

Paperweight – Elegant Stationery and Personalized Gifts in Lafayette

By Sophie Braccini



Lauren Woolsey and Kaaren Brickman discussing card designs with a client

Lauren Woolsey has known Kaaren Brickman for years, and has repeatedly suggested she take her home-based stationary business to the next level and open a retail store. Over coffee last January, the two friends started developing the project as a common venture. The hardest part was to find the right place for the store. They wanted to be located on Lafayette’s business corridor, in a cozy spot where customers would feel welcome and comfortable. They found the ideal cottage-like office on Mt

Diablo Blvd where they now operate Paperweight. Paperweight sells stationary, custom invitations and personalized gifts.

The friends both reside in Lamorinda where they’re busy raising young children. Before opening Paperweight, Brickman was in sales and marketing for a wholesale gifts firm. After having her first child, she ran a home based stationary business for seven years. Woolsey was a kindergarten teacher who started working part time at Growing Tree Preschool in Moraga after

her children were born. They both come from families of business owners and entrepreneurs and have always known that this was the direction they wanted to go. Both are grateful for the support of their friends and families. “We couldn’t do it without them,” acknowledges Woolsey.

They help customers with all kinds of events. It could be a baby shower, a child’s birthday, a wedding, a graduation party, an anniversary, or any other type of celebration. Brickman and Woolsey like to brainstorm with customers to define the event, its tone, possible themes, and options that meet client budgets and expectations.

Their main strength is their approach to a customer. As Woolsey explains it, “you get a free flow of ideas on top of your purchase,” and they know that the experience their customers receive in their store cannot be replicated by any online “print-it-yourself” service. “When a customer came in needing to create an invitation for a couple going to France and Germany for their anniversary,” recalls Woolsey, “we discussed possible ideas and came up with a passport theme carried all through the party decorations.”

Brickman recalls another client who was planning a party for a remarried couple. After hearing the customers’ story, she proposed a very charming stationary featuring two pears at the top with the simple message, “The perfect pair.” This theme

was used for centerpieces as well.

Another asset is the enormous collection of stationary they have access to: more than 30 different lines, either on their walls or in catalogs. Depending on your budget, you have a choice of using thermography, letterpress, engraving or flat printing. Flat printing can be done in-house and takes a few days while the other techniques require 2- 3 weeks.

Woolsey and Brickman can be found in their shop located at 3678A Mt Diablo Blvd (across the street from the Diamond K Supply Yard), Tuesday-Friday from 10:00-4:00, or at other times by appointment; call 925-283-0344.



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