

Bienvenue, Paris!

BY JULIE HERRON CARSON

Visitors strolling through Ruskin Place, the arts district of Seaside, Florida, may be surprised to smell the enticing scent of lavender wafting across the park or hear the haunting strains of Edith Piaf singing a French love song. A quick look around and Voilà! An Apartment in Paris, a new boutique devoted to the style and cachet of the City of Light, beckons you to enter. Oo la la! Paris has come to Seaside.

with art, music, a mix of antiques and modern furniture, one-of-a-kind jewelry, decorative accessories, dishes, and a small clothing collection.”

It's no surprise Forbes knows how to set the scene. She grew up in Ft. Walton Beach, FL, and for years worked as a set designer for TV shows and as a photography stylist. Having raised two sons and traveled extensively, she moved to Seagrove Beach about a dozen years ago.

because I have filled it with beautiful pieces from my own travels and interests. Plus, I had a warehouse full of props and furniture from my styling business, so the idea of opening An Apartment in Paris grew from there.”

The shop is designed like an actual studio apartment and visitors are encouraged to linger and chat. The living room is comfortably crowded with furniture, paintings, lamps, and chandeliers. Artisan jewelry is displayed on a sideboard and the walls are covered in paintings from floor to ceiling.

“People really like the way the paintings are displayed,” says Forbes. “Here, they can see how effective it is to mix and match works of art to make a big impact. During my years as a set designer I learned how to pull together colors, fabrics, textures, and art to create a certain style. I'm enjoying helping my customers do the same thing.”

The shop includes a bathroom and kitchen and even a bedroom closet with clothing for sale. The bathroom and kitchen are filled with art, small pieces of furniture, decorative accessories, dishes, wine racks, and more.

With so much to choose from, does Forbes have any favorites? “I've always loved fresh flowers, so I like to have them in the boutique. I'm also wild about white dishes and you'll see an assortment for sale in the kitchen. They're great to mix and match with colorful bowls and platters. I also love the Santa Rosa candles, which are the pillar candles made for churches and cathedrals.”

The artists represented include both local artists and those from other parts of the South. Forbes worked with many of them before opening her boutique and is pleased to be able to showcase their work in An Apartment in Paris.

She encourages them to attend the First Friday Art Walks, which the boutique participates in, and she also hosts Meet the Artist events and other special activities throughout the season.

Forbes personally endorses all of the items in her boutique and she is at the shop daily to talk to her customers about the pieces and the artists who create them. Like any good hostess, she wants her guests to feel comfortable and encourages them to return often.

Bon Shopping!

An Apartment in Paris is located at 210 Ruskin Place in Seaside. Call (850) 534-0038 or visit www.anapartmentinparis.net for more information.



Bracelets by Mary Kay Samouce



Wall of Art



The "Kitchen"

Owner Sylvia Forbes has created a welcoming retail shop that exudes the charm and ambiance of a modern Parisian apartment. Although she does carry a number of French items, like lavender, French soaps, and decorative accessories, many of the pieces for sale have been created by local and regional artists. She showcases a large collection of paintings from artists both near and far, including works by her son, Troy Forbes.

“If you were to visit Parisians in their home, it wouldn't be completely furnished with French objects,” explains Forbes. “People decorate with treasures from their travels or items they love regardless of the source. I've recreated that atmosphere in my shop by filling it

“For decades I've said if I had just one thing, I'd want it to be an apartment in Paris,” says Forbes. “When my job was eliminated following last year's oil spill in the Gulf, I kept coming back to that thought. My friends always say that coming to my house is like going to a boutique

