

Vonda's Collectibles is a welcome addition to business in Corralitos

Corralitos

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New store full of eclectic vintage items for classic country living has been a quick hit in town

By DONALD ALSTON

FOR THE REGISTER-PAJARONIAN

Vonda's Vintage Collectibles opened in July and, to owner Vonda Hodges' delight, the business is quickly evolving to what she originally envisioned. Three weeks ago, she opened the third room of her shop.

"I'm making my dream come true," said Hodges.

It is a pleasant experience to browse around the shop, located in Corralitos at the intersection of Freedom Boulevard and Corralitos Road. Customers are able to locate merchandise that they can't find at the big department stores. The eclectic inventory includes classic jewelry, unique hickory furniture, specialty food items and arts and crafts that all blend to create a singular theme: classic country living.

Consisting of three cozy rooms, the shop has a homey feel. Hodges said that she wants it to be "like your house." Each room has a theme: One room has jewelry and apparel; another room, rustic in appearance, is full of hickory furniture from the California Twig Company, early 20th-century prints and knickknacks; and the third room is a kitchen with an interesting assortment of food products.

Although Hodges is generally open to carrying any merchandise that fits into the theme of the store, she is most open to carrying products made by women. The art of Belinda Kumbo, whose works have been compared to Georgia O'Keeffe's, will soon be available.

Hodges features products made by her sisters-in-law, Patricia Rain and Beverly Gray.

Rain, also known as the Vanilla Bean Queen, owns The Vanilla Company, which produces a variety of products made from vanilla beans: vanilla bath products, vanilla sticks, vanilla sugar, vanilla coffee and a book on the many uses of vanilla.

In regard to the Maui Island



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Vonda Hodges, owner of Vonda's Vintage Collectibles of Corralitos, shows a sampling of aprons for young girls that were handmade by her sister-in-law.

Vanilla Sugar, Hodges said, "This one I can hardly keep in the store."

Gray makes country aprons, baby and doll blankets and embroidered throw pillows — some of which have holiday designs.

Together, these two relatives bring staples to the inventory that is expected to vary with the delightful changes that Hodges' whims and shopping adventures will bring.

During her 30 years of collecting antiques, Hodges has collected a wide range of items for her unique inventory by visiting exhibitions and gift shows. The finely-woven baskets made by a co-op of Cambodian women are an example of Hodges' rare finds; the European tea pots show her discerning eye for antiques; and the portrait of an American Indian family shows her appreciation for culture at home.



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A collection of fine decorative antique China is featured at Vonda's Vintage Collectibles.

Hodges likes to carry the works of local artists and craft persons such as Rachel's Cobbler Crumbles, which won the 2002 award at the Santa Cruz County Fair, and cat face plates by Georgiann Winfield Terese, a ceramic artist.

A Santa Cruz native, Hodges considers Corralitos to be "par-



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Vonda Hodges shows a rustic, wood rocking chair and hoop back chair in her shop. She carries a line of the furniture, from love seats to foot stools.

adise." And as you would expect from someone with that sentiment, her business is a becoming a valuable addition to Cor-

ralitos, a town that is known for its charming picture-perfect country scenes.

Vonda's Vintage Collectibles,

located at 2904-C Freedom Blvd., is open Tuesday-Saturday, noon-7 p.m., and Sunday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.