautique's business, and Christopherson believes that's because "it's a lot easier to reach a bigger audience than it is locally."

Once the warehouse is completed, Christopherson is planning a mega sale.

"Basically, we'll move all of the stuff that we're not putting on the sale into the new warehouse and then we'll have a warehouse sale at the current warehouse. It's literally going to be like 'cleaning house' because we don't want to move it," she said.



CONSIGNING FOR CASH

Kids & Kaboodle helps you clear your child's closet clutter for cash

Story & Photo by Jamie Hult

Staging a garage sale can be a major headache – and in the end, all the time you spent tagging items and waiting for traffic often seems hardly worth the 10 to 20 percent you recoup on your items at the end of the day.

But what if, instead of entrusting your profits to the chances of that storm cloud passing and the right person coming along to give you \$3 for little Johnny's like-new snowsuit, you let someone else handle the selling?

What if you consigned?

Wendy Haugan owns Kids & Kaboodle, the longest-running kids' consignment shop in Sioux Falls.

Kids & Kaboodle takes your new and gently-used clothes, toys and baby equipment, prices them and unloads them for you. You get 40 to 60 percent of the sale price, which you can cash out or use as in-store credit.

"You're entrusting your items to us to sell, and you earn the money as they're selling," Haugan explained. "As they're selling, we're generating income for you."

For many families, consigning their children's outgrown items, particularly if they're name brand and can fetch a high price, beats the unpredictable nature of garage sales, where you're lucky to get \$20 for a near-mint pack and play.

But consignment shops like Kids & Kaboodle won't take

just anything. Resale items must meet certain criteria, and Haugan created a checklist she often shares with customers who are considering consigning:

- Clean
- Current
- Complete
- Cute, and
- In excellent condition.

"Cute," Haugan clarified, is more like "appealing," but she likes the alliteration.

And Kids & Kaboodle's high standards is one of the reasons the shop has thrived for 28 years.

"We are choosy," she admitted. "We have a reputation for being selective, and that's what's kept us in business for so long."

Haugan estimates about 50 percent of her customers both consign and shop, 25 percent consign only, and the remaining 25 percent buy only.

"It's the perfect blend," she said. "You're typically going to earn more than you would at a garage sale."

Consigning is also a great motivator to clear out old stuff seasonally, Haugan added, and preventing piles from stacking up in your home, attic and garage.

Kids & Kaboodle keeps its inventory fresh by keeping consigned items no more than 90 days. After three months, items are donated.

"It's always in transition – and it's a balancing act,"



Wendy Haugan

Haugan said.

Merchandise rotates seasonally, too – from August through December, the shop is accepting fall and winter items, and spring and summer items in February through June.

"It's always in transition – and it's a balancing act," Haugan said. "We try to sell down our inventory, because when that next season comes in, it comes in with a vengeance."

Kids & Kaboodle asks consigners to make an appointment to give staff adequate time to look through items.

For all gently used items that the store prices under \$10, consigners earn 40 percent of the store price, and 50 percent for \$10-\$60 items. Anything new with tags is automatically 50 percent because it's more valuable, and consignors earn 60 percent on items over \$60,

like cribs and car seat/stroller combos.

"If you have some better brands, some sets, some good equipment, you're going to get up there," Haugan said.

When she was developing her consignment system, she looked at what others were doing, and was surprised.

"Some shops take a 60 percent cut on everything," she said. "That just drove me nuts. I just couldn't, in good conscience, do that."

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Whether you gravitate toward hilarious pop culture references, sweet and sentimental sayings, images of your hometown mascot, or anywhere in between, the boutiques across the tri-state area have a variety of graphic tees to fit everyone. For the most devoted of graphic

tee fans, The Front Porch on Main

in Sibley, Iowa, even has a

T-shirt of the Month Club!

Stock is subject to change. Check with individual retailers for more information.

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Paisley Pod goes from mobile to brick-and-mortar

Story by Jill Meier • Photos by CODE:M Design



The Paisley Pod has parked. But not for good, as Brandon's mobile boutique owner has opened a brick-and-mortar location (112 E. Holly Blvd.) at Holly Crossing.

The late June opening was a dream come true for owner Chrystal Rothenberger, who first launched the mobile boutique business with her sisters, Danielle and Laura, in 2016. A year and a half later, Rothenberger went solo after buying out her sisters' shares.

Now, she's upped her game even more with the store.

"From the beginning, I wanted a store, but we had 'Betty' (a mobile boutique) Rothenberger explains. "It was awesome and a really great way to get started, but I have been growing a little bit and am bursting at the seams in my house. My garage is full. My truck is full. I have two rooms in my house that are full and I need to get it out of my house."

"Betty" will continue to have a role in The Paisley Pod operation, but the brick and mortar space allows the Brandon, S.D., entrepreneur to triple, if not quadruple, her inventory.

"Betty's really awesome to take to events and meet customers and see customers, but I also had a bunch of customers asking, 'When can I see you?' 'Where are you next?' 'We really wish you had a store.' So, to fulfill my mission to help build a community where women can feel beautiful and confident, opening the store was the next logical choice," she said.

Shoppers will see hints of Betty in the store, however.

"I had to put little hints of pink in some places in homage to Betty, but I really went with my sort of dream style: a little Joanna Gaines farmhouse inspiration. I call it 'eclectic boho farmhouse' in here," she said. "I wanted it to be different. It's got some feminine features along with the rustic-ness. I want shoppers to feel warm and welcome and energized when they come into this space."

The Paisley Pod will be open Tuesday through Sunday,

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and Rothenberger said she'll experiment with the hours in the first couple months of business there. She's added three to her sales staff and will keep them busy with customers by staging an assortment of shopping events.

"Oh, my gosh, the events are going to be fun," Rothenberger emphasizes. "That's like my favorite thing to do is to get people together and have an event or a party for some reason to come and celebrate together. So, we will definitely bump that up. Betty will still run and we'll do events with her, but if you wanted to host a private shopping party, you can do that right here in the store. If you want to do that for a fundraiser, you can do that here in the store, too. We'll host fundraising shopping nights and I'm hoping to add in a little bit of personal styling, too."

Rothenberger well remembers the day The Paisley Pod sign went up on the exterior of her storefront.

"Oh, my gosh, it was all the emotions happening that

day. I had been working on the store since St. Patrick's Day, and it's come together, but when the sign – your logo that means so much to you – rose up and was put on the store, it's like real. It's like birthing a child," says the mother of three. "It's like my baby had arrived."



Construction began mid-March on The Paisley Pod's permanent home in the space formerly occupied by Marco's Pizza. Her father Dan Meyer, husband Adam, and their kids – Rylan, Ryder, and Corbin – pounded down the stone wall that was part of the restaurant's decor.

Last winter, Rothenberger gave her brick and mortar idea

a trial run, opening a holiday pop-up shop on East Cedar Street in Brandon. The trial run proved to be successful.

"The store just opens up all kinds of possibilities. Personal styling, mother-daughter, empowerment, private parties," she said. "And it's really good timing. My youngest starts kindergarten in the fall."

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Ellie Stone Bride

Story & Photos by McClane Archer

"I love weddings, everyone's always happy."

That's the very reason Kalli Blackstone decided to venture into the wedding industry.

Blackstone opened her bridal boutique, Ellie Stone Bride, in September of 2017. It was the perfect tie-in for her event center, a popular wedding venue, the Canton Barn. The wedding fashions store is a family affair named after her granddaughter, Ellie.

Ellie Stone Bride carries a variety of both trendy and classic style dresses.

"Our most popular designers are Allure and Justin Alexander,"

Blackstone says, "We have private labels named after our grandsons, Tallen James and Jase Micheals."

And the boutique stays busy selling them. They have about 10-15 appointment daily, averaging 90 minutes according to Blackstone.

"Saturdays are definitely our busiest days," Blackstone says, "We can have up to 40 appointments."

The average entourage size is three or four people. However, Blackstone warns against succumbing to peer pressure and choosing a dress based on what other people want.

"Go with the dress that makes you happy, and makes you feel like a

bride," she says.

And Ellie Stone Bride can make any of the stock sized dresses perfect with in-house alterations available. Blackstone says about 95 percent of customers take advantage of this perk.

"Most of the time, they'll have to be hemmed," she explains.

Blackstone's favorite part of owning a bridal shop? The transformations she sees from a nervous, possibly self-conscious bride-to-be walking through the door "into the beautiful person they are".

"Our pride in our store is we see the beauty in every person who walks through the door," she says.



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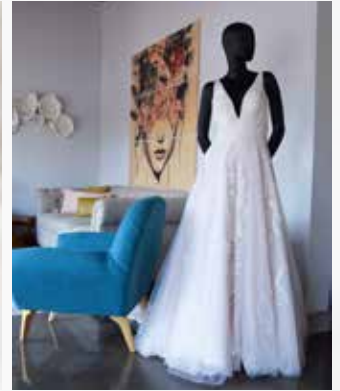
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sees beauty in all



This attitude is captured in the F. Scott Fitzgerald quote displayed in the boutique:

"She was beautiful, but not like those girls in the magazines. She was beautiful, for the way she thought. She was beautiful, for the sparkle in her

eyes when she talked about something she loved. She was beautiful, for her ability to make other people smile, even if she was sad. No, she wasn't beautiful for something as temporary as her looks. She was beautiful, deep down to her soul. She is beautiful."

Ellie Stone Bride located at 6205 S. Old Village Place, Heather Ridge on 69th Street and Western Avenue in Sioux Falls, S.D. The store is open 12-7 on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, 12-5 on Fridays, and 10-5 on Saturdays.

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