



HAND LETTERING BY MEGAN GAGNON

IT TAKES GUTS AND VISION TO BUILD A BRICK-AND-MORTAR BUSINESS in an Amazon-centric world. But these five extraordinary Greenwich women have done just that. As a result, their first-generation, female-run stores have changed the face of retail at a local level. Despite differences in their backgrounds and ages, each of these women share distinct similarities in their approach to business and life: They all developed a passion for sales at an early age; they all nurtured that passion into a viable business plan; and most important, they care deeply for their customers and their community. Flying in the face of conventional wisdom, these small business owners offer something Amazon can't—a human connection—reminding us that, at its core, shopping is still very much a social experience to savor. »



The ladies gather for a chat at CFCF on Greenwich Avenue

Perfect Provenance

47 Arch Street

IN GREENWICH SINCE
2016

BUSINESS
*Lifestyle Boutique
& Restaurant*

Lisa Lori

Creative Curation

Located in a 1912 Victorian-style home in downtown Greenwich, Lisa Lori's creative lifestyle store, the Perfect Provenance, features a beautifully curated collection of fashion, home and art products. Among the top sellers? The Circle of Life collection of jewelry. "It is based at a price point that could be given as a gift or a woman could buy for herself," says Lisa. "It's great when a woman comes in and says, 'I'm going for it.'"

As an added bonus, shoppers can view special exhibitions and works of art that rotate seasonally and get a bite at the cozy Café 47, now under the guidance of Chef Duane Shand. It serves lunch daily and dinner the first weekend of every month, and hosts private events year-round. The shop's setting on Arch Street is part of the appeal: within easy walking distance of the Avenue, the meticulously renovated home features turn-of-the-century touches such as the original front door with beveled glass panels, penny-round tiles, and even a bathroom with a pull-chain toilet. "These details give the space a little fun, a little oomph," she says.

Shoppers will find home and gift items on the first floor, and men's and women's fashions on the second. "The idea was to take European and Australian designers that weren't represented here and bring them into a boutique atmosphere. Throw food into the mix and you



have a true gallery for the senses," she says. "We are an old-fashioned boutique. We want you to feel like every time you come in there's a new item, like when you go on vacation and you find something special and then every time you wear it, you're happy and remember that special moment."



GETTING PERSONAL

WHAT MADE YOU GO INTO BUSINESS FOR YOURSELF?

"The idea was born of my experience as a public relations professional in the luxury goods business for twenty-five years.

I had always wanted to open a store. At fifty years old, I figured, okay, why not?"

WHAT IS THE MOST REWARDING ASPECT OF OWNING YOUR OWN BUSINESS?

"It's really gratifying to have an idea and concept and see it come to life. To have people embrace it. You can think about it for years and at night you'll be lying there thinking, Is this crazy? Is this going to work? And then you bring the idea to fruition and see people get joy out of it. That is awesome, awesome. Plus, the store is two miles from my home. I get to see my kids every day. Two of them work in the café. We are part of the community. My husband is really supportive. That's icing on the cake."

WHAT IS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

"When you're creating a business, building systems, recruiting staff and what price points to cover, that's challenging. When you introduce new designers and brands, there is a learning curve. Now, after two years, I have a better sense of what works. I know my customers. The ins and outs of buying are really tricky. **Just because it's cool and edgy in Paris or London, doesn't mean it's right for Greenwich.**"

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR ENTREPRENEURS JUST STARTING OUT?

"You have to love it. That sounds self-evident. You have to have a passion for it. Also, sometimes an entrepreneur has an idea for something and then becomes so emotionally invested that it's hard to step back. **In PR I learned to take rejection. For people to expand, they need to learn to adapt and move forward.**"