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Retail target: Females look for a fashion fix on Garnet Avenue

by JOHN GREGORY

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Cindy Gappy is one of the owners of Scenario, a fashionable women's clothing boutique at 1135 Garnet Ave.

Young women looking to spend money on stylish clothing make Garnet Avenue an attractive location for retailers. (This is the second part in a two-part series about the evolution of the Garnet Avenue business district.)

Jeff Kinney, owner of Surf Club Surf Shop, was not alone in describing the retail attraction of the Garnet Avenue shopping district, as well as defining the clientele attracted to the area.

"If anywhere you want to do retail, Garnet is where you want to do it because of the foot

traffic," he said.

"Obviously, PB isn't going to have a Bloomingdales. It isn't going to have a Nordstrom's. Its isn't going to have a Saks," Kinney added. "In the same sense, backwards, you're not going to see in the malls any mom and pop very unique boutiques."

He said Garnet has a "a lot of good energy" and described the trends in new businesses as very "boutiquish" women's and men's stores. The predominant shopper is an 18 to 32- year-old female who brings about two or three of her girlfriends, he said.

If the young female roams Garnet Avenue with her friends, then Forward Footwear is in the right place. The women's shoe boutique, once doing business at a space inside another Garnet Avenue store, reopened in December 2008 at 1043 Garnet Ave.

Slogans encouraging the female obsession with trendy footwear are printed on the walls: "She with the most shoes wins."

The shop was bustling on a recent weekday at about 3:30 p.m. Owners Michael M. and Herb Terrell seem to have a winning formula for Garnet Avenue.

"It's the best retail spot for what we sell in all of San Diego," Michael M. said. "It's the right demographic, the right walk-by traffic. For what we intended the business to do, this was the right place to be."

The owners are hoping the store's selection coupled, with the fact that 80 percent of the inventory is under \$40, attracts the avid female shoe shopaholic.

"We try to keep the PB girl from going to the mall," Michael M. said.

Scenario, a women's clothing boutique selling fashionable attire for going out on the town, has been at 1135 Garnet Ave. since March.

"We offer clothes for young women and even some junior clothing," said Cindy Gappy, who owns the store with three of her sisters. "We are targeting young adults. Also, we get a lot of customers going to Vegas, going out for the night or the weekend, So that's our main customer base so far."

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Gappy said the Garnet vibe is very upbeat with friendly people, and she enjoys seeing these people buying merchandise from her boutique. She has a positive outlook about always making a sale.

“We have very good service and will help you mix and match things,” she said. “We won’t let you leave unless you like something and take it home.”

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Fernanda Silveira chose Pacific Beach to open Acai Boutique and Brazilian Market “because it’s near the beach and all my people living near the beach,” she said, referring to the local Brazilian population.

Her store, located at 1570 Garnet Ave., sells Brazilian food and cooking ingredients, Brazilian beverages, gifts and — also taking aim at Garnet’s female market — Brazilian bikinis.

“The American girls are into the the Brazilian cut for the bikinis,” she said.

Raw Clothing boutique, 940 Garnet Ave., has been on the scene since 1992. Owner Mark Nussbaum said the demographic on the avenue remains the same.

“A lot of students shop this area because it’s a younger audience,” he said.

That’s just fine with him: “They’ve supported me these last 17 years,” he added.



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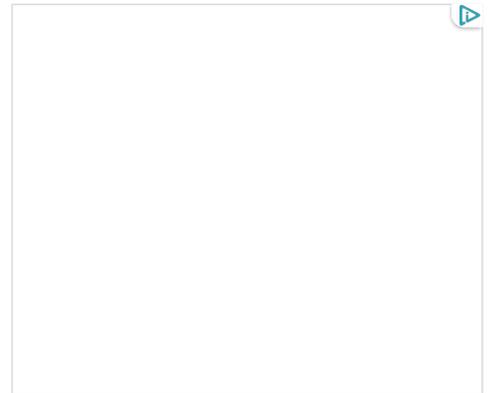
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