



Nest, a quaint shop in downtown Burlington, sells a variety of novelty items from vintage furniture to homemade candles to dresses and jewelry.



The shop is located in the heart of downtown Burlington's historic district.



Fresh grains of lavender are sold for just \$1 per scoop, a token scent of the shop.

## From 'just stuff' to 'truly something,' Nest revitalizes old things into new treasures

Kassondra Cloos  
Producer of The Swing

If she wouldn't buy it, she won't sell it.

That's Heather Mize's No. 1 rule for her downtown Burlington vintage store, Nest. It may only be open Fridays and Saturdays, but according to Mize, the 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. workday is the easy part. The rest of the week is when she and her sister, Hannah Linares, really get to work, traveling to antique and thrift shops around the state to scavenge for old pieces of furniture — and sometimes even junk — that they can beautify for modern homes.

"It's a full time job, for sure, but I love everything in here," Mize said. "It makes it a lot easier when you just say, 'I don't care if this thing is two bucks and I could sell it for \$300. If I don't like it, it's not going in the shop.'"

Nest isn't the typical antique store, as it sells things both old and new, refinished and repurposed. Some of the top-selling items include abundantly fragrant soaps and soy candles, handmade in North Carolina. Each different scent is nestled into its own corner of the store, which is organized with extreme care to give customers ideas for decorating their own homes, as well as to inspire them to make their own creations.

There are many people who peruse the store week after week without buying anything, feeding off Nest's carefully decorated atmosphere, but Mize said it doesn't bother her. In fact, it flatters her.

"We never got into this for the money," she said. "That's a nice bonus, but to take something that was going to be thrown away and turn it into something that someone who makes a six-figure income is going to put in their house, it makes me excited. So it's totally OK when people come in here and take the ideas and make things themselves."

Even though Mize has been antiquing, thrifting and yard-sale-ing since she was a small child, owning a vintage store was never part of her plan. It was definitely something she had thought of and dreamed about, but in the end, it sort of just happened, she said.



Nest sells many crafting items, such as burlap.

The real inspiration came shortly after her daughter, now 11, was born with cerebral palsy. While she was pregnant, Mize had bought an old, rough-looking cabinet at a yard sale for \$20, and giving it a new life pushed her to make a profession out of her passion for vintage.

"(My daughter) was a very unhappy baby," Mize said. "She would cry and cry and I would look at that cabinet, and that piece — it made me plan. It made me dream about something, it gave me something to look forward to, and that was the big spark for me. I think ever since then, it just never quite stopped."

Mize fixed up the cabinet and sold it, although she now regrets letting go of something that became such a meaningful memory. Three Alamance County locations later, she's found herself in the midst of a growing downtown area amid other antique and thrift stores. Nest has countless loyal customers, some who have followed Mize since she sold her first pieces from the display window of a friend's beauty parlor, and several of the other store owners around the block urge their own customers to stop by while they're in town.

"They're really good people, they're very talented," said Fran Billings, who works at Mary Katherine's, a gift shop around the corner from Nest. "We just love the store, it's beautiful. It's like a dream when you walk in the front door."

Billings said she and Mary Smith, who owns the store, have a great relationship with Mize and Linares and are always happy to tell people to stop by their store when it's open. Billings said she has bought many of Mize's creations and loves the shabby-chic style that permeates the store.

"We encourage people to shop at the other stores all the time," Mize said. "There's no competitiveness at all. It thrills me that there are so many stores down here, because people can park and walk around, and the more stores down here, the better."

Mize repaints many of the pieces she finds for Nest, but occasionally she'll stumble upon a treasure with its original paint, chipping, but beautiful to her nonetheless.

"It's a history, all the different layers of paint that just kind of tell a story about the age of the stuff is wonderful," she said. "(We're) giving it a new purpose — this was just garbage going into a landfill, and now it will go into a modern, beautiful home, and be loved again."

Visit Nest at 346 Worth St. in Burlington from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays.

### MORE ONLINE

See Nest, downtown Burlington's chic re-store and meet the owners.

<http://pend.lu/nest>

KASSONDRA CLOOS |  
Producer of The Swing

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