

Published December 11th, 2019

A walk down memory lane with Hilton House

By Sora O'Doherty



Hilton House Staff Honored. From left: Marilyn Davis, Dulce Lorenco, Cyndi Hilton Girgis, Mayor Inga Miller, Rita Kuhner and Janice Vincak Photo Sora O'Doherty

On a cold, dark Dec. 5 evening, Hilton House Consign/Designs, Inc. shined brightly as guests enjoyed live music, food and drink as the company celebrated its 20th anniversary doing business in Orinda. With "golden ticket" prizes every half hour, guests roamed the shop, filled to the rafters with nostalgic items from vintage jewelry, to antique silverware. New Orinda Library manager Michael Beller bought a colorful pocket square to complement his green jacket.

Displayed in a prominent place was the certificate awarded by Mayor Inga Miller at the city council meeting on Dec. 3, proclaiming recognition of the shop's 20-year anniversary of providing a wonderful service to the residents of Orinda and beyond. At that meeting, Council Member Amy Worth recalled, "When we were building the Caldecott Tunnel, the first day after the fourth bore opened, three women from Piedmont came through the tunnel to visit Hilton House, where they spent hours browsing!"

Twenty years ago, owner Cyndi Hilton Girgis sold her internet domain registration business in Silicon Valley. At a loose end, she felt she needed to give back to her community. Girgis had always been interested in recycling. She also wondered what she could do with her good crystal, and other luxury items. There was no social media back then, and no place to sell used items. She asked around. "How does consignment work," she inquired. Soon she opened a small shop, 800 square feet, a few doors down from the current location of her shop. Within three months, the shop outgrew its space, and Hilton House moved to the 3,000 square foot location on Orinda Way. Recently, Girgis has added another 1,000 square foot annex for mirror and larger furniture items.

The community, Girgis says, loves the upscale feel of the shop. She pays 60% of the sale price of fine jewelry, and 40% of the price of furniture and tabletop items to the owners who consign items. She employees five permanent part-time staff, Janice Vincak, Rita Kuhner, Dulce Lorenco, and Marilyn Davis.

For more information, visit the website, www.hiltonhousedesigns.com

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