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Spotlight on Success

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Kinks, Quirks and Caffeine Offers Furniture, Clothes, Gifts and Accessories That Will Make a Statement

By K. H. Queen

Whether you're shopping for yourself or for a one-of-a-kind gift, you'll want to linger at Kinks, Quirks & Caffeine as you browse among hand-painted champagne flutes, a cabinet fashioned like a face and a nine-foot angel made from a tree. This store will help you make a statement.

"If you want to give a gift to someone who has everything, go to Kinks, Quirks & Caffeine," said Stephanie Grogan, who has been shopping at the store since it first opened 10 years ago. "I always get remarks from people: 'You find the neatest gifts.' I always answer: 'Kinks, Quirks & Caffeine.' Every item you purchase there is going to be a comment piece."

The Williamsburg store has been open for 10 years next to Fresh Market in the Colony Square Shopping Center. Current owner Jennifer Raines bought the store in May 2006. This spring, she launched a website and opened a second store in Riverwalk Landing in Yorktown.

Coffee is offered as a convenience to customers, but don't let the name fool you. This is not solely a coffee shop.

"It's a contemporary handcrafts gallery," Raines said. "I seek out craft shows, art shows and other galleries like mine to find unique pieces that I love. One of the many joys of carrying handcrafts is the opportunity to work with the artists and help design something special that fits in my store. In addition to local artists, I carry work from nearly 400 artists throughout the country to enhance the eclectic feeling of the store."

This is also the kind of place where customers transition into employees and everyone feels like family. "I have a talented staff - the best staff any store owner could ask for," Raines said. "Everyone here is full of joy and laughter. The service our customers receive is beyond description. The greatest compliment our employees have paid me is that they all began as customers."

Lori Erwin fits that description. She has been shopping at Kinks, Quirks & Caffeine for almost four years and working there since November. She loves the atmosphere. "That really is the greatest thing about working here and shopping here for that



Left to right: Donna Silva, Lori Erwin, owner Jennifer Raines, Julia Moore

matter - the joking, the laughter, the general good feeling you have when you're here," she said. "When you come in, you hear the music and the fountains and it's so soothing you can't help but chill out."

This isn't the kind of store you rush through. "We have great hostess gifts and we are starting to carry larger pieces of furniture, all of which are just beautiful," Erwin said. "We have Island Cowgirl sterling silver and leather jewelry and painted wine glasses. You'll need to walk around the store at least five times to see everything."

While maintaining the original owner's vision, Raines has expanded offerings to reflect a wide price range. STICKS art furniture, some of which costs thousands of dollars, reflects Raines' love and appreciation for unique, funky and beautiful craftsmanship. "They are all really beautiful pieces," she said. "I am in awe of the way an artist takes an idea and transforms it into art. A great example of this is from a Richmond artist, Mehmet. I have a cabinet that he made that is a face. To open it, you pull on the nose. You open the drawer by pulling on the lips. You'd have to see it to believe it. You'd think you would have to travel to a metropolitan city to find the kind of artwork offered right here in Williamsburg."

There's something for everyone at Kinks, Quirks & Caffeine. "You don't have to spend thousands of dollars to shop here," she said. "We have wonderful unique gifts such as key chains, wine toppers, signs, frames, candles and magnets that will make you feel just as fabulous for a fraction of the cost."

Other items you and your friends will love include hand-painted champagne flutes, whimsical bubble baths that look like ice cream scoops and the STICKS line of furniture and accent pieces.

You won't have to worry that your gift will be identical to someone else's offering if you buy yours at Kinks, Quirks & Caffeine. Raines works with many artists, often buying only a couple of items from each, to

ensure the variety and creative energy is appealing to customers. "I want my store to be an extension of me," she said. "I can look at any piece and tell you about the conversation the artist and I were having when I picked that piece out."

For Raines, the store represents a lifelong dream come true.

"I remember as a young girl telling my mom I wanted to be a store owner," she said. She visited Kinks, Quirks & Caffeine with her mom and sister six years ago. "I said, 'See, Mom, this is the kind of store I've always wanted to have - very funky, very girly.'"

Years later while in the midst of a successful but stifling corporate career, Raines found out her dream store was for sale. "When I contacted the owners, they already had a buyer they were working with," she said. "I convinced them I was the right person to own this store and that I would be a great fit with passion and continued vision."

About the same time she met the man who is now her fiancé. They are planning a 2008 wedding. Her life now is reminis-

cent of the nine-foot STICKS sculpture - the angel made of tree trunks. Raines calls the piece her Hallelujah Lady. "She's my symbol, looking up to the sky saying Hallelujah. That's me. I wake up every day truly happy with my life and what I'm doing with it."



Mehmet's Face Cabinet



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