

Second home

Pandemic boon yields satellite shop for Magnolia nursery



Co-owner Courtney Paulson continuously refreshes decor inside Magnolia Gift and Garden's downtown Chico shop.

PHOTO BY EVAN TUCHINSKY

"but I messaged my husband that I wanted to get this space because it was just so perfect, with all the windows and the skylight.

"Honestly, I'd been at the nursery for so many years [that] I was kind of ready for a change, too. But I love plants, so this has been a new adventure sticking in the plant world. It's kind of a perk, too, that my husband and I have our own spaces now!"

Paulson (and Hunter) decided the storefront needed only a couple minor renovations: flooring and paint. Otherwise, Paulson simply has added touches of decor from local antiques stores such as Eighth and Main. She said she continuously refreshes the look of her shop, not just the inventory, so customers can have a different experience each visit.

Her overarching theme is a motto for both sites of the business: cultivating a good-natured home.

So far, the clientele has come from "a lot of word of mouth"—via the East Avenue location, social media and the Local Nursery Crawl (happening Feb. 25-26 this year) in which Magnolia participates.

"What a luxury that we have an established business," Paulson said. "And we had that advantage with our nursery [when it opened]; everyone knew there was a nursery there, so even though the name changed, that's always been on our side.

"It's been a lot of fun [opening the new shop]," she added. "It's been a lot of work ... it was a little more than I was anticipating, but it's amazing. I'm really grateful and happy."

—EVAN TUCHINSKY

evant@newsreview.com

In March 2020, with plants in their nursery and their annual business cycle about to bloom simultaneously, Courtney Paulson and Chris Hunter locked the gates of Magnolia Gift and Garden. They could have stayed open—under pandemic restrictions at the time, theirs was considered an essential business—but uncertainty in the first wave of COVID-19 prompted the married owners to take the safest course.

"I thought we were toast; I thought that was it [for the nursery]," Paulson recalled in a recent interview. "I mourned our life, really. It was just such a strange time."

Three weeks later, Magnolia reopened ... and went on to have its best year since the couple started the business in 2008 at the East Avenue location of the old Zamora Nurseries, where Paulson had worked 20 years. California's stay-home orders led to more interest in plants, she explained—notably, house plants. From this coalescence sprung a downtown shop, which opened last August. The

store with an industrial interior, on Broadway between Eight and Ninth streets, expands upon the indoor plants and pottery aspects of Magnolia's nursery, with a distinct aesthetic. Paulson knew she'd found her place the moment she spotted it while driving by, stopped and peeked inside.

"We weren't actively looking," she said,

Magnolia Downtown Chico

830 Broadway.
(530) 809-4196
magnoliagardening.com



Chico PERFORMANCES



MELISSA ETHERIDGE



ROBERT CRAY

DEMETRI MARTIN Sunday, Feb. 6

KITCHEN DWELLERS Thursday, Feb. 17

BOOK IN COMMON LECTURE:
THERE THERE, BY TOMMY ORANGE
Tuesday, March 1

NOBUNTU Thursday, March 10

MELISSA ETHERIDGE Sunday, March 20

BLACK VIOLIN Tuesday, March 22

BANFF CENTRE
MOUNTAIN FILM FESTIVAL
WORLD TOUR Friday, March 25

PARSONS DANCE Sunday, April 3

ROBERT CRAY Friday, April 8

MERZ TRIO Sunday, April 10

NASSIM Tuesday, April 19

PSS PSS Tuesday, May 10

TICKETS

By Phone: **530-898-6333** Online: **chicoperformances.com**

In Person: **at the University Box Office,**
corner of Third and Chestnut streets

University Box Office Hours are Monday – Friday 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

NORTH STATE SYMPHONY

21/22 SCOTT SEATON
MUSIC DIRECTOR

MENDELSSOHN | SIBELIUS | RAVEL
GLAZUNOV | VINTER

Masterworks 3
Finding Inspiration

Saturday, February 12
Laxson Auditorium, Chico | 7:30pm

MTAC
Youth Orchestra



Robert Fant,
French Horn



TICKETS: 530-898-6333 | CHICOSTATETICKETS.COM

INFORMATION: NORTHSTATESYMPHONY.ORG



Chico
PERFORMANCES

CN&R
Chico News & Review

NSPR NORTH STATE
PUBLIC RADIO
A SERVICE OF KQED

MORE **ENTREPRENEURS** CONTINUED ON PAGE 14