

TRENDSETTERS

up close / beat / her style / his style / noticed



THREE'S COMPANY

The siblings behind My Sister's Closet are giving back in a big way

BY SHANA SCHWARZ
PHOTOS BY CARL SCHULTZ

A Prada purse or a Tiffany necklace for a big percentage off the price—who wouldn't jump at that deal? Surprisingly, when sisters Ann Siner (CEO and co-founder), Jenny Siner (co-founder) and Tess Loo (chief fashion stylist and co-founder) launched My Sister's Closet over two decades ago, it wasn't an easy concept to sell.

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up close

“A store was born in 1991 after Ann discovered ‘resale’ shopping at a store in Texas while on a business trip for PetSmart,” says Tess. “The second-hand store idea was planted, [my] sister Jenny was just out of college, and research showed that Phoenix didn’t have any quality consignment stores. It took months to convince a landlord to let us try our concept of a high-end resale store, but Town & Country shopping center at 20th Street and Camelback finally let Ann and Jenny open My Sister’s Closet.”

Since then, the original location has done so well that additional locations and concepts have been opened, including a men’s clothing consignment store (Well Suited) and a furniture/home goods store (My Sister’s Attic). All three store concepts give people a chance to sell designer items that they no longer use. In turn, shoppers looking for a bargain on quality merchandise know exactly where to look.

“An estimate of our own personal homes and closets would say that at least 75 percent of our belongings came from My Sister’s Closet, My Sister’s Attic or Well Suited,” says Tess. “Everyone thinks that as the owners, we get first pick, but what they don’t realize is that our stores literally put out thousands of new items every single day. The best stories are from customers who say they never could have afforded ‘fill in the blank with your favorite designer,’ but thanks to these stores, they now own something they could only dream of before. From a cashmere Hermès throw to Restoration leather chairs, these are the things I found at our stores that I adore and would have struggled to otherwise buy.”

“When we first opened, Jenny and I worked our little store every day and met many people,” says Ann. “We often had to convince customers that it was okay to buy something used. When we would see a customer that we recognized outside of the store, they often looked the other way like they didn’t want to be recognized for shopping resale. Now when we meet someone and say that we own My Sister’s Closet, the usual comment is, ‘I love that store!’”



Though some people might find it difficult to work so closely with family members, Jenny says that isn’t the case for this family.

“Ann and I have worked together for almost 24 years and usually agree on most business decisions,” she says. “We complement one another as I’m the artistic side of the business while Ann does best with numbers and notes. Tess joined the business a few years ago and brings a fashion side to My Sister’s Closet. We sometimes even vacation together, so there’s a lot of sisterly time and a lot of time talking about the business.”

The sisters have made a name for themselves locally as dedicated philanthropists, a point of pride for the family-owned company.

“Our favorite charities are those that help animals, nature and women,” says Ann. “Over the years, our donations of both unsold goods and money have totaled over \$1 million dollars. The list includes: Arizona Humane Society, Defenders of Wildlife, The Nature Conservancy, Southwest Wildlife Conservation Center, HALO

Animal Rescue, Friends of Animal Care & Control, Fresh Start Women’s Resource Center, Phoenix Art Museum, Desert Botanical Garden, Southwest Autism Research & Resource Center, Rancho Coastal Humane, PETA, AZ Animal Welfare League, plus others.

“I serve on the board of directors for AZ Humane Society, The Nature Conservancy AZ, Phoenix Art Museum, Fresh Start and on the National Council for Defenders of Wildlife. Tess [and I] are chairing the Phoenix Art Museum’s biggest fundraiser of the year, called the pARTy, on Feb. 28. We also chaired the Fresh Start Gala in 2014, raising nearly \$1 million. And in 2014, we started our own 501(c)(3) nonprofit called My Sisters’ Charities. We opened a thrift store, created a fundraising event called Dinner with Wolves, and donated the profits to other animal-related groups. We are proud to say that we donated 32 percent of our net profits to these groups in 2013.”

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