

ec

THE EMERALD COAST MAGAZINE

SECOND TIME'S THE CHARM

Bagging affordable
fab finds is très chic



**SALARY SURVEY
SAYS ...** We sneak
a peek at some local
paychecks and reveal
who makes what

'30A STYLE' SCRIBE
Lynn Nesmith's
newest book opens
the doors to 22
spectacular homes

**PLACE YOUR
'BEST' BETS**
This year's 'Best of
the Emerald Coast'
ballot is inside!

\$3.95 JUN-JUL 2011



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SHOPPING RESALE
 BOUTIQUES AND
 CONSIGNMENT SHOPS
 IS FASHIONABLE,
 AFFORDABLE AND FUN
 BY ZANDRA WOLFGRAM

OKLAHOMA
 OCT
SEASIDE

Sm. \$5 MED. \$5 LG. \$6
 Add Cream or Chocolate \$1.00
 Add Soft Cream or Chocolate \$1.00
 1X Any 3 Single Flavors

BANANA BERRY BERRY SOUR
 BLUEBERRY BLUE BUBBLE GUM
 CHERRY COCONUT
 GRAPE GREEN APPLE
 LEMON

MARGARITA TUTTI-FRUITI
 PEACH PINEAPPLE

THE ONE OF OUR
SUGAR FREE
 FLAVORS

CORN BREAD
 PLEASE

BAD DATE
 BUBBA FLAVOR
 BUBBA BERRY
 BUBBA BERRY
 BUBBA BERRY

BLUE HAVAN
 BIG DUC JUICE
 BILLY BEAR
 BILLY

CHANCE
 CHERRY BLUE

CHERRY COLA

CHERRY
 CHERRY

CHERRY
 CHERRY

CRAWFORD
 CRAWFORD

FEELING
 TROPICAL

FIRST CLASS SECOND HAND



SHAVED ICE
 LIME IN THE COCONUT
 RASPBERRY LIMEADE
 ROOT BEER FLOAT
 SILLY WABBIT
 TWASHER
 TWASHER'S BLOOD

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 COCONUT CREAM THE
 CHERRY RICE
 GET YOUR SHAVED ICE
 WITH FRODO CUSTARD OR
 MAKE IT A PIGLET
 SHAVED ICE WITH
 \$2.99 \$1.99

FREEZE

DRINK
 Coca-Cola

VINTAGE Just as refreshing as the blue raspberry snow cones at Trist sites is this vintage 1970s polka dot and striped belted halter dress in sear sucker cotton, \$69; round-necked leather embellished sandals with gold filigree danglers circa 1960s, \$22; yellow-green cat-eye sunglasses circa 1950s, \$45; vinyl case in lime, \$28; basket weave purse with leather handles, circa 1960s, \$39; gold filigree and white bebble bracelet, circa 1950s, \$29. Fashions by SHANGHAI VINTAGE BOUTIQUE. Hair & makeup BARBE ORTIZ, AVANTGARDE AYESA SALON

CREATIVE DIRECTION BETH NABI STYLING ZANDRA WOLFGANG ACCOMMODATIONS INN BY THE SEA BY YERA BRADLEY, SEASIDE, PROVIDED BY COTTAGE RENTAL AGENCY, SEASIDE THANKS TO MO AT BUD & ALLEY'S, TOM AT CENTRAL RECORDS, CHRIS AT CRUSH AND MIKE AT FROST BITES SPECIAL THANKS TO DEKE LEE AT AVANTGARDE AYTGA SALON VERY SPECIAL THANKS TO JON IRVIN, AMY COBLE, PAM AYERA, PAMELA THOMPSON AND THE TOWN OF SEASIDE AS IT CELEBRATES ITS 30TH ANNIVERSARY IN 2011

Thank goodness for the woman's curse," jokes Fort Walton Beach shop owner Tara Wesley, who says her resale business concept called The Closet Swap hinges on a woman's prerogative to buy clothing, shoes and accessories thinking she'll wear them when, in fact, many never do.

Over her lifetime, according to the United Kingdom's *Daily Mail* newspaper, a woman spends 25,184 hours and 53 minutes shopping — approximately three years. While the American Research Group says resale shoppers don't fit into any particular demographic profile type, it reports that 33 percent of all Americans will shop at a "second hand" store in any given year.

The resale industry claims to be one of the fastest growing retail segments. NARTS, the National Association of Resale Professionals, reports a 7 percent annual growth in new stores over the past two years, bringing to 300,000 the number of resale consignment and thrift shops across the U.S. that are ringing up to a multi-billion dollar industry.

With women making 85 percent of all annual brand purchases — equating to \$5 trillion dollars or half the U.S. GDP (gross domestic product) — resale shop owners may be happily thinking, "We may need a bigger bag." And the good news for shoppers? Shopping reportedly burns 48,000 calories a year, so at least you are assured to look fetching in all of your nearly new fab finds.

NARTS claims the resale industry is one of the few "recession proof" segments of retailing. In a 2010 membership survey, the association reported a 12.7 percent growth spurt in resale sales for 2009, while the U.S. Department of Commerce showed a downward trend in retail sales of 7.3 percent. Yet, ironically, despite the drop in sales, the retail prices passed on to consumers remain as stiff as a brand new Ralph Lauren button down.

According to Marsha Chouinard, director of retail for Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort for the past 23 years, the retail markup on women's apparel can be 50 percent or more. "Brands that are hot can ask even more because they are in demand," she says, adding that buyers will pay even higher markups for off-brand styles. "Right now I am seeing a lot of knockoff lines at market that have the look of a trendy shop such as Forever 21 for cheap prices. They are known as 'ready ships' that you can order today and get next week, which retailers can mark up three times as much as what they pay for them."

Shoppers don't want to burn through their hard earned cash or look frumpy even if the economy is in a slump. So, many savvy fashionistas along the Emerald Coast look to resale and consignment boutiques to line their closet with fashion forward styles — but without the designer price tags.

Consignment shops operate under a sales system in which the consigner gets paid an agreed upon percentage of the item's price when the store makes a sale. Resale shops generally pay consigning clients up front in cash or in store credit.

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AVA'S ATTIC

12889 Emerald Coast
Pkwy., Miramar Beach
(850) 434-8767
TheAvasAttic.com

SHOP HERE FOR women's apparel sizes 0 to 20, shoes, purses, jewelry and children's apparel.

HOW IT WORKS: Any time during store hours, bring in freshly laundered, pressed clothes on hangers. Style of clothing and shoes must be within the last two years. Consignment period is for 60 days. Unsold items available for 70 days are sold as clearance or donated to charity (you can pick up a tax receipt).

The deal is you receive 40 percent of the selling price when an item sells within 60 days. Ava's Attic cuts checks once a month to consignors for balances over \$10. Pick up check or use balance toward purchases. Have check with a balance of \$20 or more mailed to you for \$2 fee.

HOT SELLERS are designer tops and women's rings.

SPECIALTIES here are designer labels and furs.

ONE COOL FEATURE is the complimentary pickup service for clients with several items to consign.

WORKING GIRL: The Grammy goes to this Cynthia Steffe three-quarter sleeved short-sleeved dress with embellished ribbon piping and beaded details, \$99 (retail \$190); All About Back Link, \$34 (retail \$69); Steve Madden hat in lace up pumps, \$24 (retail \$49); Isabella (Joan Klein) handbag in gold leather, \$29 (retail \$49); costume pearl necklace, \$4 (retail \$60); etched silver statement ring, \$8 (retail \$29). Fashion by **AVA'S ATTIC CONSIGNMENT BOUTIQUE**. Hair & makeup by **BARBIE DINTZ, WASTAURORA AVISA SALON**.

All consignment, resale shops sell nearly new items at a discount that ranges from 30 percent to 75 percent below the retail cost. And with price tags still hanging from some merchandise, the buyer can snag a brand new item at a huge savings. The stores are obviously a hit with local bargain hunters, as local resale and consignment shops often turn over their inventory in a matter of weeks, if not days.

Whether you are going for a particular look, or simply find the savings too attractive to pass up, there are plenty of fashionable options available in the area to suit any budget, taste and style.

IT'S HIP TO BE GREEN

With a degree in sociology, easygoing Tara Wesley, 37, says she had no clue about what she wanted to do for a living when she graduated Florida State University. But she was certain about one thing: "I couldn't sit still long enough to have a desk job, so I took those out of the equation and came up with service and real estate." Her first jobs included working as a makeup artist and in a hair salon. Once children came along, she wanted to be certain her time away from them was spent on something she absolutely loved.

She set up the first iteration of The Closet Swap with a college friend in Destin six years ago. In 2009 she decided to go solo and relocated her store to downtown Fort Walton Beach, where she also makes her home with her husband and two kids. She says it was a great business decision. "I couldn't imagine my store anywhere else. The sense of community is fantastic. We're a group of merchants that really care about what we do," she says.

One thing Wesley cares deeply about is operating a "green" store. "When I opened my store, I drove my contractors nutty because I insisted everything in the store was going to be recycled, repurposed or organic," she says. She pillaged flea markets, salvage yards and Habitat for Humanity for materials for the historic 1933 space. She left all of the beams exposed and dropped the old cast iron sprinkler system down, converting the pipes into clothing racks. "I recycle and compost. I try to make my footprint extremely small," she says. "I think now more than ever it's trendy to do that. We're a resale shop, so it makes sense."

Wesley's shop embellishes the typical shopping experience. In addition to offering a kids' playroom and hosting style parties, where she makes experts available to





BEACH CASUAL Make a shapely statement as impressive as the Coleman pavilion in Michael Kors' maxi dress in a brown/tan geometric print, \$69 (retail \$150); Seale beach hat, \$12 (retail \$25); orange beaded chandelier earrings, \$12 (retail \$28); gold-plated bangle bracelets, \$10 (retail \$35); Chico's embellished gold-plated bracelet, \$12 (retail \$38); ruffled flats by Dupica Dupica, \$29 (retail \$70). Fashions by **AVA'S ATTIC CONSIGNMENT BOUTIQUE**. Hair & makeup by **BABBE ORTE, AVANTGARDE KYEDA SALON**.

help her customers with everything from fashion advice to hair trends, she contends she has the only shop along the Emerald Coast that pays cash "on the spot" to customers who bring in items for sale.

What's "hot" in this Closet? Wesley says designer denim is her shop's number one item and she devotes two large racks to it. As for fashion trends, Wesley says dresses are a sure bet. "We sell a lot of cute, comfy casual dresses paired with flip flops or booties. Dresses that are versatile and comfortable that don't have a specific season are popular."

A 'FASHIONABLE' FAMILY AFFAIR

With more than 1,000 consignors bringing in more than 400 designer apparel pieces, shoes, bags and accessories each week, Ava's Attic is a resale treasure trove. Owned and operated by 26-year-old Courtney Hood, the Miramar Beach shop named for Hood's 3-year-old daughter has been in full swing since 2009. Relatively new to the consignment scene, Hood is proud her store earned the "Best Of the Emerald Coast" award in its second year of operation.

Ava's is truly a "fashionable" family affair. Hood's mother, Susan Henry, manages a consignment furniture store under the same name that connects to Hood's shop. They are hoping the concept of "clustering" like shops will attract even more shoppers than having separate locations.

It appears to be working for Peggy Schweppe, a customer from Freeport. She bought a "one-of-a-kind picture of a chicken for her bathroom" from Ava's Attic furniture store two months ago and though she doesn't usually buy resale apparel, on this trip she was browsing the racks to see

CONTINUES ON PAGE 66



FORMAL Are you game for this bead-encrusted L'Orléans gown in shimmering taupe? \$900 (retail \$2,500); glitter-plated cocktail ring with an amber stone, \$10 (retail \$34). Fashions by **AKKS ATIC CONSIGNMENT BOUTIQUE**. Hair & makeup by **SARAH BARTO, AVANTGARDE Aveda SALON**.

THE CLOSET SWAP

222-A Miracle Strip Pkwy.,
Fort Walton Beach
(850) 226-7743
TheClosetSwap.com

THE VIBE of this shop is artsy and urban.

HOW IT WORKS: On Tuesdays and Thursdays the shop accepts freshly laundered apparel in perfect condition that is one to two years old, designer shoes and jewelry.

THE DEAL is for your accepted items, you can choose cash on the spot or a store credit valued at one-and-a-half times the value of cash.

HOT SELLERS are designer denim, dresses, blots, skirts and shoes.

ONE COOL FEATURE is the kids' playroom where children can hang out while mom shops, sipping a freshly brewed coffee.



DATE NIGHT Heat up "date night" in this White House Black Market boat neck halter polyester/spandex dress, \$111 (retail \$141); Colin Stuart rhinestone sandals, \$25 (retail \$98); crimson clutch with floral and bead blossom embellishment, designed by Michelle Schiess for the J & Em Clutch Co., \$95; ice pink rhinestone and drop pearl chandelier earrings, \$12 (retail \$50); rhinestone encrusted petal pink rose statement ring, \$12 (retail \$26). Fashions by THE CLOSET SWAP, INC. Hair & makeup by SARAH BARTO, HAIR; SARAH AVIDA SALON.

SHANGRI-LA

124 Miracle Strip Pkwy. SE,
Fort Walton Beach
(850) 862-4588
Shangri-la-vintage.com

THE VIBE of this shop is laid back, funky and fun.

THE OWNERS are "hippies at heart and believe in peace, love, understanding and recycling."

SHOP HERE FOR quality, unique vintage pieces for women and men, funky furniture and artwork by local artists.

THE DEAL is consignors receive 60 percent commission.

HOT SELLERS include the '50s pin-up look.

A COOL FEATURE is donations made in the name of charities get 70 percent commission.

what they had. Though she didn't find anything on this trip, she said her passion for "vintage jewelry bracelets" will likely bring her back again.

For Hood, who earned an apparel merchandising degree from the University of Auburn in 2006, trying on the role of shop owner was as comfortable as some of the Juicy Couture tracksuits she sells. "I've always wanted to run a retail store," she says. "My mother and I started with the furniture and thought there was a need with the clothing. It worked out perfectly. I love it."

And it shows. Hood's shop became so popular with locals and visitors that they were able to add two full-time employees and expand the store to include the retail space next store, doubling their floor space.

For many retailers, the economy has demanded belt tightening, but not for this chic shop. "I think this is a good business for a slow economy. We have low overhead costs, so it has not had a negative effect on us," Hood confides.

One of the benefits of being in the resale business is the tight-knit community. Hood knows many of the other shop owners and says they are friendly with one another. "It's like antiquing when people go into a consignment shop. If you don't have something no one is reluctant to offer a referral. We all want the customer to be happy," she says.

Tracey Sharp, a 44-year-old from Panama City Beach certainly is. She and her husband heard about the shop from a friend and decided to stop and check it out on their way to a Bluegrass concert

in Crestview. Though she only began shopping resale a few months ago, she doesn't plan on stopping anytime soon. "I used to be a Caché-White-House-Black-Market-kind-of-girl, but now I am trying to watch what I spend. I still get great styles, but at much better prices," she says as she takes a strapless sundress and two tops into the changing room. Sharp spent \$100 on her last resale purchase and got three pair of jeans and three tops. "I used to spend that on just one pair of jeans."

WEARABLE ART

Denise Embler, 51, and Kay Filson, 48, call themselves "vintage soul sisters." The two friends, who are self-proclaimed "hippies at heart," have owned and operated Shangri-La, a vintage boutique in downtown Fort Walton Beach for three years.

Like many of the one-of-a-kind frocks she sells, Embler's passion for vintage dates way back. After shopping the hip, funky shops in Philadelphia with her mother in 1976, Embler was enthralled. "The more I looked at the quality of the fabric, the attention to details and the uniqueness of the piece, I was hooked!" she says.

Filson credits her grandmother's dress-up closet as the place where she "learned to appreciate vintage as a serious art form."

The 3,000-square-foot shop, which the pair says customers describe as "cool, beautiful and unique," is home to more than 1,000 vintage pieces that date back to the 1920s. Unlike "big city" vintage boutiques, prices are kept affordable, so they are accessible to everyone.

Shangri-La attracts a variety of shoppers, from those looking for a costume rental to the "collector" who considers vintage "wearable art" and displays framed vintage wear in their homes. Still, Embler realizes vintage isn't everyone's cup of tea. "Not everyone is into vintage, which is OK because authentic vintage pieces are one-of-a-kind and when it's gone, it's gone," she laments.

Crazy for couture and bold prints, Filson is always on the lookout for great finds. "Wherever we travel, we are on the hunt," she says. The shopping duo has been collecting for years and considers a great find to be a successful "rescue."

For many, much of the attraction of Shangri-La is novelty. Customers of this boutique can find quality, unique pieces that are no longer produced. "Our motto is One of a Kind: Just Like You," Embler says.

In addition to vintage clothes, the shop sells funky, mod furniture and local art. "We are a candy store for the creative person who can look at a piece and see the possibilities," says Embler. For these hippie chicks, being "green" by operating a resale shop is a natural lifestyle. "You can't get any greener than vintage, except naked," she jokes. **ec**





GIRLS' NIGHT Outshine the setting sun in this Zsa-Zsa New York ruffled racer-back blouse in taupe satin, \$25 (retail \$86); 7 For All Mankind flared denim jeans, \$50 (retail \$74); red leather Bebe strappy sandals, \$25 (retail \$66); etched pewter and glass dangle earrings, \$10 (retail \$26); gold elastic rhinestone statement ring, \$8 (retail \$17.50). Fashions by **THE CLOSET SOURCE INC.** Hair & makeup by **SARAH BARTO, AVANTGARDE AUREA SALON**