

Yours, Mine & Ours

A Fashion Resale Boutique and More in Scotts Valley

Business Profile is a regular feature of The Mid-County Post. Each issue, a Post advertiser is highlighted, offering readers an opportunity to learn more about area business owners. For more information about this feature, or how your company might be included, call Jeff Walker at The Post at 831-476-9130.

by Judith Wellner

Oranges and pinks, lots of green, red, and blue. "I call them rainbow sherbet colors," says Penny Lopez, Owner of Yours, Mine & Ours.

The clothes are arranged by genre and by color, the displays stylishly accented with purses, shoes, belts, and jewelry.

You can walk into the store with any current fashion magazine in hand and find pieces that seem to have been brought in for a photo shoot. But blindly following the latest fashion trend is not what the store is all about. The idea is to represent current looks while maintaining a classic feel.

"I read about 12 fashion magazines each month," Lopez continues. "Usually anything older than two years old is dated."

Lopez emphasizes that a successful resale fashion boutique must allow customers to find all the different labels at one place, browsing through truly unique pieces that represent the most modern styles.

"It's basically one-stop shopping that provides customers with the best, most current styles at fair prices," she says.

Penny is especially happy with today's look.

"I love the way fashion looks now," she continues. "You can match plaid stripe with polka dots. Now that's all the rage."

Fusion — Ruffles and Lace with Jeans

Penny says that the current trends are all about variety in colors and fabrics. This season has brought bold patterns, lots of embroidery, romantic blouses, airy woven tops with Victorian touches like lace, crochet, bell sleeves and ruffles. You can pair the romantic blouse with a sleek bottom, dark straight jeans or a pencil skirt.

Browsing through the lines, I find it all — the patterns, the colors, the little details. There is even a denim purse on display, one of the new hits of this season. I see brands like Esprit, DKNY, Hugo Boss, Ann Taylor, Sweetpea, Ralph Lauren, Bebe, Arden B, Kate Spade.

Penny is very selective about her merchandise.

"I know what I want when it comes to the labels and styles," she says.

She points out that while some people don't pay attention to labels, quality is certainly important for all customers.

And she believes that a good fashion store needs to be very specific about what it sells, and it needs to find its niche in the market.

"We have more classic pieces, but also very modern ones — capris, camisoles, the layering look, short crop top jackets, cargo pants," she added.

Where does it all come from?

The clothes come to the store from consigners throughout Santa Cruz County and the Monterey Peninsula. There are regular consigners as well as new ones. She points out that just like the people putting their items on consignment, customers are also from all over the region including Silicon Valley, Carmel and Sacramento.

"If you're into resale, you're going to drive to the resale

place, even if it's farther away," says Lopez. "Clothes make us feel good. ... We love to help women feel good about themselves. We love to show them something they would've never

came off the rack," says Lopez.

Once she has decided which pieces they are interested in, Yours, Mine & Ours will determine the selling price and attempt to sell each chosen



thought of wearing but they look amazing in it."

Selling is a Serious Business

She emphasizes that selling is a serious business. When somebody wants to be a consigner, they really have to understand the style of the store, what usually sells and what doesn't.

"We always recommend that consigners come in first, check and see what we carry. It saves us all time," she says.

Once you feel you have a good sense of the store, you can make an appointment and bring in some clothes. No more than 15 pieces at once.

"Everything needs to be freshly laundered. As if it just

garment for 90 days. If they don't sell, they will either be donated or given back to the consigner, whichever option they prefer.

"We sell about 75 percent to 80 percent of what we get in," says Lopez.

The store gets 60 percent of the selling price, the consigner 40 percent.

The Woman Behind the Scene

Before Yours, Mine & Ours, Lopez had never owned a business. She worked in public relations for several years, but then one day got laid off.

"I wasn't thinking about opening a store. It sort of fell into my lap. I knew the previ-

ous owner, who asked whether I'd be interested," says Penny.

She has been running the business for more than four years, and she is very happy with how it has turned out.

"I see it as an opportunity to take an idea and push it beyond what I thought was possible," she says.

Penny wanted to make the store her own.

"I made lots of changes in the store," she continues. "It used to be older clientele. Now the age group is 30 to 60."

Sales have also increased. Penny feels that this is mostly because she knows her clientele, found the niche in the market. She also emphasizes the importance of flexibility.

"I'm always open to change," she says. "When you own a business you have to be that way. But you have to keep your core ideas, of course."

Penny lives in Ben Lomond with her husband and two children. Besides the boutique, she also runs three tanning salons, with 24 employees.

"I'm very busy. I really need to prioritize, juggle time," she says.

But Penny does love fashion. Her favorites include BCBG, Banana Republic, Dolce & Gabbana, Chanel.

"I wear my BCBG boots everywhere. They're bronze and green and gold. They are beautiful. They get lots of comments," she says.

When she is looking for something new to wear, Lopez goes to other resale shops in town.

"That's where I shop. I'm not threatened by competition. Every store has their own niche," she says.

If you would like to check out Yours, Mine & Ours, you can find it at 220C Mt. Hermon Road in Scotts Valley, or call 831-461-9733. ■