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# Port's Pear & Simple is all decked out for the holidays, all year 'round

Even without any snow piling up outside, it is certainly beginning to feel a lot like Christmas at Pear & Simple, the year-old gift shop in downtown Port Washington.

The store is owned by Melissa Suddendorf and her mother Rose Morgan, and Jaime Morgan, who manages the shop. It opened late last year — in time to tap some of the Christmas shopping season — but has burst forth in full seasonal splendor for the current Yuletide.

CHRISTMAS IS BURSTING out all over at the Pear & Simple gift shop in downtown Port Washington. The store opened a year-round Christmas section this summer, but the colorful decorations spread throughout the shop at this time of year. Photos by Mark Jaeger

Located at 314 N. Franklin St., the store was the longtime home of the Port Antiques shop.

Although the shop specialize in home decor items and gifts, the owners took a long-range approach to the holiday season. They opened a year-round Christmas store in the back of the shop in July.

The stock includes a large selection of ornaments, stockings, holiday decorations, Nativity sets and collectibles.

"We have 1,000 square feet of Christmas decorations up all year, and around the end of October we brought some more Christmas items to the front of the store," said Jaime Morgan.

"People have been delighted with what we have. I had one woman who came in and was just giddy. She said, 'I feel whole again,' referring to the Christmas in Port store which closed several years ago."

The dazzling display of decorations is a hit with customers of all ages.

“It is fun to see the kids come in and their eyes open wide. They may not care about going to a gift shop, but they really seem to love the trees,” Morgan said.

She said people appreciate being able to immerse themselves in an intense Christmas environment, and complete their holiday shopping without having to head to a mall.

“It can be pretty crazy sometimes, but people are usually patient when shopping for Christmas. They don’t mind waiting if they find what they want. We don’t end up offering too much advice on decorations. Most people just want to wander around the store,” Morgan said.

“There are times when a dad will come in and say he wants to get specific ornament for his 15-year-old daughter or in a certain style.”

With the needs of male shoppers in mind, a “Men’s Night” promotion was held Wednesday, where plenty of gift-giving ideas were offered.

There are a dozen exquisitely decorated trees scattered throughout the shop, most decked out according to common themes.

“I don’t know that I have favorite, but I do really like the tree that has big, colorful but plain ornaments,” Morgan said.

She said the store owners keep an eye open for unique decorations throughout the year and order items from vendors from all over the country.

“We want to offer things that are special and different from the selections you can find at any large department store,” Morgan said.

“The goal is to keep adding to our selection, but there really isn’t much of a demand for ‘new and trendy’ ornaments. Christmas is more about tradition. Probably the most popular decorations we sell are the elaborate ornaments that are meant to hang on an ornament stand rather than a tree.”

Harried shoppers can also take some comfort in knowing the store still carries a wide array of easy gift solutions.

“Our most popular gift items are scarves. We have lots of choices. They can be very festive and are affordable,” Morgan said.

Despite working in a veritable Winter Wonderland, Morgan said she doesn’t lose control when decorating her own home for Christmas.

“We have a tree up, but it has pretty basic ornaments,” she said.