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Taking a step back: Elizabeth Todd of The Shoe Hive

Posted by Editorial / Wednesday, January 6th, 2016

Elizabeth Todd of The Shoe Hive shares her favorite shoes from the store's first location and current collection, how trends have changed and why the boutique has remained popular for the past decade.



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Clockwise from top left.

1. The [Marc Jacobs](#) shoes are super comfy, and they have a lower heel. I think I've at least had these for 10 years from our old location. They are timeless shoes; if I saw them at a show today, I would still get them for the store.
2. "[These] [Stuart Weitzman Nudist shoes](#) are the iconic shoe that you see all of the celebrities wearing. Ours are called the New Nudist because they have a shorter heel. They are offered year-round."
3. "These Bettye's are my favorite. I still wear them a lot. I don't think you see the high chunky heel like that as much anymore. All of my older shoes here are from the old space, so they are at least 8 years old."
4. "People are kind of surprised that these are [Tory Burch](#), but the laser cut was such a big trend for fall [2015], and it's still popular for spring, too. These would make a good carryover shoe [between seasons]."
5. "It's funny because if you look at the Bettye's and you look at these, you can tell how that type of adornment has kind of come back around. The grommet [trend] definitely went away for a while, but these French Soles are new for this year. Everything old I have has come back in style."
6. "Linda Pritchard is no longer in business. I guess this is more of a 'shootie' than a bootie, but I remember ordering these and thinking, 'Are people going to get this?' We had never had anything like that. I find it so funny because now everyone is doing something like this. Those are 8 or 9 years old."



Photo by Robert Merhaut

As a born and bred native of Ohio, Elizabeth Todd was convinced that a trip around the Beltway would give her a heart attack. When she first moved here 17 years ago, Old Town Alexandria provided a bit of solace amidst the fast-paced madness, so she never left. Now a proud Alexandrian, Todd has become an integral part of the landscape with her boutique, The Shoe Hive, which opened its doors in October 2003. "When I had another career, I traveled to a lot of small state capitals for work. I always found these cute little independent boutiques, and at that time there weren't any in the greater D.C. area," says Todd.

Since then, the amount of local stores in Old Town has multiplied, and Todd helped to co-found the Old Town Boutique District a little under 10 years ago as a way to cross-market and collaborate. A few years ago this concept was taken a step further with the idea for The Alexandria Stylebook from Bellacara's Angela Sitalides to show that everything from makeup and decor to fitness and fashion could be found without leaving the area. "The boutique district is the macro, and The Stylebook is the micro," Todd says. "There are over 30 stores in the boutique district, so we can't have the specialized information that The Stylebook has."

In addition to the changing retail offerings, Todd has noticed a shift in the type of items women are leaning toward. "Comfort is really the most important thing for people," she states.

"They still want heels and to be fashionable, but they want to be able to walk around all day and not want to cut their feet off by the end of it." By listening to customers and expanding to include clothing and jewelry, The Shoe Hive has been able to evolve and remain relevant. In 2016, shoppers can expect to find pieces from IRO and Jerome Dreyfuss, as well as more shoe styles from client-favorite Freda Salvador.

(January 2016)

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