



Holiday 2010



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Amanda Converse & Amy DuFault

Women to Watch: Amy DuFault and Amanda Converse

by Katie O'Sullivan

A year ago, their friends and colleagues thought they were a little bit crazy.

Who opens a new store on Cape Cod during the winter off-season? In the midst of a recession? A women's clothing boutique, no less, featuring upscale fashions by eco-conscious designers?

Amy DuFault and Amanda Converse were determined to make their eco-fashionista dreams into reality. In November 2009, they opened Shift <http://www.shiftboutique.com>, a conscious clothing boutique at the far end of Hyannis's Main Street. Their timing, it seems, was far from crazy.

This November, Shift celebrates its one year anniversary with a huge bash including food and drinks from local area merchants.

Fledgling designer sensation Gretchen Jones, the latest winner of Heidi Klum's Project Runway competition, will be at Shift for a handful of after-hours "styling parties." The woman Michael Kors and Nina Garcia said was the best stylist on Project Runway is coming to Hyannis to help Shift's customers and their friends find their own perfect style.

After a long year of launching their business and bringing the message of "green fashion" to Cape Cod, Amy and Amanda are giving back to the community that has supported them.

The success of the boutique was no accident, but rather the product of hard work and clear vision.

Shift collaborates with other local businesses to create engaging events for their customers once or twice each month, including trunk shows by various designers, art shows, wine tastings, and after-hours events with other eco-businesses. They work closely with their Main Street neighbors, including the Little Beach Gallery next door as well as the local restaurants who provide food and drinks for their store events.

"We work hard to make you think Shift and Main Street are interesting places to come to," says Amy with a big smile. She says they usually have at least two dozen people show up for each event, and are expecting many more for their anniversary party.

According to their website, Shift is geared towards women of all ages who consciously want to enjoy purchasing quality wardrobe staples as much as couture clothing. They work with and promote designers who are using sustainable and organic materials, as well as clothing companies who are working to make "fashion" a greener industry.

"Fashion is just the fun part," says Amy. The women truly believe in their environmental purpose, and Amy says their goal is to be the "go-to people for eco-sustainable clothing."

Standing inside the boutique, their commitment to the environment is obvious, from the use of repurposed doors to create funky dressing rooms to the eye-catching selection of fashionable clothing, all from designers and companies vetted by the women for their eco-friendliness.

In May 2010, Shift was awarded a "Green Difference Award" from Project Green Schools, a state nonprofit group who strives to create greener and healthier learning environments through education and awareness programs.

Amy and Amanda grew up on Cape Cod and have family in the Hyannis area. Being Cape natives, they understand the fragile nature of both the Cape's ecology as well as the economy.

Both women left the Cape after graduating high school to pursue their dreams, and both have chosen to return to Hyannis.

Amanda Converse graduated from George Washington University with a master's degree in Environmental Policy. She had thought to work in Washington D.C. helping to form environmental public policy, but after spending two years there she realized that change – real, sustainable change – needed to be affected from the local level.

She moved back to Cape Cod to work with Hyannis Main Street Business Improvement District <http://hyannismainstreet.com/>. For the last five years, she's been the Development Director of the private nonprofit organization, working with small business owners to revitalize downtown Hyannis.

HMSBID's mission is to promote the community and economic development of the Main Street, Hyannis district as a desirable place to live, work, invest, and visit.

During this time she also started a small business with partner Jitka Borowick called greenover <http://www.green-over.com>. It's a "green lifestyle consulting company" that guides individuals, businesses and organizations through the process of going green.

The website explains that while "Going green" is a term everyone is familiar with, it's not a reality that most people know how to accomplish. She's currently working with several local chambers of commerce to help create environmentally sustainable business plans.

While working with other small business owners, Amanda realized that Main Street, Hyannis was where she wanted to be and where she wanted to bring her own small business dreams to life.

After the last year of working both at HMSBID and at Shift, Amanda left her director position in October to focus more of her attention on Shift, since fashion is one of her greatest loves.

Amy DuFault is a long-time fashionista, having spent years as a fashion and entertainment reporter on the West Coast and, after moving back to Cape Cod, for the Cape Cod Times. She now writes a column for ecosalon <http://ecosalon.com/category/fashion/>, an online eco-fashion magazine based in San Francisco that she describes as being "like a green Vogue."

For Amy, the transition from fashion writer to fashion boutique owner wasn't as strange as it may sound. "As a freelance writer pitching stories, it was always important to be aware of season, holidays, political climate, economic climate..." she explains. "Now I'm pitching customers and finding that all the same rules really apply." Make it timely. Make it relevant. Make it fun.



Amy and Amanda enjoying a Green Drinks event at Limelights, in South Dennis.

Amy and Amanda certainly make it look like they're having fun while they're helping to "green" Main Street. Together with Jen Villa of The Little Beach Gallery, the women have revitalized the group Green Drinks of Cape Cod <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=264248196896>, a branch of Green Drinks International, an organization with 745 branches worldwide.

Monthly gatherings of the group take place in various eco-friendly businesses around the Cape and attract a range of local business people who meet after work to share local food, drinks and ideas. (CWO will publish more about Green Drinks in a future issue. Look for an article by Jen Villa in the Winter 2011.

Despite successful careers off-Cape, Amy and Amanda brought their creativity and endless dedication home to their Cape Cod community. They're hard at work to build not only their own green business but also to coordinate with the local business community to build that network of support and connection that helps everyone to succeed.

Buy local. Create support networks with fellow local business people. Strive to be as green as possible. These are mantras that Amy DuFault and Amanda Converse repeat in their business dealings and in their lives, making them women we should definitely watch out for.



ECO-DESIGNERS FEATURED AT
SHIFT BOUTIQUE:

Alchem1st, Allison Parris, Dahl, deux fm,
Doucette Duvall, Elroy, Ethos, Feral Childe, Frei,
Good Society, J. Brand, Jonano, Kelly B, Look
for Fiddleheads, Mika, MothLove, Mountains of
the Moon, NeuAura, Nixxi, Olsen Haus,
Popomomo, Prairie Underground, Rebe, estore,
She-bible, Sublet, SUST, Taxi CDC, Toggery

www.shiftboutique.com

Upcoming Events at SHIFT

ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY PARTY
SATURDAY, NOV 13, 6PM-9PM

Come celebrate and shop the one-night-only ridiculously low sale items, peruse fresh fall clothing and accessories, look for that new holiday dress and fill out a Wish List. Organic wines from Grain & Vine and mouthwatering apps from Island Merchant.

VENDOR BENDER
SATURDAY NOV 20-SUNDAY NOV 21, 10AM-6PM

Join Shift and 14 other vendors for "Vendor Bender," a pop-up in Mashpee Commons with truly talented local craftspeople, artists and designers. Beanstock Coffee Roasters will be on hand as will Late July Organic Snacks for samples and sales. Also enjoy a rotating stock of some of the Cape's most popular local musicians.

HOLIDAY DRESS SWAP
FRIDAY, DEC 3, 6PM-8PM

Last year's Swap was so much fun they decided to do it again. Tired of wearing the same LBD to another company holiday party? Bought something you never wore and now doesn't fit? Bring it and maybe you'll like what we have and vice versa. NO CHRISTMAS SWEATERS ALLOWED! Light refreshments served

GUY'S SHOPPING NIGHT OUT
FRIDAY, DEC 17, 6PM-8PM

Another Shift favorite party where the guys can either come with a pre-filled out Wish List or we give expert advice and instruction as to what the ladies like. Don't take chances, let us help you!

Dude refreshments served in the form of Cape Cod Beer, salsa and chips and whatever else we think guys like to eat.



Katie O'Sullivan is the Editor of this magazine.

She lives in West Harwich with her husband, children and dogs. Her second book, **Perfect Strangers**, was just released by Moongypsy Press. When she's not writing, editing, or playing "Mom's Taxi," you can find her curled up with a good book or blogging about the antics of her new Puppy.

Visit Katie's website www.katie-osullivan.com, check out her blog www.katieosullivan.blogspot.com, and friend her on Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/kt.osullivan>.