

Zinnia's Home and Garden — A Mecca of Gifts and Decorating Ideas

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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 Annie Luxmore

As I passed through the open doors of Zinnia's Home and Garden, a black modern-styled end table caught my eye. Its surface shined as if adorned by jewels. Zinnia's owner, Marion Palm, was finishing up with a customer and I had time to fully inspect the end table. An illuminated mosaic surface melded perfectly into the straight lines of the elegant table. I later found out that the piece was originally all one color and texture. But after it suffered a scratch, Marion called upon a local artist to turn the tragedy into a treasure.

This type of originality and creativity seems to jump from every corner of Zinnia's. From hand blown glass hummingbird feeders to botanical jewelry to Little Giraffe baby blankets, Zinnia's is stocked full of exceptional gifts and home décor.

"We really try to find very unique and different things," said Marion. "We're constantly changing — adding new lines and finding new artists."

Marion came to Zinnia's after spending time in many different fields, one of which was garden design. Her expertise, along with the skills of her eclectic staff, makes each section of the store a masterpiece of colors and charming gift and decorating ideas.

A Sight to Be Seen

Zinnia's is divided into many different areas, each with a theme. An elegant living room is arranged in the front, with a couch, chair, coffee tables and



Zinnia's is an eclectic masterpiece of home décor and gifts.

both modern and traditional pieces. Across the room sits a silk flower garden and walls garnished with art.

Behind the counter, you'll find an area that resembles a kitchen, with cabinets full of beautifully designed glassware, elaborate hand-painted dishes, wooden planks and rubs for grilling, fur aprons, cookbooks and much more.

In the back, colorful hand-blown glass hummingbird feeders hang next to birdhouses made from vintage architectural pieces. Glass butterfly feeders that resemble tulips with long stems are propped in a flowerpot.

Next to the garden accessories sits a shelf full of pet gifts. Elaborately stitched pillows showing the stately pug and other dog breeds are displayed in baskets. Pet signs, gourmet treats and designer collars adorn the area.

You'll also find a full display of baby gifts, glass bowls and vases, candles and candleholders, jewelry, mirrors, lamps, cabinets, bath and body products, serving tables and much more.

But don't expect the store to stay the same for very long.

"We have customers come in twice a week to see what new

things we have," said Marion.

"New things come in every-day," added Phyllis, staff member, painter and former floral designer.

Christmas is by no means an exception. The Zinnia's staff is already gearing up for this season's winter wonderland.

"It's a place to be awe-struck at Christmas," said Marion. "The whole store is completely changed."

Zinnia's Supports Local Artists

If you're looking to purchase locally designed and crafted products, Zinnia's is the place to shop. Almost every product category contains pieces from a local artist, including the jewelry, wall art and baby gifts.

"We really try to support our community," said Marion. "We feature a lot of local artists. Most of our jewelry is local."

Along with the jewelry, you'll find pieces strategically placed all over the store designed by local craftsperson Janette Brennan. Janette practices the art of Pique Assiette, a folk art that draws on traditional mosaic techniques and became popular during the Victorian Era when peo-

ple began turning their broken heirloom china into beautiful decorative pieces for their homes. Janette designed the surface of the end table that caught my attention at the beginning of my visit.

Many Zinnia's customers also work with the local artists to create custom pieces.

"One of the local artists is a painter," said Marion. "She'll draw portraits of pets or family members for our customers."

Furniture Galore

Though many home and gift stores shy away from furniture, Zinnia's is focusing more and more on larger pieces. The store now carries couches, chairs, coffee tables, end tables, and cabinets in a variety of styles. Their list of furniture lines is always expanding, including the latest addition, Designer Paul Robert.

Many staff members are also skilled in pairing fabric, style and color to create a custom look for a couch and chair. Customers can peruse a full collection of fabric and furniture styles to custom match their décor. So don't fret if the perfect piece is not on the showroom floor.

"If somebody's looking for something and we don't have it,

we'll try our best to find it for them," said Marion. "As quickly as we can."

Special orders can be made for other accessories as well, including lamps.

"We do a lot of special ordering," said Phyllis. "We're here to give people ideas."

A Unique Store with a Unique Staff

Zinnia's Home and Garden seems to be a place for friends. The staff knows many of the customers on a first-name basis, there is always laughter in the air and nothing is out of the question when it comes to making someone happy. The doors are routinely re-opened for desperate shoppers, staff members make frequent house calls and there is always courtesy gift-wrapping.

"Our employees are wonderful," said Marion. "We have a great time and everybody has different skills. It's all about teamwork."

According to Phyllis, one of Zinnia's staff members is a singer and will serenade customers upon request.

The most appreciated asset, however, is the staff's ability to see a finished design.

"The customers view our eclectic collection and see a variety of things that they can use," said Phyllis. "We're willing to help them with their design ideas. We help them put it all together."

Marion and the rest of Zinnia's staff have been helping local residents "put it all together" for almost four years now. On June 4, Zinnia's will be hosting "Customer Appreciation Day" to celebrate their anniversary and say thank you to their many customers. There will be a barbecue, music, many door prizes and a host of other surprises. Marion and Phyllis promise it's an event not to miss.

Zinnia's is located in Graham Plaza next to the Starbucks in Scotts Valley, at 219 C Mount Hermon Road. They can be reached by calling 831-430-ZINN (9466). □