

THE MIRROR *Weekend Section*

CJ's Closet Offers Designer Looks At Half The Price

BY KAREN BERGER
MIRROR REPORTER

Achieving a designer look on a pauper's budget requires just a little creativity, and a trip to CJ's Closet.

The owner of the longest-running resale shop in the Toledo area is constantly amazed by the talent her customers show in pulling together one-of-a-kind, knock-your-socks-off outfits.

"Our customers tend to be eclectic and artsy," said CJ's owner Connie Peiffer. "They have a sense of textures and colors that go well together. And they know what to spend a little more money on."

The sweaters, blouses, dresses, pants and two-piece outfits are immaculately arranged by color, with designated areas for small, medium, large and plus sizes.

"If someone is looking for something specific, such as a dress or a casual two-piece, they don't have to dig through a lot to find it," Peiffer said.

CJ's Closet carries designer handbags with names such as Coach, Sereta, Falci, Donna Karan and Kathy Von Zeeland, as well as belts

and barely-worn shoes and boots in all sizes.

The designer clothing rack includes St. John, Ralph Lauren and Louise Ricci. The store also carries a lot of cashmere and a lineup of leather pants, skirts and jackets, Peiffer said.

An entire aisle of evening wear, with dresses, suits, sweaters, glittering wraps and evening bags, will be set up through the holidays.

All of the higher-end apparel, shoes and handbags are used, brought in by consigners who receive 40 percent of the sale price.

"Because our buying customers' standards are high, our receiving standards are high," Peiffer said.

To accommodate early wardrobe builders, CJ's Closet begins taking spring and summer clothing in January and fall and winter clothing in June.

Clothes on hangers may be dropped off any day up until 15 minutes before closing. Items not sold or picked up at the end of the season are donated to the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

In addition to the gently used clothing, Peiffer pur-



Connie Peiffer, owner of CJ's Closet in Maumee and Holland, has decorated the stores for the holidays with memorabilia from old Toledo stores such as LaSalle's and Jacobson's. CJ's Closet is the longest-running resale shop in the area, and currently has an entire section filled with elegant evening wear for the holidays.

MIRROR PHOTO BY KAREN BERGER

chases new wraps, jewelry and evening handbags, using suppliers from around the world. She points out the strikingly unique necklaces, bracelets, rings and earrings from California artist Judy Jansen, as well as the whimsical chickens from a Poland artist.

CJ's Closet began carrying

decorative and fine art, and other home furnishings and accessories, in 2006. On the wall are two triangular modern paintings obtained when Kmart's corporate office sold off its art collection. Nearby is an 18th-century Oriental screen from the same collection.

A story goes with nearly every item in CJ's Closet, many of them stirring up memories of holiday shopping experiences from decades ago.

A Lion Store lion greets customers at the door. Under the Christmas tree from the Westgate Dillard's Home Store are ribboned boxes from LaSalle's, Tiedtke's, Lamson's and Dayton-Hudson.

CJ's Closet has also provided a new home for racks and forms from Gantos, gold-painted leaves from

provided. She brings that service to her customers, from the tea, coffee and treats offered to the television and sofa set up for men to enjoy while waiting.

After working in an office, Peiffer decided she wanted to do something different, so she opened a consignment shop with children's clothing.

Over the years, as her children grew up and she expanded into selling ladies' clothing, she dropped the youth apparel and began focusing on just women.

Throughout its 26 years, Peiffer's shop has resided in Parkway Plaza on Detroit Avenue and at Holiday Plaza, which is now demolished. The shop moved back to 2558 Parkway Plaza in February. In 2000, Peiffer opened a location at 1007 McCord Rd. in Holland.

For more information, contact the Maumee store at (419) 891-9900 or the Holland store at (419) 861-9900. Store hours are 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. weekdays and 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Saturday.

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