

Best friends behind Port Washington boutique known for its vintage finds



Best friends Jacquelyn Conte and Krissy Harper co-own Wit & Whim, an eclectic gift-meets-gallery-meets-curiosity shop in Port Washington. Credit: Wit & Whim

By Anne Bratskeir

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“People feel like they walked into the Etsy website when they walk in here,” says Jacquelyn Conte, 44, of her shop, Wit & Whim, an eclectic gift-meets-gallery-meets-curiosity shop in Port Washington, which she co-owns with best friend, Krissy Harper, 49.

“We’re very unconventional in the way we stock the store,” says Conte. “We don’t go to big gift shows like at the Jacob Javits and instead of buying from China, we shop vintage festivals, flea markets and focus on the work of some 50 local Long Island artists.”

One step into the well-stocked space that in the 1930s served as a little grocery store and you get it. In one sweep, your eye might light upon an old vintage typewriter, a handmade shawl, a jewelry holder made of a decoupaged oyster shell, candles, obscure beauty products, tiny glass sculptures, hand-embroidered purses and more. There are also quirky one-of-a-kind pieces such as a vintage faux miniature taxidermy kangaroo complete with a pouched baby.

There’s an unusually ample selection of men’s gifts too (these, often a hard to find category) that includes porcelain signs, sport flags, vintage barware, beer trays, pocket knives, cuff links, socks, pouches and key chains.



The mix is eclectic and interesting at Wit & Whim in Port Washington. Credit: Wit & Whim

Prices range from \$2.50 for a picture button or postcard to \$2,000 for a rare gemstone, though much of the merchandise is under \$50.

Added bonus? Beneath the wide-ranging inventory runs a philanthropic bent. Each month, the women choose a charitable cause that is important to them ranging from mostly local organizations that benefit animals, individuals and

communities to which they donate a percentage of their profits.

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The duo, who bought the place from their boss three years ago, and met six years ago at a vintage clothing shop are a striking pair, with their winged eyeliner, dramatic red lips and retro do's. "We're a perfect blend, and weirdly we have very different tastes even though we see things similarly. We appreciate each other," says Conte. "I go for the dark stuff and am more Gothic – spiders, bats and skulls – while Krissy is the more colorful and whimsical of the two of us."

Of late, they've taken to Instagram Live to engage their people on Thursday afternoons between 4 and 5 p.m., occasionally offering discounts on some items to folks who check in. One week, they talked about masks, another beauty products. "People seem to like it and they're still not going out as much," she says. "And it's fun. We both love it."

Wit & Whim is located at 6 Carlton Ave. Call 516-944-9200 or visit online at wit-and-whim.com.

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