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## Heritage Becomes Pappagallo Fine Gifts and Imports

*By Susan Larson*



*(L to R) Suzanne Metzger and Tricia Olsson at Pappagallo Fine Gifts and Imports.*

Suzanne Metzger had been working as a senior business analyst at Geico in Stafford for 15 years and was ready for a change when an opportunity presented itself. The owner of Heritage Gifts and Imports was selling. Metzger bought the store's inventory and changed the name to Pappagallo Fine Gifts and Imports. The shop is located at 300 William St., across from Hyperion Espresso.

"I wanted something creative. I wanted to be my own boss," Metzger said. "I've always loved downtown Fredericksburg. Whenever I need a gift, I always come here. It's funny, I've been shopping at Heritage Gifts and Imports for years, and the opportunity presented itself. You have to jump when the opportunity is there, otherwise you won't have that opportunity again."

Metzger said she's keeping with the store's tradition of unique gifts from all over the world and impeccable customer service. "I like the old world charm that already existed in the shop, and I wanted to keep that. The feedback from our customers is always great."

She's also working to put her own signature on the store, introducing items that personally appeal to her. "I brought in some marbled silk scarves from an artist in Connecticut. They're very pretty, and I particularly love silk scarves," she said.

"We have cameos from Italy. Each one is hand made and has a signature on the back. We have handcrafted Murano glass jewelry from Venice, Italy.

She also carries Rance fragrances. "They are made in Italy but are based on the formula worn by Napoleon and Josephine," she said. "It's an exclusive. We try to educate our customers about those exclusives that no one else has available in the Fredericksburg area."

Also exclusive to the shop are the artisan hardwood puzzles by Bent Mountain, Va., artist Peter Chapman. "You can take those apart and find little surprises. For example, inside the whale is Jonah. Inside the snake there's a rat. People are drawn to those because they are little works of art. Each one is hand made. They're lovely little gifts."



*The shop carries Majolica Italian ceramics, handmade the same way since the Italian Renaissance.*

The shop now carries **Majolica Italian ceramics**, which have been made the same way since the Italian Renaissance, Metzger said. "They're really beautiful pieces. Hopefully we'll get some positive feedback," she said.

Metzger retained two women who worked at the store with the previous owner. "Tricia Olson and Alice Parker are great. They provide that impeccable service," Metzger said. She wants to provide a personal shopping experience, something you don't receive at the mall. To that end, the shop provides free gift-wrapping on any size purchase.

"One fun thing about being a shop owner is building relationships with my suppliers who are artists themselves, and there's that connectivity because we're all independent business owners," she said. "It's neat that they have a unique product to offer. We feel privileged to be able to display it in our store, and hopefully people will be drawn to that uniqueness that you're not going to find in the big box stores."

Metzger has an interesting story about how she decided on the name for her shop. "Pappagallo is Italian for parrot, and the store already had many lovely Italian products," she said. "I happen to own a yellow-headed Amazon parrot. Her name is Turkey Bird. I dearly love that bird, so Pappagallo seemed very appropriate."



*Pappagallo Fine Gifts and Imports is located at 300 William St. in downtown Fredericksburg.*

People are asking if Turkey Bird will visit the store. "I want to get to the point where I get a little perch and she can come to the store with her Wilma; she calls me Wilma. I have no idea where that came from. I'm not the original owner. She's in her 40s. So she's a lot of the inspiration behind the name and the logo."

Pappagallo Fine Gifts and Imports is open 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday.