

Screaming for Vintage recalls Beggars and Choosers

by Brittany Perloff

With its old-style, disheveled brick walls and its white paneled ceilings, Screaming for Vintage (SFV) transports its patrons to a different time. Visitors might start to reminisce about their grandma's old house, times of peace, and rock and roll t-shirts. Old time records, vintage wooden furniture, flower-power clothing, and knick-knacks from the past fill the store.

Every afternoon, from Wednesday to Sunday, the store's owner, Chad Piraino, can be seen behind the counter rocking his beanie and band tee. With his laidback, cool, 70's vibe, Chad is the embodiment of his store.

Before residing in Pittsboro, Chad was born in Chicago and raised in Raleigh. "We moved to Pittsboro on a whim after feeling like Raleigh wasn't home anymore, and immediately fell in love with the town," he recalled.

Before owning SFV, Chad worked as a guitar tech for touring hard rock bands. The vinyls in his store are just a taste of the music he enjoys with genres ranging from punk to hard rock to soul. His music knowledge even helped him name his store.

"It's kind of funny, but we used the influence of a song by [heavy metal band] Judas Priest to name our store, Screaming for Vengeance, which became Screaming for Vintage," he explained.

While he toured with bands, his wife, Mary, worked at a local vintage shop in downtown Pittsboro, Beggars and Choosers, a 40-year-old establishment. The owner Pam Smith helped them realize their desire to open a shop of their own.

"Pam really inspired us to do this, we've always had an interest in vintage, but without her we would've never opened our own shop," he acknowledged.

Pam decided to retire shortly after and offered to let them rent her space. He said the opportunity "fell into our laps."

The name Beggars and Choosers can still be found on the side of the building in honor of the stores place in the town's history. "The sign confuses people sometimes," he laughed, "but Beggars and Choosers is a destination, and we wanted to keep it alive."

Describing the difference between the shops he said, "SFV is a bit more refined and curated than Beggars and Choosers. But, ultimately, both stores put their efforts in finding something for everyone."

He often feels like being in his store zaps him back to a different time, and he's tried to fill the place with items that make other people feel the same.

"I'm a 70's child and also like the 60's, and Mary loves the 80's. Together, it's a good recipe," Chad said.

He then added, "People appreciate good designs and quality made furniture; it's hard to get nowadays."

Although advances in technology should yield higher quality items, Chad believes that the care that was once used to make good products is often sacrificed in favor of mass-production.

"It seems like this stuff is coming full circle and you see kids wearing this stuff now. The only time it's kinda funny is that sometimes you go to someone's house and they have really crappy furniture," he laughed.

On a typical day at SFV, Chad works the afternoons, while Mary takes on the morning shift. But working in the shop doesn't compare to the work they do after hours. Chad is constantly researching potential new inventory and traveling throughout the country to collect it. He finds himself traveling more so now than when he was touring.

“Owning your own business is a 24/7 job,” he said.

He also recalled the struggles they endured opening shop. “We started from nothing,” he admitted. “The people in town would often come by and help with the renovation process for free. I was taken back, I never experienced such kindness. We would've never finished without the people of Pittsboro,” he said.

Now celebrating their two-year anniversary, Chad said that owning the shop has been nothing short of an incredible journey.

Brittany Perloff is a freelance writer, poet, and musician. Raised in New York City and residing in Pittsboro, NC, she has an appreciation for multiple perspectives.