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Health & Wellness Issue

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The name says it all

NOT JUST FOR THE GARDEN IS TWO-THIRDS INTERIOR DECOR

Thursday July 19, 2007

Andrea Utter

AS ITS NAME PROCLAIMS, there's more to this quaint Belmont Village store than garden decor. Not Just For The Garden does have a healthy array of products for an outdoor oasis, but it's also chock full of cool urban wares for inside the home, too.

"We called it Not Just for the Garden because we carry pieces for the interior and a lot of our metal pieces could be employed for both," owner Eleanor LaPorte explains.

The landscape designer turned retailer says their focus has changed over the years. "The store is now two-thirds interior decor and one-third garden decor, but our focus is on products for both indoors and outdoors."

SMART MOVE

In April 2001, two years after opening their first location just off Blair Road in Cambridge, Eleanor and co-owner/husband Doug Cameron discovered the space in Kitchener's busy Belmont Village. "We didn't know a lot about retail when we opened the store in Blair," Eleanor says. "But we realized when we moved to Belmont, it's location location location when it comes to retail."

Business boomed as soon as the Kitchener store unlocked its door. "How we could move product at the Belmont location compared to the Blair location was like night and day," she says.

"In Blair, we saw people twice a year, but it's more likely we will see people weekly in our Kitchener store."

A year later, the pair closed their Blair shop after acquiring the neighbouring unit on Belmont, where they house a big selection of garden statues, botanicals and accessories.

STYLE-SAWY

"The urban contemporary style of the store is not as gender-oriented because it's not pouffy and frilly," Eleanor says. "The home is for the whole family and design should be something you can live with and enjoy, not something you can only look at." Small nooks are filled with quirky accessories, giving the store a sense of humour.

"Our inspiration for the pet room is our children, Jazz (a golden retriever) and Tuffy, Buffy and Zuffy (the three cats)."

HOMEWARD BOUND

In scouring the market for merchandise, Eleanor's criteria are to find products with a Canadian connection. "We want to support the Canadian economy whether it's through our artists or manufacturers."

LESSON LEARNED

On a summer stroll in the village, stop by to get your creative juices flowing. Eleanor creates custom arrangements for clients on the go, but also offers seminars throughout the season on container gardening, everlasting wreaths and garden sculpting with plant materials.

"Lots of people come into a store like ours and see all these things, but don't know what to do with them," she says. "If you don't feel you can do it, we can do it for you. But if you are feeling creative, come to one of our seminars and we'll help you do it yourself."

FLYING OUT THE DOOR



Husband-and-wife retail team of Doug Cameron and Eleanor LaPorte own Not Just For the Garden.
(Robert Wilson)

Chilewich indoor/outdoor placemats and table runners, \$9 to \$53.

Jane Mackay art glass serving dishes, \$11 to \$160.

Michelle Beaudoin magnetic board with eight decorative magnets, \$53.

Canadian-made canvas art, \$50 to \$500.

HOT SUMMER DEALS

Dazzling Gourmet great Canadian pate knife, \$11.

Concrete bird bath, \$159.

Adventures With Wine: Naked Tasting Party set, \$34.

In-store favourites

Verbois glass-top trolley side table, \$269.

Domistyle cooking aprons, \$40 to \$50.

Max Pawfection dog collars and leashes (with sayings like "One of us has no balls"), \$18 to 25.

Not Just for the Garden is located at 730 Belmont St. W., Kitchener. Call 519-571-0000. Website: www.notjustforthegarden.ca

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Grand Magazine, 160 King Street East,
Kitchener, Ontario N2G 4E5
Phone: (519) 895-5214
Fax: (519) 894-3912

