

Pick of the bunch

A profile of Pickets & Primrose

By BREN CHISHOLM



ARDEN

Home décor shops seem to pop up everywhere and they start to look alike. But every once in a while, a store comes along that you find yourself returning to again and again. You may even tell your

friends about it because you're so impressed. Pickets and Primrose is one such store and is run by Jenny McConnell and her cousin/business partner, Angela Kirkland. Visitors have been enchanted with their unique take on tradition since their opening two years ago in Milton.

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Their specialty is home décor of primarily vintage and antique style. "We even have some vintage chandeliers," says McConnell. They also pride themselves on their careful handling of one-of-a-kind pieces and base their success on the careful selection procedure they follow. Thorough research is involved to ensure the items they receive aren't redundant. "Our biggest challenge is bringing in affordable items, and making sure they can't be found in the store down the road", says Kirkland.

Their original store location was a source of frustration in that conditions weren't entirely comfortable plus they were unable to successfully renegotiate their lease to their liking. "A move wasn't something we planned but we figured it was the card we had been dealt", says Kirkland.

Although initially overwhelmed with the idea of relocating, they decided to see what Campbellville had to offer and were pleasantly surprised to find out rent was far more reasonable. They found an ideal location on 6 Main Street N. (known by the locals as the old emporium) that had been completely revamped and sat directly below Cranberry Hill Kitchens. And it was only approximately 8 miles away from their old location!

Even a short move can be a huge undertaking yet McConnell and Kirkland managed to pack things up and relocate to their new place in two short weeks.

One week was reserved to pack up and the second was dedicated to the task of unpacking and getting settled. The ladies admit that husbands, in-laws and a number of select friends are responsible for getting them up and running in a tight period of time. "We owe them!" laughs Kirkland. Their doors opened for business Saturday, November 6 at 10:00 am with one half of their visitors comprising of visiting tourists and the other half being established customers who received their move notification and wanted to see what the ladies had done.

The official "Grand" opening has yet to be announced but will likely fall sometime in December.

The name "Pickets and Primrose" came from a list of words jotted down that they wanted to personify their store. What McConnell and Kirkland decided upon suits their unusual mix of casual and elegance.

In addition to the store, McConnell & Kirkland are contributing to the community behind the scenes. This will be their sec-

ond year as participants in the United Way Christmas House Tour, which has been taking place now for the past twenty-two years. Proceeds go to benefiting those less fortunate. The event is scheduled for Friday, November 19 and Saturday, November 20, 2004. Six houses will be lavishly decorated by a number of volunteers in the designer and retailer sector of Milton. Those lending out their houses for the event are given the full treatment. "People want to see Christmas 'overdone' and that's just what we do!" quips McConnell.

Pickets & Primrose have been given the task of sprucing up a heritage home on Victoria Street in Campbellville. Although there are a number of other businesses involved in this annual gala, Anne Eadie, Executive Director of the Milton United Way says, "Pickets and Primrose assist in the selling of tickets to this event and they also sit on the committee."

As enjoyable as the event is, "The saddest part", admits McConnell, "is coming in after the tour to take everything down but the homeowners often want to purchase some of the decorations!" And naturally, visitors of the tour want to come into their store to see what else they have to offer.

There are stores you visit once that you never give another thought to. Then there is Pickets and Primrose which might help you find just what you are looking for - Christmas or any other time.

Hours of operation are Tuesday - Friday, 10 am - 5 pm; Saturday 10 am - 4 pm; Sunday 11 am - 4 pm; Monday: CLOSED.

Further information of the United Way

Christmas House Tour can be obtained by calling the United Way Office at 905-875-2550. You may also purchase your tickets by dropping in to Pickets & Primrose.

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