

Wild Flowers Consignment



What's the difference between consignment and thrift? Laurie Boycott, owner of the new Wild Flowers Consignment in downtown Owen Sound, will be happy to explain it to you. Her business model puts money back into the local economy by paying women for their second-hand clothes. She's not a thrift store.

"It all comes from local women and they get their money when the items sell," she explains. "There's value to it in the sense that it's quality pieces."

Getting really nice clothes at a discount is only one of the values that Boycott and many others in the community place in this kind of business model.

"For me, I've always been into second-hand since I like that it's good for the environment," she says. "People are thinking more sustainably these days."

That may be part of the reason Wild Flowers Consignment has been so busy since it opened on September 5. Another reason is that Boycott is there to help customers find the right pieces for them. They can safely try things on in one of her three change rooms. She feels that a person needs to try an item on to know if it's right for them.

"That's always rewarding when you see someone get really excited about a piece," she says and recounts an interaction with a customer the other day who came in looking for something specific. She found it for a fraction of the price that it would be new. "She was over the moon," Boycott says proudly. That's one part of being a business owner that excites her.



She offers a 'wish list' for customers seeking specific items, which is just one practice she's adopting as she learns this whole entrepreneurship thing.

Boycott spent the previous twenty years working as a pharmacy technician until she lost her job in January. But she looked at it as an opportunity to turn her side-job into her main gig. She was selling consignment part-time Online and thought to pursue it as a main income. She contemplated other options like going back to school but kept coming back to the consignment idea.

The name Wild Flowers was chosen to match her vision and because it made sense given the industry. "I felt like...in the case of second-hand clothes you never know what you're going to find," she says. "And I think it speaks to women – we're so different and diverse. Our bodies are different."

She's received a lot of help along the way this year from friends and family, which is important for anyone starting out. "I stepped out into a huge unknown opening a store. I'm learning massively," she says. "There are definitely a lot of people who have helped me along the way."

Her September 5 opening was a success and now she's seeing repeat customers, which she's really happy about. But she also recognizes that this fall/winter brings some uncertainty. "Now that the numbers are

climbing there's always that fear we will we go back into lockdown," she says. "I'm still stressed about it to be honest. The peace hasn't come yet, but it's going well."



If she's forced to close to the store for a period of time, she is definitely positioned well to continue with Online sales. If you follow her social media feeds, you'll notice she's very active at putting together outfits and showcasing specific items that come in.

It would be difficult to go back to Online for someone who feels strongly that clothes need to be tried on to know if they look good, but she's optimistic that things are going to go well. I mean, you have to be an optimistic person to open a store during a pandemic. She's happy she did and so are many women in Owen Sound who like quality

clothes at an affordable price.

So head on in to see for yourself. She offers three change rooms and is careful about safety and keeping everything sanitized.

But regardless if her store is physically open or if she's online for a little while this winter, she's part of the downtown business community, and that won't change.

"It's a cool community to be a part of," she says. "People have been really positive"

Written by Jesse Wilkinson