

HOME STYLE THROUGH A NEW LENS

NICOLE NORRIS DESIGN STUDIO AND BOHEMIAN SWAN ARE THE LATEST ADDITIONS TO DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION

In the last year or so, downtown revitalization has featured both a longtime businesswoman returning to her roots and another couple who have moved their business here and are looking to carve out a niche.

New North Main Street tenants Nicole Norris Design Studio and Bohemian Swan are both involved in the artistic realm. While they offer interior design and furniture of different styles, they also both bring experience and passion to their work and want to be a part of downtown growth.



NICOLE NORRIS DESIGN STUDIO

Nicole Norris is no stranger to Sumter. Her interior design business has been popular since she opened her first studio, actually also in the downtown area, in 1996.

That was a time when there were not too many options for dining and activity downtown. She eventually moved the operation to Guignard Drive and steadily built

the design business with both a residential and commercial appeal.

Her studio has expanded to six employees now with four designers, and it specializes in residential design and interior architecture, Norris said. However, being based in Sumter primarily has allowed her to work on numerous different projects.

That list includes residential

homes, local industrial corporate offices, funeral homes, restaurants, stores, hair salons and even four dental offices, she said.

"You name it, we've done it, practically," Norris said. "We like having the opportunity to do a lot of different things. Since we are in a smaller town, we have been able to do more, whereas if you were in a larger city, you might be more of a niche for a certain type of design... When I think back, it is kind of amazing what I have gotten to do through the years."

In recent years, the opportunity to move the studio back downtown arose with a rental property at 47 N. Main St. that was getting a complete makeover by local commercial Realtor Jay Davis.

Davis has a team that works to redevelop and bring older downtown buildings back to life while still maintaining their historic charm. Norris and her designers also got to collaborate in the process.

The result was a win-win of the "historic-meets-the-modern vibe with a twist" and included exposing the original hardwood floors and old brick walls, Norris said. The studio includes a storefront for

a retail area for home décor and accessories, a kitchen, design library, an open work area in the back for the design team and storage space. The new studio opened in January 2023 and is 2,000-plus square feet.

"Over the years, we have tried to streamline and focus on what we do best," she said. "We feel like it is the right size."

Norris loves the progress made with downtown revitalization through the years.

"There are a lot of great things down here," she said. "It's fun to have so many options for food and dining and activity on Main Street."



BOHEMIAN SWAN



Imagine you inherited a piece of furniture that is a family heirloom and still want to use it because of its quality, but you simply have a different color scheme. Or you live in a historic home with smaller rooms and desire smaller, American-made furniture that was constructed 50 to 70 years ago as opposed

to the larger pieces of today.

Enter Pamela and Dion Bowen, who opened Bohemian Swan, a reclaimed marketplace/vintage store, in April 2022 at 3 N. Main St. in downtown Sumter.

For a dozen years, Pamela was a professional upholsterer, but she missed interacting with people. She has always loved reclaimed antiques and vintage items, and those connect with upholstery because that is generally for older furniture, she said.

In 2018, the couple opened a similar store in Charleston where the vintage concept has a large following. Here, the Bowens are trying to build a reputation, they said.

Just having a specialty item or two in a home can generate a vintage appeal, Pamela said.