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THE WOMEN OF
**BOSTON
STREET**

GILBERT FIREFIGHTER
GOOD GUY GIVES BACK

BABYCAKES CAFÉ
CARROT CAKE TO LIVE FOR

THE WOMEN OF BOSTON STREET

by Joan Westlake

12



Front row: Tonia Tinker, Dianne Everson, Nicole Gould
 Second row: Glynis LeGrand, Andrea Serrano, Natalie Simons
 Third row: Christy Thompson, Wanda Villegas, Lisa Huebner,
 Laurie Fagen, Megan Rhey, Viviana Kedzior
 Back row: Sigrid Sciacca, Melissa Minchella, Luella Wilson-McDaniel, Wendy Fallon, Dilia Wood
 Photography by Gordon Murray, SuperHero Productions
 Make-up by Marissa Balken, LaBella Salon & Day Spa
 Shot on location at Uptown Bridal & Boutique in historic downtown Chandler



When trailblazing women moved into a frontier town to open shops, cafes and other “civilizing” businesses, it was an exciting benchmark of progress.

Boston Street, in historic downtown Chandler, is undergoing a renaissance being ignited by a new generation of independent business women. They are providing the services and goods essential for revitalizing this traditional SanTan Corridor center of commerce. And, just as their foremothers did, these entrepreneurs enhance the culture and sense of community.

Women are at the helms of firms such as Arizona Mesquite Furniture Company, Art on Boston, The Blue Peacock, Boston Street Pilates, di Sciacca, Downtown 109, Porch & Parlor Antiques, The Bistro at Kokopelli Winery, Thompson Law Firm, Uptown Bridal & Boutique, Urban Crib and the soon-to-open Inspirador, Urban Tea Loft and Vivi’s Boutique.

Although the styles, support and opportunities may have changed since the days of the Territory, today’s business women are meeting challenges with the same skills and attitudes as their early counterparts.

Business vision

Having an entrepreneur’s eye to select a re-emerging downtown Chandler is a vision shared by all these business leaders.

Some visionaries always ahead of the pack include Luella Wilson-McDaniel, who started offering salon services at Downtown 109 in June 2001. A Chandler resident for 37 years, the stylist says she’s “watched the downtown area slowly come back and develop a personality. It’s a good feeling to contribute to that.”

Lisa Huebner says she opened the Boston Street doors to the Arizona Mesquite Furniture Company three and a half years ago because she felt the area had “a lot of potential.”

“The area reminded me of what downtown Tempe’s art district looked like years ago, when mom-and-pop businesses prevailed,” she explains.

Being “the neighborhood attorney and counsel for the community” is at the heart of what Christy Thompson says motivated her to open the Thompson Law Firm in Chandler in January 2006, after a decade of success at her downtown Phoenix offices. Chandler holds such appeal for her that she chose the location for her wedding and reception.

Thompson’s community involvement includes being on the board of the Chandler Center for the Arts, a position she admits allowed her to be “responsible for picking Wayne Newton to play in Chandler.”

Natalie Simons says that she has had her eye on downtown Chandler for some time. In April 2006, when she and co-owner Megan Rhey were ready to bring a personal fitness venue to the downtown scene, they opened Boston Street Pilates. Already the business has expanded to the point that they have brought

in an additional trainer, Gail Hendricks, who has worked and raised her family in Chandler over the past 25 years.

Andrea Serrano says that she and her business partner – and sister-in-law – Theresa Serrano-Keel chose downtown Chandler for their gift shop The Blue Peacock because “this area truly represents what America is all about -- the entrepreneurial spirit.”

That “the architecture of downtown Chandler has remained true to its roots” is a factor in why Wanda Villegas and her husband opened the Urban Crib on Boston Street. She adds that the one-of-a-kind nature of the restaurants and shops made it ideal for their shop, which offers furnishings and accessories from some of the finest artisans in Bali, Indonesia.

Independent spirit

The typical successful entrepreneur’s traits – courage, determination, putting in long hours and a passion for the work – are found in abundance among the women of Boston Street.

It is her “passion for fashion” and “an intense desire to be my own boss and build my own financial independence” that motivates Viviana Kedzior. Set to open this spring, Vivi’s Boutique is bringing upscale men’s and women’s clothing to the Chandler retail scene.

“I do what I love and I love what I do,” says Sigrid Sciacca. A principal of the retail shop di Sciacca, she has been

designing signature glassware via their wholesale company, 1 Source, for firms such as Bombay Sapphire and Bacardi for 14 years. “Wanting to share our passion for glass” with the general public, Sciacca says that she and her husband opened the retail shop that also offers another love of theirs, Chinese antique furniture.

A willingness to take on challenge and the freedom to create are some of the reasons Huebner cites for her business venture. “I would advise any woman interested in starting a business to find your passion, figure out how you can make a living for it and then throw yourself into it 100 percent,” she adds.

Artists Wendy Fallon and Laurie Fagen, also publisher of *SanTan Sun News* and *SanTan Essential*, are taking their passions for their artwork and frustrations over limited marketing opportunities and opening Art on Boston. Now open with their first exhibit, Art on Boston is a contemporary fine art gallery, and offers artist studios for rent, an artist’s cooperative, and art classes.

Family matters

As to one of the biggest challenges facing most business women, Fallon echoes what most of her counterparts say: it’s balancing the roles of mother, wife, business professional and community contributor.

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-- Lisa Huebner

However, owning your own company can be a bonus when juggling these roles. Being the boss offers the potential of a more family-friendly schedule than the typical 8-to-5 job affords, according to Wilson-McDaniel and Serrano.

Villegas of Urban Crib points out that that her husband and two children provide the love and support that made the store and its growth possible. And, the shop provides a shining example to her children of the values of diligence and hard-earned money as well as an appreciation for the arts.



Women of Boston Street with businesses currently or recently under construction, clockwise from bottom: Dilia Wood, Viviana Kedzior, Tonia Tinker, Dianne Everson, Laurie Fagen, Wendy Fallon, Glynis Legrand, Nicole Gould.

Photography by Gordon Murray, SuperHero Productions

Make-up by Marissa Balken, LaBella Salon & Day Spa

Shot on location at Uptown Bridal in historic downtown Chandler

The legacy of the vine goes back four generations at Kokopelli's Winery and Bistro. Melissa's husband, Dennis, grew up in the business, and Melissa brings not only a degree in hospitality management but also 22 years of experience in the industry. The couple bought the business from his father and mother, Don and Carol Minchella. It is a legacy that she says they work to leave to the three Minchella daughters.

It has been a family affair from the beginning at the brand new Uptown Bridal & Boutique. Planning the weddings of their twin daughters convinced Dianne Everson and husband Walker to start the brand new bridal shop and bring daughters Tonia Tinker and Nicole Gould into the business. Dianne says that "as a family working together on a daily basis, we inspire each other." She adds that there is something "magical" about making every wedding day memorable.

The challenges

"I believe each woman business owner probably faces her own unique challenges," says Huebner. "Two years ago, I faced the challenge of a divorce at the same time I was buying out my business partner. It was a tremendous struggle ..."

Having to prove yourself as a female business professional in order to be taken seriously is a barrier that Fallon acknowledges. But along the lines of "what doesn't kill you makes you stronger," the artist says that having to work harder and take on multiple roles only serves to make women better suited to entrepreneurial ventures.

With a favorite quote of the late great governor of Texas, Ann Richards, Thompson sums up the business group's can-do attitude toward the challenges they must face: "Ginger Rogers did everything Fred Astaire did, except backwards and in high heels." ☺

Joan Westlake is editor of SanTan Essential and has been living in, enjoying and writing about the Southeast Valley since Baseline was a dirt road. She can be reached at Editor@SanTanEssential.com.

women of boston street listings

Lisa Huebner

ARIZONA MESQUITE FURNITURE COMPANY
DESERT WOODS DESIGNS
91 W. Boston St.
480-899-6077
AZMesquite.com

Wendy Fallon

Laurie Fagen
ART ON BOSTON
11 W. Boston St. Suite 1
480-917-1112
ArtOnBoston.com

Andrea Serrano

Theresa Serrano-Keel
THE BLUE PEACOCK
51 E. Boston St.
480-963-1095

Megan Rhey

Natalie Simons
BOSTON STREET PILATES
96 W. Boston St.
480-732-7873
BostonStreetPilates.com

Sigrid Sciacca

DI SCIACCA
81 W. Boston St.
480-517-9777
DiSciacca.com

Luella Wilson-McDaniel

DOWNTOWN 109
109 W. Boston St.
480-755-7977

Dilia Wood

INSPIRADOR (Summer '07)
63 E. Boston St.
888-638-2671
Inspirador.com

Melissa Minchella

KOKOPELLI WINERY AND BISTRO
35 W. Boston St.
480-792-6927
KokopelliWinery.com

Christy Thompson

THOMPSON LAW FIRM
108 W. Boston St.
480-634-7480

Dianne Everson

Tonia Tinker
Nicole Gould
UPTOWN BRIDAL & BOUTIQUE
11 W. Boston St. Suite 3
480-242-9408
UptownBrides.com

Wanda Villegas

URBAN CRIB
85 W. Boston St.
480-722-7573
Urban-Crib.com

Glynis Legrand

URBAN TEA LOFT (Spring '07)
11 W. Boston St. Suite 2
480-786-9600

Viviana Kedzior

VIVI'S BOUTIQUE (Spring '07)
95 W. Boston St.
480-220-4180

