

First business opens at new Raymond Renaissance in Old Pasadena

By Janette Williams, Staff Writer

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Carrie Davich, proprietor of Maude Woods Artful Living shop in the Raymond Renaissance in Pasadena. (SGVN/Staff photo by Leo Jarzomb)

PASADENA - Offering a blend of new and vintage - just like the \$45 million condo/retail project transforming Old Pasadena's historic Raymond Theatre - the first business at the Raymond Renaissance is up and running.

The opening of the Maude Woods: Artful Living shop at 55 E. Holly St. is something of a milestone for longtime developers Gene and

Marilyn Buchanan, who bought the theater in 1985 and spent the next 23 years fighting to convert it into a mixed-use project.

"It's an awesome little store," Marilyn Buchanan said. "That corner (of Holly and Raymond Avenue) has needed something for a long time, and we're looking forward to getting it all done, obviously not until next spring."

The BLD (breakfast, lunch, dinner) restaurant, a popular westside fixture, also has signed a lease for neighboring space and owners are working on plans to move into the development, Buchanan said.

The Raymond Renaissance includes construction of 28 new condos and, in the old building, 10 "stage house" lofts, nine live/work lofts and retail space.

In a tough economic climate, Buchanan said, 11 condos are under contract, one owner has moved in and two others will move in later this month.

Maude Woods owner Carrie Davich, a 20-year Pasadena resident, said she decided to open a store after finally running out of attic space for the treasures she's "scavenged" and restored over the years.

"I love finding old pieces and restoring them. I couldn't resist... it became a joke," Davich said.

Davich - who named the store after her great-grandmother - said she'd looked in different parts of town, including other parts of Old

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Pasadena, for the right site and decided the new space at 55 E. Holly St. was ideal.

Photo Gallery

Maude Woods Artful Living shop



(SGVN/Staff photo by Leo Jarzomb)

Her store puts "old stuff and new stuff together" in a younger, edgier style, Davich said, with furniture, housewares, linens and gifts displayed in a way that makes customers think they're walking into a "mini-house."

Upping the "cool little walking street" factor and adding a New York-style vibe to Holly is a goal, Davich said - she's even suggesting calling the area "NoCo," for north of Colorado.

Steve Mulheim, president and CEO of the Old Pasadena Management District, said the new store "looks great" and fits in well with the neighborhood, including Adesso Eclectic Imports across the street, which sells vintage mid-century and earlier houseware items.

"I think it all helps," Mulheim said. "One of our great efforts is constantly educating people that there's more to Old Pasadena than just Colorado Boulevard. We're constantly trying to get people to walk a street or two off their beaten path."

Mulheim said he's saddened by hearing people - especially locals - complain that they liked Old Pasadena more when there were more independent and specialty shops.

"If we could just get them to walk a little bit," he said. "Green Street, Union, Holly - there are unique shops and really great dining, a lot of independent merchants with stores they are working in every day, special and different - you just have to explore a little bit to find them."

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