

A Bit of Whimsy in Lafayette

By Sophie Braccini



Nicole Jarotzky and her children at Whimsy.

Photo provided

“Whimsy” is the perfect name for the new children’s store that opened Aug. 20 in the Lafayette Shopping Center on Mt. Diablo Boulevard. The store is the manifestation of Nicole Jarotzky’s vision. The Burton Valley mom, who was raised in Orinda and created the very successful home/Internet business Fairies and Feathers – which caters to every little girl’s wildest dreams of fabulous, fantasy tutu dresses – is now settling into a brick and mortar establishment while dramatically expanding her offerings to include creative, unique, yet sensibly priced clothing for boys and girls, as well as toys.

“I had to make a decision. Fairies and Feathers is getting to be bigger than I am. I have someone helping me to do the dresses now,” said Jarotzky. “In order to continue to grow I would have to format the production, go the China route, and lose the uniqueness and quality control I have now.” Jarotzky said that the idea of opening a shop had been on her back burner for a long time and she was just look-

ing for the perfect place – one that was affordable for a new business, offered enough space, and would benefit from foot traffic. “Here I am, more local and more integrated with my community, which is important to me,” she said.

In her new store at 3643 Mt. Diablo Blvd., a few doors down from Trader Joe’s, Jarotzky sells children’s clothing, toys and accessories from both well-known and small, creative, fashion designers at a wide range of prices. “While I understand I cannot compete with Target, I do have some items in the lower price range, as well as the high end,” she explained.

Entering the store, one first sees a seasonal display of accessories and clothing – now completely “Frozen” and including an “Elsa” tutu dress – that will change periodically. Every small rack holds different age groups, styles and brands, in a cheerful mosaic of colors, shapes and textures. “I have boys’ clothes up to age 7, and for the girls I have clothing up to teens,” said Jarotzky.

Brand names include Charlie

Rocket, Splendid and Kissy Kissy; she also carries smaller, international stylists such as Bit’z Kids from Japan. Shoppers can find KicKee Pants’ pajamas for boys and girls, made of bamboo, Petit Bateau underwear, adorable European fashions for girls from Catimini and Mayoral, and much more. “The clothes here are for school, not just for parties,” said Jarotzky. “I consider Nordstrom to be my main competitor, but a lot of what we have here comes from less known, but not lesser, brands.”

With a background in luxury fashion marketing – she worked for Chanel and Paco Rabanne – Jarotzky knows how to procure, choose and negotiate. She searched the big trade shows in Los Angeles, where the whole planet meets, to find brands that match her style. “This is what I have learned: to be successful, I need to present what I love, what I would choose for my own children.”

The mezzanine of the store is dedicated to tween and teen girls – there they can try on clothing and wigs in their own space. Little ones have their own space, too, in the shape of a baby hut under the stairs where games and pillows await them.

The store also offers quality toys for parents and grandparents seeking non-electronic gifts such as stuffed animals – don’t miss the adorable Mailleg soft mouse family series – paper dolls, puzzles, pillows and blankets.

Fear not, young dreamers, for Fairies and Feathers lives on. The custom-made tutus have their own display in the store. “The tutu costumes are still a very big part of what I love doing,” said the young mother, “but there is much more to see here than just the tutus.”

Jarotzky is excited and at the same time a little scared with the opening of the store. For her it is a big risk, but she has put her whole heart and mind into it. There will be a grand opening celebration at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 17. Jarotzky invites all curious people to stop by for refreshments, enjoy the party and discover what her shop has to offer.

Lamorinda Weekly business articles are intended to inform the community about local business activities, not to endorse a particular company, product or service.

business briefs

Moraga Pediatric Dentistry Opens

533 Moraga Rd., Suite 100, Moraga
(925) 247-0193, www.moragapediaticdentistry.com

Dr. Joanna Cheung opened a new dental office providing specialized dentistry for children and adolescents in a warm, caring and child-friendly environment. Cheung graduated from dental school in 2001. After practicing general dentistry for a few years in the Bay Area, she found her passion in working with children. She returned to school and completed a two-year pediatric residency program in New York. Cheung says that the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Dental Association, and the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry all recommend establishing a “dental home” for children by one year of age. Children who have a dental home are more likely to receive appropriate preventive and routine oral health care. The new practice serves infants, children, teens and children with special health care needs.

Home/Made Kitchen Café and Bakery

337 Rheem Blvd., Moraga
(925) 388-0841, homemadekitchen.com



The patio at Home/Made Kitchen Café and Bakery.

Photo Sophie Braccini

Word spread quickly in Moraga that Gayle Somers’ café was opening on Rheem Boulevard across from the theater. The chef and her partner, Aly Dean, built a strong following with their fresh and creative menu when they operated temporarily at the Hacienda de las Flores, during what they hoped would be the few short months before renovations were completed at their current location. But as construction sometimes goes, it took much longer and patrons had to wait for Somers’ organic and creative breakfast and lunch menus. As soon as Home/Made Kitchen Café and Bakery opened, the large, inviting patio and modern interior filled up. Home/Made Kitchen is open from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday; during the week you can get coffee until 4 p.m.

Business Anniversaries

Diablo Foods Celebrates 45 Years

3615 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette
(925) 283-0737, www.diablofoods.com



Three generations of Stokes’, from left: Dan Stokes, Betty Stokes, Ed Stokes, Connie Stokes-Collier, Daniel Collier.

Photo Sophie Braccini

Founded 45 years ago by Ed Stokes, three generations of the Stokes family now run the iconic Lafayette grocery store and still follow the same guiding principles – best quality, full friendly service, excellent selection, utmost cleanliness, and fair prices. Despite fierce competition from much larger chains, the family continues to attract loyal customers who appreciate their remarkable selection of local fruits and vegetables, meat and seafood, and continual support of local food producers and the community.

Lamorinda Dental Care Turns 2

533 Moraga Rd., Suite 240, Moraga
(925) 247-5343, www.lamorindadentistry.com

Dr. Julia Hoang recently celebrated the second anniversary of her Moraga dental practice. The hard working young woman has been able to establish herself rapidly and is enjoying a very busy practice. Lamorinda Dental Care is her first business venture; she worked in Orinda for many years before opening her own office. She said she recently bought a house in Moraga and is happy to be getting involved in the life of the town.

News from the three Chambers of Commerce:

Lafayette

Ribbon-cutting for T’s Firehouse Restaurant and Bar, 5 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 4, 3709 Mt. Diablo Blvd.

Mixer at Atria Lafayette, 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 10, 1545 Pleasant Hill Rd.

Tri-ribbon-cutting for Lashify Studio, Sandra Martin Skin Care & Make-up Studio and Conceive & Receive, 5 p.m. on Thursday, Sept. 11, 1043 Stuart St.

Moraga

Shred Event next to 5A Rent A Space, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 13, 455 Moraga Rd. – \$5/Banker Box size.

Orinda

Sunrise Mixer in the lobby of the Orinda Theatre on Thursday, Sept. 4 from 8 a.m. to 9:30 a.m. for a morning kick-off to rev up the Orinda Classic Car Show and the California Independent Film Festival. Both events are on the same weekend – the Classic Car Show is on Saturday, Sept. 13 and the film festival runs Sept. 11-14. Complimentary coffee and sweets, everyone is welcome!

The chamber is forming new committees for the new season. Those who want to play a more active role in the chamber can reach Candy Kattenberg at (925) 254-3909, or email info@orindachamber.org.

If you have a business brief to share, please contact **Sophie Braccini** at sophie@lamorindaweekly.com

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