

# Happy 20th Anniversary, Dry Dock

*The Dry Dock turns 20, as eclectic as ever*

by Jessica Brophy

STONINGTON—Shoppers walking around The Dry Dock are likely to come across clothing, art or jewelry they have never seen before—at least, that's the hope of owner Janet Chaytor.

Now in year 20 of operation, Chaytor has dedicated herself to seeking out artists who create quality, hand-made pieces. None of the goods in The Dry Dock are mass-produced, and Chaytor likes it that way.

"I always like to represent the underrepresented," said Chaytor. This includes seeking out fair trade goods, working with women's cooperatives, startup clothing companies, young artists and more.

"There's always something someone is making six of," said Chaytor. "There's always something new." She is particularly excited at the moment, as there are several young artists doing clothing and jewelry she was able to represent for the first year.

Some of the clothing items are pricey, but that's because they're made by small-scale clothiers by hand, said Chaytor. She can think of several artists she's carried over the years who "became famous" and whose clothing or art has become too expensive for The Dry Dock to carry.

Chaytor is a native of Marlborough, Mass. though her family is from Maine and Nova Scotia. Before purchasing The Dry Dock in 1992, she had a gallery in Boston, and was the first non-Maine gallery outside of New York City to feature the work of Jill Hoy. She also worked with many area artists, and when she heard The Dry Dock was for sale, many friends contacted her and encouraged her to move to Stonington and purchase the store.

The Dry Dock was then owned by Marcia and Jim Aldrich, who opened the store first where Island Approaches store is now in 1983 and moved after the 1984 fire that burned the former Noyes property, the Overlook. The store is currently located in what was once the Overlook's garage. It was sheer luck and a good wind that kept The Dry Dock building from burning then, said Chaytor.

In the back of the store are concrete steps leading into a blocked-off area now used for storage. At one time, the area housed Dr. Benjamin Lake Noyes' "Penobscot Bay Archives," which were later used to found the Deer Isle-Stonington Historical Society's archives.

The building has been the home of the power company, headquarters for the Island Heritage Trust, a fabric store, a crafts store and an antiques store. The island's food co-op even had a store briefly in that spot.

Chaytor eventually expanded the store, which had been only the front room, to include the back room to feature more clothes. "I love selling clothing," said Chaytor.

When asked what the future holds for The Dry Dock, Chaytor said she's ready to "move online." The store does not currently have a website, and while she's not interested in any

sort of large-volume online business, she does agree with her daughter that it's time to go into the next 20 years with a little more technology.

The store also has a new logo and a new sign in the works, the first such update in 20 years.

"People have been very vocal with how happy they are with the store. I've always had support from the local customer base," said Chaytor. "My goal is just to be here."

The year's celebrations have included a special "blowout yard sale" and a book signing with author Brooke Dojny. Still to come is an open house on Tuesday, August 7, from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. with door prizes and food. For more information, call The Dry Dock at 367-5528.



"I always seek to represent the underrepresented," said Dry Dock owner Janet Chaytor, in forefront with employee Sue Dorr. None of the items she carries are mass produced, and she seeks out fair trade goods from cooperatives and young artists.

Photo by Jessica Brophy



The Dry Dock as it stands today. Owner Janet Chaytor has a new sign in the works—with a brand new logo—to replace the one above, which has greeted customers for the past 20 years. Photo by Anne Berleant



At one time, the Dry Dock building was used by Dr. Benjamin Noyes to house the "Penobscot Bay Archives," later used to found the Deer Isle-Stonington Historical Society archives. Like the house behind it, the Dry Dock has changed with passing time.

Photo courtesy of the Deer Isle-Historical Society

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