

# Christmas, Boxing Day sales soar...

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adding what she appreciates is the personal service, the wide selection and the prices.

"I hope more people shop in Acton instead of going to Wal-Mart," Wilson said, adding with all of the new stores opening in town, she can always find what she's looking for.

Gift certificates for spa treatments were the runaway sales item at the newly opened Blue Springs Spa on Mill Street, according to owner Kristine Cieslok who said holiday traffic and sales were "phenomenal."

"It was mind-boggling," Cieslok said on Saturday, adding she sold 400 gift certificates, double what she'd anticipated.

"I'm totally elated and thrilled, and I thank God every day," she said, adding business is booming because Blue Springs offers services not available locally until now, including full service packages to

couples, groups, and, popular this year, mother and daughter spa visits.

At Country Reflections, owner Judy MacDonald, said sales were "wonderful."

"It was very good. I was busy non-stop. I did so many gift baskets - it was just a great year," MacDonald said, adding she was busy the entire week prior to Christmas, not just on the 24th, when things are usually hectic.

One of the biggest sellers at Country Reflections was Bradford Exchange collectibles, along with Tilley hats, socks and underwear.

MacDonald said she is now closed on both Mondays and Tuesdays, because she needed more time to actually run the business when customers aren't there.

Olde Hide House president John Brison, fresh from a restructuring that saw the founding Dawkins family divest itself of the

business, said they are "quite happy" with Boxing week sales.

"We're happy with traffic levels. We're happy with conversion of customers to sales, and quite honestly, given the fact that it's been extremely warm and we are in the outerwear business, business has been very, very good," Brison said on Monday.

He would not divulge specific percentage increases in sales, but said he was "happy with the results, and that they are very favourable to last year from the same period."

Brison said Boxing Day was not quite as busy as the previous year, but sales the week before Christmas more than made up for it.

In the Acton East plaza, Pet Valu franchisee Rhonda Fox said business was up 100 per cent over last year.

"I don't know why," Fox said on Monday when asked to explain the huge sales increase, adding sales

have been up generally since she took over the franchise on April 30th, this year.

"Sales were excellent - it's far exceeded what we thought. We knew the business would grow over the years, but I mean it's like 'wow.' We're very pleased with how well it has taken off for us," Fox said.

Next door at Pharma Plus Drugmart, manager Jason Canny said they did "fairly well" in Christmas sales, but wouldn't know the actual percentage increase in sales until he gets the numbers from head office by the end of the week.

"Our customer count was up seven per cent, so our sales were up," Canny said on Monday, adding their sales have been "trending up" ever since they opened almost two years ago.



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**SUZIE Q WINNER:** Tania Crook right, accepts her Christmas "stocking" from proprietor Susan Quinn at the Willow St. store on Monday Dec.22. Tania had her pick of \$100 worth of merchandise from the store when her name was drawn on Dec. 21 for a shopping spree. She selected jeans, overalls, pants, shirts and stockings from the store's selection.

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