

Vicinity - Fabulous Finds Expands Operations

BY DONNA CURRIE

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Consignment sales are booming in Longmont at Fabulous Finds according to the store's owner, Clarissa Edelin. The store opened in April 2011 and has expanded three times since then.

The newest expansion, scheduled for a mid-October opening, will include a brand-new space for a boutique that caters to "the full and fabulous women," according to Edelin.

Her decision to launch the new boutique was spurred by comments from her customers. Some of her full-figured shoppers would tell Edelin that they couldn't find anything in their size. Fabulous Finds stocks clothing for everyone, but with sizes starting at 00, the sizes at the small end of the spectrum are in the majority. The current store will keep clothing sizes up to 14, and the new location—just a few steps away—will sell sizes 16 and up, along with shoes, handbags, and other accessories.

When it comes to selecting clothing to sell at the store, Edelin said that the priorities are "brand, quality and condition," and they also need to be seasonal and current—she doesn't sell winter coats in the midst of summer, and this is the wrong place to look for vintage dresses.

Clothes that come in for sale have to be recently laundered and on hangers, but the hangers go back to the sellers—Edelin simply doesn't



Photo by Donna Currie

Clarissa Edelin, the owner of Fabulous Finds at her store in Longmont.

have the time or the staff to steam the wrinkles out of clothing that's folded or stuffed into a bag or box, but she wants the hangers on the racks to be the same. Considering that the store receives an average of 1,500 items per week, that would be a lot of wrinkle removal.

Besides selling clothing and accessories, Fabulous Finds also has a section with home décor, including furniture, lighting, crystal, paintings, and decorative items—to name a few. But, "It's the clothes that drive

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the business," Edelin said.

All the items in the store are put out for sale for 60 days, and anything that remains unsold is returned to its original owner or passed on to a charity. Edelin said that most people don't want their items returned and are more than happy to see the items donated.

Customers can currently choose to receive payment by check or in-store credit, but a new option will allow customers to donate their credit to the charity, A Woman's Work. Those items will have a special tag so buyers can see that part of their purchase price will go directly to the charity.

Edelin said that as far as her shoppers are concerned, Fabulous Finds is "a first-look shop" when they're looking for upscale items at great prices—usually 50-80 percent off the retail price. She said that some customers have said that she and her staff "do all the shopping for them because we're selective."

Edelin said she has a good eye for fashion and what will sell, but it's not always successful. One designer dress was so odd that no one could figure out exactly how to wear it. Another strange top had four armholes, which didn't work well for the two-armed folks in Longmont.

Before starting the consignment shop, Edelin had suggested to the local charter school that a thrift store could be a great fundraiser. That didn't work out, so Edelin started the consignment store. Now that the consignment store is so successful, she said that a companion thrift store wasn't totally out of the question. Many of her customers already drop off items specifically for one of the charities that Fabulous Finds supports, so it would be easy to stock a nonprofit thrift store.

Customers aren't in short supply, either. Edelin said that the store is always busy, and she often hosts women's-night-out events where 40 or 50 women might show up to learn about fashion or design from a guest speaker. These nights out are usually held every few months, but the next big event will be the grand opening of the new boutique.

Fabulous Finds is located at 600 S. Airport Road in Longmont. For more information, including the date of the grand opening celebration, see fabfind-sconsign.com or call 720-340-4152.