

Fashion Boutique a Go-to Shop for Women

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was not aware there were career possibilities in fashion, "I didn't even think of pursuing a fashion degree because I didn't know that this kind of thing existed at all."

She also admits that she had no previous experience in owning a business but that didn't stop her from achieving her goal, "I didn't take any courses in undergraduate school, I just Googled [information]. I figured it out myself."

Although she spent a while procrastinating about opening the boutique in Portland, an accident at her job in New Jersey forced her to leave work for three weeks and was the motivation she needed to pursue the business.

"It propelled me to do what makes me happy and I am truly happy," she said.

Ordering the merchandise, shoes and accessories needed, along with the planning and finding a location, White successfully opened the boutique, "in literally the amount of three months, from zero to now I'm here," she said.

Northeast Portland was picked for the boutique's location for a variety of reasons.

"It is the mecca of Portland [and] I wouldn't consider having a business in any other location," she said. "Growing up in the area and living in her grandparent's home is how she came up with the name 'Thirty27.'"

In numerous department stores and malls there are large amounts of inventory, White said that is not the goal for her boutique.

"Currently I carry only 10 different styles of shoes and a handful of dresses. And once I have sold out or sold majority of those items I will be ordering a whole new collection of shoes and dresses. My goal is to provide woman with a variety which keeps fashion young and refreshing," she said.

When asked why her boutique stands out from the rest she said, "Thirty27 is here to disrupt patterns in order to recreate and refresh, which in my opinion is something that is missing in Portland."

What does the future hold for White? She said she would consider expanding the boutique, opening another location and possibly incorporating her joy of coffee into her business plan, "But for right now I'm very much so content with my small boutique. It allows me to remain personable and fair to my customer base."

When asked if the process of owning her business was a difficult one, she said, "It wasn't as difficult as I thought it was going to be. I think I was just dragging my feet about it but you have to be fearless and just push yourself."

Some words of advice that she gives young aspiring business owners would be, "Don't be obligated to anybody. Do what you're passionate about. Do what your good at and I think the rest will come. And be fearless, have faith, and everything should be okay."

Christina White's exclusive shoe boutique "Thirty27" is open 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. It is located at 3519 N.E. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

Kayla Tatum is a student at Portland State University.



PHOTO BY DONOVAN M. SMITH/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Jewelry and other fashion accessories line the shelves at the new women's boutique Thirty 27. Portland native and owner Christina White opened the northeast Portland shop in August.

Making a Difference

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County is part of a regional workforce development plan that creates partnerships between public and private entities that include the City of Portland, Washington County, TriMet, community non-profits, and local businesses.

"This has been a top priority for me," Smith said. "More than half of the county's employees identify as baby boomers, poised to retire in the next 10 years. SummerWorks opened the door for us to develop

young people who we can recruit and hire in the future. Training them to be a part of the workforce is smart planning."

Youth Jobs+ is President Obama's challenge to businesses, non-profits, and government to "work together to provide pathways to employment for low-income and disconnected young people."

Smith plans to grow the program to include low-income young people in rural areas of Multnomah County and to become partners with businesses to expand the private sector investment in youth jobs.

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Project Clean Slate operates in tandem with Multnomah County District Attorney's Office and in cooperation with Multnomah County Circuit Court. It is a program of Independent Development Enterprise Alliance, a nonprofit organization.

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