



Everything Alabama

Inside Up: New downtown shop features fashion, artwork and home furnishings

By Debra Braggs

January 12, 2010, 5:03AM



(Press-Register/Victor Calhoun)

Unique fashions are among the art-inspired offerings found in this new downtown dig.

From the eclectic mix of fashion and recycled jewelry to the paintings from local artists, Inside Up is a treasure-trove

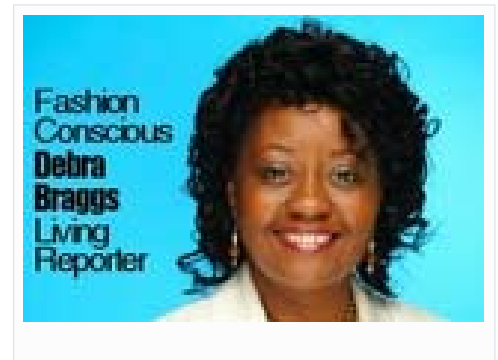
of wearable art and home furnishings.

This two-story shop, a scavenger-hunter's dream, is the fruition of a dream between three girlfriends.

Pat LaGrange, Rebecca Rossler and Becky Nance of Mobile knew they wanted a business with an artsy edge. Waiting patiently for their lofty location across from Bienville Square to be renovated, the trio opened their doors at a temporary downtown location in October 2008.

Last August, they were finally able to invite customers to come inside their North Conception Street home.

"We always knew we wanted to be downtown, and Pat knew this building was the perfect location. That's why she suggested the name "Inside Up" because you can come inside and go up for more goodies," Rossler said.



(Press-Register/Victor Calhoun)

The jewelry pieces shown above, by local artisans, were created with recycled materials like metal and cardboard.

The first floor of the store features the unusual fashion collection, jewelry, home accents and spa products, all displayed meticulously on antique furniture pieces that look like they belong in one of Mobile's historic mansions. Behind the checkout counter there is a gift-wrapping station.

Upstairs, you'll find larger home accents like lamps, pictures, including the paintings of many local artists, as well as unique art pieces for the home.

A particular "jellyfish" lamp continued to captivate visitors during my tour.

"I actually assembled that lamp myself," Rossler said. "But it's one of those unique finds from Pat."

Rossler is referring to her partner, Pat LaGrange, who has been in the interior decorating business for more than 30 years. Rossler credits the seasonal décor and unusual accents to "Pat's unique eye."

"You will definitely have to stay awhile to see everything," Rossler said. "Sometimes I'm out of the store a day or two and discover new finds," she added.

Hanging around and taking it all in, as if you're in an art gallery, is exactly what these artsy businesswomen want their customers to do.

"We have embraced the art community and love having them in our store," Rossler said. "We have unique and different artists and artwork all the time. And we enjoy participating in the monthly LoDa Artwalks downtown."

With a unique focus on customer service, which the ladies refer to as over-the-top, Inside Up offers a free, whimsical gift-wrapping service and personal shopping assistance.

"Our response has been overwhelming. We've been so warmly welcomed," Rossler said.

The store was such a hubbub of action during the past holiday season, the ladies found themselves wrapping gifts late into the night.

"This place has really exceeded our expectation," Rossler said.

If it's an unusual dress or blouse you're looking for, soap and spa products made right here in town, or recycled jewelry designed by local artisans, this is the place to visit. From the art on the walls, to a pet pooch that might greet you at the door, this boutique succeeds in inviting its guests to come inside and venture up.

© 2010 al.com. All rights reserved.