

THERE'S NO
HARD SELL AT
dwell





“I’m living the dream. I love it!” Shelly Dally exclaims, arms in the air. She’s happily planted behind the counter of Dwell, a fresh home décor store on North 21st Street in Tacoma that’s celebrating its one-year anniversary.

“What excites me, the thing I like the best, is the people,” she says. “You know, meeting them, being part of their lives. I see the same people every day when I’m here.”

As if to prove her point, the bell over the door tinkles sweetly and two women bustle in. Exclamations of praise explode from their mouths as soon as they notice Dally and the new items that have appeared on the shelves since their last visit. She blushes slightly, asking them how they’ve been. “Oh, you know,” one of them says, “We’re just visiting our favorite store!”

Dally and part-owner Cindy Hickly, both Tacomans, began brainstorming once they realized they shared the dream of Dwell. Tentative research began, and addiction to the idea was almost instant. They, and many others, were hooked. April Donato, a contributing artist, recently joined them as part-owner. She’s a testimony to Dwell’s appeal.

“It’s about creating that third place,” Dally said, counting on her fingers. “First home, then work, then Dwell.” >>>

BY CHLOE SCHEFFE
PHOTOS BY STEVE JAMES

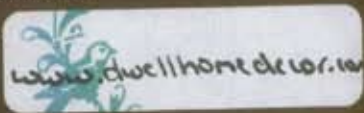


DETAILS

Address: 2716 N. 21st St.

Phone: 253.761.1889

On the Web:



LOCAL ART IN ACTION

The Dwell ladies, as they've been coined by certain regulars, also believe in generosity as a key to a strong Tacoma and eventually a stronger world. With this in mind, Dwell donates a percentage of its profit to organizations like Sound Youth Counseling, the University of Puget Sound and St. Patrick School. They host and participate in auctions for health institutions, and award money to make private school tuition more affordable for students. On an even more personal level, Dwell features the work of local artists within the store. "That is what's most amazing," Dally explains. "Being like 'Wow, you made this?'"


In addition to discovering locals, one has to wonder how they compiled a selection so unique. The answer: flea markets, gift shows and huge amounts of research. "We have to find lines that aren't saturated in this area," Dally said. The women are working hard to create a top-notch reputation for the home décor store of their dreams.

Even though the search can be difficult, their discoveries still excite them. Unceasing determination and passion have resulted in a soap line from France, beautifully reconstructed furniture, and semi-precious jewelry with a funky flair. Pillows, magnets, matchsticks, and teas as you've never seen them before.

Dally admits it's really difficult to pick her favorite finds. She darts about the store, pointing, explaining, flooding her patrons with samples. "I love the Rosana ceramic kitchenware, especially because the designer is from Seattle. That's really cool. Also, Christine Cavana's furniture, and the Lollia hand crème! It's so good!"

"Dwell is really wonderful," muses Lauren Nelson, a freshman at Seattle University who designed the store's logo. "It's been really great to get exposure through a business with a good cause, and I've received new design jobs as a result. Getting to know others in Tacoma's art community has been fabulous."

Nelson also produces fashion-themed greeting cards, paintings and decorative letters for Dwell, as well as their shopping bags. "They trust me," she says.

So, go if you're shopping for the woman who has everything, or if you're itching for a teapot packaged in a hatbox. Go if you need an apron remarkable enough to make baking fun. Go for the perfect handmade card. Dwell can be your third place, too. 

Chloe Scheffe is a senior at Tacoma School of the Arts and enjoys every minute of it. Vintage postcards from Paris and a world map printed in Italy are some of her favorite Dwell finds.