

PUTTING DOWN ROOTS

Plant shop opens in Astoria

BY LISSA BREWER

Pacific Northwest design is about bringing the outdoors in, and at Variegata Exotic Plants, the North Coast's newest greenery haven, you're invited to do just that. Whether you're looking for low-maintenance cacti or unique aroid varieties, you're sure to enjoy a visit to the space.

Opened in November by co-owners Andrew and Marina Frink, the shop was a passion project. "We got really into plants a couple years ago and just kind of had them taking over our house," Andrew said.

Choosing Astoria was an effort to put down roots of their own. The couple made a cross-country move from Conway, South Carolina, near Myrtle Beach, where they met while Andrew was a graduate student. "I'm a big fan of the Oregon Coast. My grandma lived in Newport, so I used to come out here growing up all the time," Andrew said. "Marina was born in Tacoma, so we wanted to

move back to this area with our daughter and raise her here."

The Uniontown shop, which once housed a historic steam bath, now carries a wide variety of indoor plants, from more common varieties like aloe and pothos to those aimed at collectors. One of Marina's favorites in stock is the colorful Pink Princess Philodendron. "That plant is really what drove me to pursue opening the plant store," she said. "It was my dream plant. When I finally bought it, it was thriving and I was able to propagate it and grow more, I thought, 'This is something that I really enjoy doing and could continue doing!'"

If you're not sure where to begin, the couple is happy to give advice. Whether you have five minutes each week to mist or are looking for a plant to spend a lot of time with, Variegata can help you make the right choice. "We can make personal recommendations depending on light

See Page 5

Variegata Exotic Plants

285 W. Marine Drive, Astoria

Visit www.variegataexoticplants.com or call 503-468-0150 for hours.



LEFT: Owners Andrew and Marina Frink with their daughter and cat. **RIGHT:** Interior of Variegata Exotic Plants in Astoria.

Lissa Brewer