

Gazette Photo by Linda Meaux



The Michels (from left), Jennifer, Joette, and Heather, await customers at the Allure Boutique, noted for its trendy looks and great prices.

## Boutique has special Allure for the discerning shopper

By Linda Meaux  
Gazette Reporter

Lafayette newest strip mall on West Pinhook Road is home to Allure Boutique, Joette Michel's family-owned business.

Jennifer Michel, the boutique's manager, is a 27-year-old who became frustrated in finding age appropriate clothing for her petite frame.

"Too old for junior fashions," is how Jennifer describes her predicament.

The idea to open her own boutique came after a few brainstorming sessions with her mother, Joette, and sister Heather.

Allure Boutique occupies 1500 sq. ft. but looks much larger once you're inside.

"The trendy collection has pieces that are age appropriate," Jennifer said. "You're able to be wear pieces during the day and at night. The styles appeal to a wide group of women, with prices ranging from \$15 to \$150."

As the shopper

moves about, the eye focuses on contemporary artwork for sale by two local artists, then onto the makeup counter, where it lingers on displays of Bare Essentials and MB formulations.

This is where cosmetician Heather Michel assists with full makeup applications for bridal parties and other special events. The cosmetics are 100 percent mineral based without any preservatives or fillers.

The shop also offers such wares as Soda Blu, Sweet Pea, level 99 LA Premium Denim, cardigans, Witness, tanks with a Christian message, accessories, belts, Tiger Lily sandals, magnetic picture frames for different sororities and Woodwick candles.

In fact, when it comes to looking good and feeling good, Allure Boutique can be your one-stop shopping experience.

Allure is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday and from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday. For more information, call 337.267.SHOP (7467).

## House (continued from Page 1B)

Then Landry's only daughter, Kathlyn, and her husband, Larry Hurst, took over management of the restaurant upon the founder's death in 1958.

The Hursts groomed their children to take over the business, which in 1977 had re-located to 240 Tubing Road, and they stepped into those roles in 1985.

The two succeeded immediately and within a year opened the family's second location, Little River Inn, located in New Iberia.

The inn is now located in the old Trappey's building at 833 E. Main St. in that city, its dining area overlooking the Trappey Oak, estimated to have been planted in 1630.

"I guess you could say the business snowballed," said Richard, getting a mix of laughs and groans from the friends and customers who gathered to celebrate The Little House's official opening house.

Helping present the open house was the Broussard Chamber of Commerce, with Chamber members Katy Kinze and Arlene LeBlanc doing the ribbon-cutting honors. The two also introduced Kathlyn, Richard and Elaine to the crowd.

With The Little House, the Hurst family now offers a unique experience in intimate dining. Though the Tubing Road site is just blocks from busy U.S. Highway 90, turning into the shelled parking lot is like turning into the countryside. Plantings, paths and lots of shade trees cast a tranquil mood over the setting.

The Little House is available for all sorts of functions, from private business meetings to small luncheons to wedding rehearsal suppers.

Rhea Cormier is the event coordinator for the facility, which features an audio/video system, high-speed wireless Internet connection, and a CD/DVD



At the grand opening of The Little House are (from left) Lori Hurst, Kathlyn Hurst, Elaine Hurst Alderman and Richard Hurst. The first private dining facility to be associated with Poor Boy's Riverside Inn held its grand opening on April 8 at the Broussard location on Tubing Road.

system with speakers inside and out. The facility is ADA compliant as well. Rates for privately catered parties and other func-

tions are available by calling Cormier at 337.330.2758. You can also visit the website, [www.PoorBoysRiversideInn.com](http://www.PoorBoysRiversideInn.com).

## Shop showcases local artists, artisans

By Linda Meaux  
Gazette Reporter

Morgan Street Furniture Co. and Gallery is celebrating its 10th year in business at the same location, 118 N. Morgan St. in Broussard.

The store offers a complete line of bench-made fine furniture crafted by Acadiana artisan Ben Blackburn and artwork created by artists from across Acadiana.

A 14-year veteran of the craft of building furniture, Blackburn will also accept pieces commissioned by clients with specific needs, and works from designs created by the store's owner, Agnes St. Amand.

Morgan Street Furniture Co. was Blackburn's first showroom in the Broussard area; he has since opened a second showroom on Rena Drive in Lafayette. MSF carries a full line of Blackburn's furniture and will also design

and build to suit clients, for either the home or an office setting.

"Ben creates pieces for the home or office, and I'm pleased at the prospect of working with him," said St. Amand.

In addition to offering fine furniture and interior pieces, St. Amand has built a reputation among Broussard's burgeoning arts community by featuring local artworks in her spaces.

Morgan Street Gallery is the name given to the store's arts arm, and many artists in the area have been part of the Morgan Street Gallery Group for the past decade. Blackburn will continue the tradition by showcasing local artists' pieces at his Rena Drive showroom.

Morgan Street Furniture is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

For more information, call 337.837.4803.

Gazette Photos by Linda Meaux



Agnes St. Amand shows visitors a niche in her store, Morgan Street Furniture Co. and Gallery, appointed with hand-crafted wooden furniture by artisan Ben Blackburn and the artwork of such Broussard artists as Linda Meaux. Below, a table created by Blackburn holds candlesticks and ginger jars.

## Real estate going green in Acadiana

When thinking of "green," Van Eaton & Romero real estate agents Arla Slaughter and Lori McCarthy don't want you to think the word only pertains to general landscaping, the rainforest or even Birkenstock-wearing granola types.

They want you to think of real estate.

Slaughter and McCarthy are two Van Eaton & Romero agents who have teamed up to offer buyers information about energy efficient, money saving and earth friendly real estate trends. In stride with some of the nation's leading environmentally active real estate brokers, Lafayette's top residential real estate company is taking a proactive step toward the practice of using sustainable resources and encouraging environmental stewardship.

Van Eaton & Romero REALTORS® Inc. has announced Slaughter and McCarthy have the distinction of being Acadiana's first EcoBroker® real estate agents.

Green realty is a phenomenon that is being championed by the Colorado based company EcoBroker® that educates real estate professionals and builders about green building practices and sustainable resources. The movement is spreading across the United States through networks of educated and knowledgeable real estate agents who are advocates for greener home renovations and greener home buying decisions. Slaughter and McCarthy are blazing environmentally conscious trails for South Louisiana real estate.

"Lafayette is ready for this," said McCarthy. "I work with buyers and sellers regularly who want to make green choices when they are buying a home."

Earning the EcoBroker® designation required Slaughter and McCarthy to complete a rigorous curriculum entailing environmental

Photo courtesy of Van Eaton & Romero



Van Eaton & Romero real estate agents Arla Slaughter and Lori McCarthy want to help you to 'think green' when buying a home.

health issues such as radon, asbestos, lead, water, mold and indoor air quality. Energy efficiency knowledge was also integral to gaining the EcoBroker® designation — energy efficient technologies, sustainable energy options and energy efficient mortgage options that increase a buyer's purchasing power were all part of the coursework that the two Van Eaton & Romero real estate agents completed.

"Educating buyers about environmental issues is admirable and important work for our time," said Bill Bacqué, CEO of Van Eaton & Romero. "We are proud to be a company where work like Arla's and Lori's can be carried out."

With a background in marine biology and a former environmental educator for a resort development in Charleston, S.C., Slaughter found the EcoBroker® education to be a perfect segue between her biological career and her real estate career. Her alliance with McCarthy was also an important part of her transition because of McCarthy's residential real estate success.

McCarthy and Slaughter are mediators for

eco-conscious home buyers and the abundance of resources available to them in the home-buying process. The real estate agent occupies a pivotal communication role in educating buyers about green features for their homes.

Of the many resources they offer, the agents can help buyers increase their purchasing power with Energy Efficient Mortgages.

EEMs work by allowing buyers to finance energy improvements and by stretching debt-to-income qualifying ratios. Future savings are calculated based on the home's energy ratings, and the buyers are given reports estimating how much money they will save in the long run when they invest in energy efficient housing in the short run.

Consider a couple with a combined income of \$3,000 per month with a maximum allowable monthly payment that is 28 percent of their debt-to-income ratio equaling \$840. The maximum mortgage at 90 percent of the appraised home value they could afford would be \$132,900. If they were to work with Slaughter and McCarthy and their network of Energy Star Raters and the Department of Natural Resources, the same couple would have \$9,500 more purchasing power with an EEM.

In the National Association of REALTORS® 2007 Profile of Buyers' Home Feature Preferences, 90 percent of respondents said that they feel energy efficient features are either very or somewhat important. REALTORS® like Slaughter and McCarthy are here to educate these buyers about all of the cost saving, energy efficient, eco-friendly options available to them in the Acadiana region.

Van Eaton & Romero is a locally owned real estate firm that is consistently named to the Top 500 real estate companies in the nation. Comprised of over 200 agents and full-time staff, Van Eaton & Romero includes a full-service Relocation Department, a Commercial Department, and satellite locations in Carencro, Opelousas, New Iberia, River Ranch and, opening in 2008, Sugar Mill Pond. Van Eaton & Romero's main office is now located on the corner of Kaliste Saloom Road and Camellia Boulevard.



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