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## Fashion and Arts J. Colleen Boutique opens in Lafayette

By Sophie Braccini



Julie Colleen Rubio in the garden at her boutique.

Photo Sophie Braccini

rooms: designer clothes, jewelry, shoes, gifts, and a vintage room. Some of the designers Rubio has chosen for the boutique are people she met in her travels or through her family. Her mother used to own a fashion store in Los Angeles where she taught Rubio how to choose and buy.

A big part of her family is from Hawaii and the island style is a big part of who Rubio is. "It's in Hawaii that I first discovered Indah, a designer from Bali that I am featuring in my store," she says. "I will also have the high-end clothes from Gucci and Versace. Not everybody wants to drive to Walnut Creek for a dress, or to see art, or watch a short film."

Rubio will also sell hats, bags, pillows, Coola organic sunscreen, and her own line of scents, J. Colleen Blue Lani. Shoes are consignment and vintage, and of course there is a lot of jewelry. "I have silver, pearls from Tahiti, and Michelle Mirkovich will be presenting her creations, all made with real gems," she says. "We'll have some expensive pieces and some that are very interesting and aren't expensive. You can mix it all up."

Additionally Rubio wants her place to be a platform for artists. "We need to be exposed to more art in the East Bay," she says. "For example, Jen Johnson is an artist from Hawaii who I love, but I'm open; if someone wants to email me and show me what they are doing, I am interested." On the walls, she's also displaying edgy creations, like pictures of the art she filmed in her documentary, "Everything Is Temporary," that will be featured at the Mill Valley Film Festival.

The grand opening reception Sept. 7 will begin at 6 p.m. and will include a fashion show.

"We'll have a stage here (the back parking lot), about 100 chairs around it, we'll show everything from our new designers, such as the Vitamin A bathing suits, and some of our vintage pieces," Rubio says. "We'll be serving wine and cocktails, we'll have art on display, live music. It's going to be a real party."

For more information, visit [www.jcolleen.com](http://www.jcolleen.com).

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Julie Colleen Rubio thinks that Lamorinda women are an enigma. "They are seen walking around town in their yoga clothes during the day and may seem very casual," says the new business owner, "but come the night, they go the city, to parties, and they like to dress, and they know how to dress as their social life requires."

Rubio, who has lived in Orinda for 14 years, thought that a store for the discriminating and creative woman was needed here. She thought of the concept of her first boutique, J. Colleen, as a place where women will come to choose unique attire, enjoy art, or simply muse in the flowery patio. An artist herself, this professional filmmaker loves creators and has selected a small group of fashion designers for her store. The grand opening on Sept. 7 will be done in style.

The boutique is located at 261 Lafayette Circle, where Queen Bee used to be. "We want to honor the heritage of that store and have a place for gifts in here," says Rubio.

Entering the space, you get the feeling that it has been decorated by someone who really wants to make the place her own, infusing each object, each accessory with her personality. Nothing is done haphazardly or cheaply; the chandeliers come from Jessica McClintock's showroom that's closing. "I met with her brother and they took me under their wing since I am starting my business," she says. The metal gate to the garden, the mirrors, velvet fabric, and some vintage clothing also come from the showroom. A lot of accessories such as the display cases or even the hangers are refurbished quality items and have been chosen by Rubio with a desire to express quality and timelessness. The side patio is a little sanctuary full of flowers with lounge chairs for people to hang out.

The boutique is composed of a series of specialty

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