

*Inside* CHIC AND UNIQUE  
SANDY'S UPSCALE CONSIGNMENT  
LOS COMPADRES

# Women in Business

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# Treating customers like they're family

By Jason Arndt  
STAFF WRITER

**C**ompadre, in English, is commonly referred to as a relationship between two close friends.

But at Los Compadres, in Burlington, the definition carries a deeper meaning for owner Bertha Benitez.

Benitez, a Burlington High School graduate, didn't plan on opening the authentic Mexican restaurant until her oldest son's godparents pitched the idea.

"At the beginning, it really wasn't my idea, it was my oldest boy's godparents," Benitez recalled. "They said 'Let's open up a restaurant.'"

Her sister, Jackie Hernandez, pitches in at the restaurant whenever Bertha needs a hand and explained that a *Compadres* is a relationship between a child's father and godfather.

"Los Compadres is what they call each other in Spanish when they baptize each other's kids, so that is how they decided on the name," Hernandez said.

Los Compadres, which opened in 1997, has served the Burlington community and beyond since then, offering authentic dishes including some that draw inspiration from family recipes handed down from generation to generation.

Benitez said Los Compadres strives to treat customers like they are members of her own family while offering high-quality, locally sourced ingredients, with little to no processed food on the menu.

"We are very authentic, and we cook everything from scratch as fresh as we can get it," Benitez said.

Unlike grocery stores – and even some restaurants – the food made at Los Compadres does not have undesirable preservatives.



**top:** Bertha Benitez, owner of Los Compadres in Burlington, sits inside her authentic Mexican restaurant. **above:** Benitez stands alongside her sister, Jackie Hernandez, at the restaurant. Hernandez pitches in at the business when her sister needs a helping hand.

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"We try to stay local," she said. "My family eats here, my kids eat here, my customers are my family, and I wouldn't feed them any processed foods."

Menu options include a carne asada dinner, *ala Mexicana* dinner consisting of sautéed onion, tomato, jalapeno, and cilantro mixed with tomato sauce served with a choice of meat and tortilla, among dozens of other dishes.

For the complete menu, visit

[loscompadreswi.com](http://loscompadreswi.com).

## Increased engagement

Benitez said they have found more ways to connect with the community in recent years such as recently introducing a food truck.

The food truck, which has made numerous appearances at community events – including some organized by other Burlington businesses – has

increased exposure to the brick-and-mortar store.

"It is pretty new right now, we are just starting the food truck," Benitez said. "When people come here, they don't even know we have a food truck."

Likewise, many customers who have ordered from the food truck at community gatherings are surprised to discover the restaurant has a permanent establishment.

In addition to increased exposure through the food truck, Los Compadres has been involved in many other community events. That included helping with the new Day of the Dead, which was held in conjunction with the annual Spooky City event in downtown Burlington last fall.

Day of the Dead, known as *el Día de los Muertos*, is a Mexican holiday that allows families to welcome back the souls of their loved ones and food, drink and celebration are part of the Mexican holiday.

Benitez, who assisted her sister, Jackie, with the Day of the Dead event, said she met many new friends from throughout the community during the inaugural event, which she said was a success.

"When we did Day of the Dead, I saw faces of people I have never seen before because I never had the opportunity to," Benitez said.

Looking ahead, Benitez and Los Compadres plan to host a *Cinco de Mayo* margarita market featuring local vendors. They also hope to partner with other local establishments for a *Cinco de Mayo* event.

In addition to dining in at the restaurant and ordering from the food truck at events, Los Compadres offers a banquet hall for events, catering services, and online ordering for customers seeking a simple carryout option.

Los Compadres is at 725 Milwaukee Ave., Burlington.

# 'Something new in my shop every day'

By **Jennifer Eisenbart**  
STAFF WRITER

For most people, the go-to place for a new pair of shoes, a dress or something else similarly styled would be limited to local choices. Among those local options would likely be a trip to Kohl's, Wal-Mart or Target. For someone like Sandy Lenz, though, who has operated Sandy's Upscale Consignment in Walworth for more than 25 years, some people want a wider world view of clothing.

"People shop all over the world to condense it to my consignment shop," said Lenz, who has owned and operated Sandy's now for 26 years.

The store is currently located at 212 N. Main St., Walworth, on the edge of downtown Walworth.

During her many years in business, according to Lenz, she has developed plenty of consigners, which she said is in the "hundreds."

"Possibly because I've been in business for 26 years," she said. "And I have consigners and customers both who've been coming here for 26 years."

Lenz owns the building where the store is now located, a building that ties to the history of the Walworth community. The building is the site of the original blacksmith, and Lenz has been in the location since 2005.

As for why she chose to start a consignment shop, Lenz simply said, "I shop this way."

"I just felt you could find something unique and different," she explained.

She said she feels her store offers a personalized shopping experience with upscale clothing and accessories, and that she truly has everything.

"I have everything a woman would want to wear," Lenz said.

The store deals exclusively in women's clothing and accessories, the latter of which can include shoes, purses, jewelry or other items.

The store is arranged by sizes, and there is a counter featuring jewelry.



Sandy's Upscale Consignment, 212 N. Main St., Walworth, has a long reputation of providing quality women's apparel and accessories. Owner Sandy Lenz shops consignment herself and finds the large variety a chance to offer something different.

JENNIFER EISENBART *Women in Business*

## 'More bang for your buck'

Lenz's store meets its goal of offering a little bit of everything including a wide variety of sizes, 0-3X.

Her store has mostly modern pieces – items that have been popular in the last few years. While she's not opposed to stocking a high-quality vintage item, Lenz admits those are rare.

"I think you can get way more bang for your buck using consignment," Lenz said.

She said even she herself is kind of fussy about brands.

"People travel. You just get something kind of unique," she said.

As for many things in her shop, Lenz said you may not see those items anywhere else.

She explained that she goes for quality because she knows it's what has built her reputation.

"They're coming from all over. Even my merchandise comes from all over, because I have people box up stuff and ship it to me," Lenz said.

"They typically know what I want," she

added.

With that kind of range and versatility, one thing is very clear: Lenz has built her brand.

She also said the reason people continue to shop her store is simple and is how she's chosen to run the business for so many years.

"For the personalized shopping experience, that's why people keep coming back," Lenz said.

"And there's something new in my shop every day. Every day, we put something new out on the floor," Lenz added.

Sandy's Upscale Consignment is at 212 N. Main St., Walworth. The store is closed Sunday and Monday, and open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. They also ship anywhere in the United States.

Consignment is by appointment only. To contact Lenz, call 262-275-8221.



**above:** Every accessory from hats to purses to shoes and jewelry is available at Sandy's.

**at right:** This stylish dress that was on display at Sandy's, is complemented by a cashmere cape with real mink. The items available in the shop constantly change.



JENNIFER EISENBART *Women in Business*

## Women in Business

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**above:** Sue Schinke, owner of Lyle's along with her husband, Tom, is shown in the theater room at their shop, which displays large televisions. They also sell appliances for every room as well as grills, smokers and The Big Green Egg and accessories. **right:** Lyle's TV and Appliance has been a fixture in Elkhorn since Lyle Schinke started the business in 1956. It remains in the same location and is now under the direction of Lyle's youngest son, Tom, and his wife, Sue.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ Women in Business



# She knows her appliances and more

*Sue Schinke has helped Lyle's continue to grow*

By **Sandra Landen Machaj**  
CORRESPONDENT

**L**yle's TV and Appliances in Elkhorn has been open at its current location since 1956, when Lyle Schinke first bought the property, a private home where he raised his six children while running his business from the front of the building.

As the business continued to grow, Lyle tore down more of the house and enlarged the business showroom area. According to the business' website, he never closed the store, even for a day while he expanded the business to its 16,000 square foot

showroom.

Today the store is owned and run by Lyle's youngest son, Tom, and his wife Sue, along with some help from their children and grandchildren, making it a business that has had 4 generations involved. Lyle's is the largest and last independent dealer in Walworth County.

Sue said an update they got a few years ago changed how they display appliances used in the kitchen.

"We were given a showroom update by our buying group," she said. "We chose to have our kitchen display area done where we can now showcase the latest in major kitchen appliances."

It features the newest – some high-end – appliances, but also the displays, which

offer ideas on how to set up a kitchen and incorporate a variety of items including large refrigerators, cooktops, built-in ovens and traditional range ovens.

According to Sue, one of the newest options is the induction cooktop. An electric smooth glass cooktop, it's unique in that it doesn't heat up, making it safer, especially in homes with young children.

"The induction cooktops can be installed on your countertop, or they can be part of a traditionally styled range. The induction cooktops require special pots and pans made of stainless steel with magnetic ability for use on the surface," she explained. "The induction cooking

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**above:** Blues and greens in several shades are a trendy color combination as this display shows, with blue patterned chairs, green sofa and large blue flowered prints. **at left:** Kristi Hugunin, owner of Paper Dolls, takes a short break in one of the living room settings in her store. It features neutral furniture and area rug with several colorful accents.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *Women in Business*

# Paper Dolls has not stopped growing

*Owner started the business by hanging wallpaper*

By **Sandra Landen Machaj**  
CORRESPONDENT

Whether we own a house or condo, or rent an apartment, most people occasionally look around and wonder what can be done to change things up. A visit to Kristi Hugunin's store, Paper Dolls Home Furnishings, is likely to offer plenty of ideas.

When a decision has been made that it's time to make changes, it's important to avoid falling into the trap of doing what we've always done, because whether it's painting a wall or two or purchasing a new piece of furniture, it's easy to default to colors and styles in our comfort zone.

This is where Hugunin and her staff — along with her large store in Lake Geneva come into play.

The store features a wide variety of high-quality furniture, home accents and design elements, area rugs, window treatments, décor and more. From those seeking a small pop of color to people ready to bring a whole new look to a room, Paper Dolls offers ideas and inspiration.

Whether the plan is to redo the entire interior of a home, one or two rooms, or simply to add an elegant, modern, or classic touch, the employees are happy to share their knowledge and expertise.

Hugunin has been in the business of helping people make their homes beautiful and unique for about 40 years. She began her career with initial business partner, Chris Haak, installing wallpaper.

"We installed wallpaper and because we were two women, were known as the paper dolls," Hugunin explained.

"We then opened a small store in Elkhorn where we carried craft items which we took in on consignment from local crafters. At that time — about 38 years ago — crafty items were popular. But today styles have changed," she said.

As the business grew, the focus slowly changed, and they began adding more home décor items. About a year later they found a small store front in Geneva Square where they opened a second home décor store, keeping the name Paper Dolls Home Furnishings.

"We kept the store in Elkhorn when we opened this 600 square foot store in Lake Geneva for about another year," Hugunin said. "And then we started enlarging the Lake Geneva store, adding additional products including furniture, window treatments, and storefronts to now having seven storefronts, making our store very large.

"The newest addition is the bedroom and recliner gallery, which we opened in the last acquired space," she added.

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# Chic and Unique now open in bigger space

By Jason Arndt  
STAFF WRITER

Owner Kerry Witbrod, of Chic and Unique Consignment and Boutique in Burlington, never imagined she would experience exponential growth at her store when she first opened more than a decade ago.

However, the downtown storefront at 173 E. Chestnut St. that she cherished (since opening 2010 could not hold anymore inventory and has led her to seek an expanded footprint.

“I outgrew the space a few years ago and I realized that I can’t grow anymore,” she said. “If I wanted to grow, I had to get a bigger space.”

While having a bigger facility served as one criteria, another important factor for the Witbrod was being able to remain in the Chestnut Street loop, where she said she has built relationships with other local business owners over several years.

After Madam Cora’s Emporium, which was at 112 E. Chestnut St., decided to move on, Witbrod found the opportunity she had been looking for, which included increased space to accommodate more inventory – and to keep her business in the area she desired.

The larger store doubled Chic and Unique’s footprint, from about 1,000-square-feet to 2,000-square-feet. That extra space is advantage for customers and consigners, according to Witbrod.

Witbrod, who received the keys to the new location in early February, began renovating the future storefront, which was formerly used by an insurance agency prior to becoming Madam Cora’s Emporium.

“We started right away and (owner Melinda Mitchell) left it very clean, too, which was wonderful because there wasn’t a whole to do, other than update a lot of things,” Witbrod said.

Witbrod said she and her husband spent time renovating the new space for Chic and Unique, including lighting updates, making the change from carpeting to hardwood flooring, applying a color-neutral coat of paint, and adding more dressing rooms compared to what was offered at the former location.

“It has been several decades since there were any updates,” Witbrod said, adding that it had burgundy walls when it was Oldenburg Insurance and some gray walls.

She said having more dressing rooms

is “a big thing. They won’t have to wait in line when I have events,” which was a common occurrence on Saturdays in her former storefront.

## Excited for expansion

Chic and Unique offers women’s clothing, authentic luxury goods, new jewelry, accessories and gifts.

Additionally, the business consigns new and gently used designer label clothing, shoes and handbags from some of the top brands.

With increased space, Witbrod is able to bring in more items from consigners, expand the store’s luxury product line among other inventory items, all while providing customers with additional space to move around and look at what’s available.

“Customers will be able to walk a little more and not be so tight,” she said prior to opening at the new location, which happened in April.

Witbrod said the new, larger space will be a positive for consigners as they will be able to have more items for sale at the downtown establishment.

“Everybody is very excited that we are able to expand and offer more

**above:** Kerry Witbrod, owner of Chic and Unique, celebrates the opening of her business’ expansion to a store with twice the space. She is still on Chestnut Street in downtown Burlington but is now across the street from Runaway Micropub and Nanobrewery. **above, left:** Chic and Unique Consignment and Boutique opened in its new location at 112 E. Chestnut St. recently. This allowed the business to remain in the Chestnut Street loop in downtown Burlington.

CHIC & UNIQUE FACEBOOK PHOTOS Women in Business

opportunities,” she said in March. “Consigners are very excited as well, because they will be able to bring in more items.”

Witbrod admitted the move would likely be an emotional time because she became attached to the previous property.

“It’s going to be bittersweet when I leave because I know what I have here, and I love the building. I can only hold onto it so long,” she said prior to the move.

“I had expected to be here forever, I really did. My landlords are fabulous. They are wonderful people. They have treated us well. We have treated them well,” Witbrod added.

She held a soft opening in early April, and the shop is now officially open for business.

Customers can find the new Chic and Unique storefront directly across from the Runaway Micropub and Nanobrewery in the Chestnut Street loop. Regular store hours are Wednesday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Thursday and Friday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For more information, visit [chicandunique.net](http://chicandunique.net), which includes an online store, or follow the business on Facebook.

**LYLE'S** • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

surfaces are often used to replace gas stoves because of the instant on and off feature, with no hot surface remaining once it is turned off.”

People who are used to cooking with gas but switching to an electric stove may have difficulty dealing with the difference. Those switching from electric to gas might have the opposite challenge. With use, people likely learn to adjust to these changes, but an induction cooktop may be an ideal option for those converting from gas.

The induction cooking surfaces are manufactured by several major appliance makers including GE, Bosch, Wolff and Frigidaire, which are featured at Lyle's.

While there was a time when there was not much of a choice of style or colors for new appliances, today there are. The most popular finish currently is stainless steel, which Schinke said, comes in several finishes including polished satin, gun metal and fingerprint free. A few people still choose to order white but those are less popular and the stainless is most common.

“There is one company Blue Star, that offers a variety of many different colors and if they don't have a match in their large inventory of colors, they can custom match the shade you'd like,” Schinke said.

**Refrigerators, microwaves and more**

Refrigerators also offer a variety of sizes and choices to fit any kitchen. They are no longer limited to a refrigerator with

a freezer on the top, but numerous freezer arrangements and door choices to best suit what the customer desires.

“The top choice today is the refrigerator with French doors,” Schinke said. “The freezer is on the bottom. They come, depending on the model, with a variety of high-end options.”

Ice makers and water dispensers accessible on the outside of the door are commonly enjoyed by families these days. According to Schinke, some refrigerators have two icemakers so they can produce different types of ice cubes.

“There are the traditional ice cubes and a craft ice cube. The craft ice cube is usually a large ball of ice – sometimes referred to as a ‘whiskey ball’ because they are used for whiskey – and cocktail drinks are poured over them,” she said.

If ready for an upgrade on a microwave, they have come a long way since the early models, which were all portable and sat on the counter. Today's microwave ovens are often mounted above the stove or placed out of sight in a drawer to free up counter space.

Some are not only a microwave but include a convection oven feature, allowing the ability to roast foods without needing to turn on a large oven.

The simplest way to determine when it's time for a new dishwasher is when it's no longer working properly, from not cleaning the dishes well to being so loud that it's generally only used when no one will be in the home.

Lyle's carries a variety of dishwashers including Bosch, GE, Frigidaire, Sub Zero and Miele. Each offers a variety of models with special features and Schinke has some tips.

“When choosing a dishwasher, pick the one that meets your family's needs. Don't under buy or overbuy when choosing a brand and model,” Schinke said. “And always use a rinse aid in the machine for the best results.”

When shopping for new appliances it's important to know the dimensions of the space where they'll be installed. If replacing more than one appliance, many manufacturers offer a special price on a package that allows the replacement of all items at once at a more reasonable cost than purchasing them individually.

Whether updating the kitchen or not, don't forget the outdoor area. There are a variety of new outdoor appliances available at Lyle's – from pizza makers and smokers to rotisseries – just waiting to be installed on a deck.

**Keeping things clean**

The hardest working appliances in a home are the washing machine and dryer because rarely is there not a full basket of clothes or pile of towels let alone the chore of changing the bedding. Today there is a wide variety of machines to suit the needs of every size family and home. The newest player in the laundry game of life is one machine that does it all.

The GE One and Done washer-dryer

combination takes less space and less work when doing laundry. Place the load of clothes in the machine, add soap, turn it on and the machine takes it from there, including drying; it's that simple. It doesn't quite do everything – because the laundry will still need to be removed, folded and put away – but it does reduce the number of steps in the process.

Lyle's also carries the Excelsior brand laundry detergent and stain removal products to offer an environmentally friendly way to clean clothes. It's phosphate-free, bleach-free, safe for septic systems and works in all water temperatures. No additional brighteners, whiteners, fabric softeners or anti-static products are needed. The washing machine cleaner and deodorizer – which is recommended to be used monthly – will remove odors and soap residue in the machine while leaving a clean, fresh lemon scent.

The business also services most brands of appliances, will provide service for appliances they sell and for most others even if purchased elsewhere once the warranty has expired.

Lyle's TV and Appliances is at 17 S. Washington St., Elkhorn. For more information, call 262-723-3477 or visit the website at [www.lylestv.com](http://www.lylestv.com). Hours are Monday through Wednesday, and Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Thursday, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. The store is closed on Sunday.

**PAPER DOLLS** • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5**Like walking into a home**

Paper Dolls has a variety of room vignettes that gives visitors the chance to observe the furniture, light fixtures, accent pieces and more as they would look in their homes.

Having many rooms allows the store to showcase many different looks at once, generally all reflecting current styles and trendy colors while also offering visitors ideas on what might look good in their space.

As many know, colors and styles change in popularity regularly, and one of the most popular colors in home décor currently is blue, according to Hugunin.

“Blue, lots of blue, is popular. But it's not only the blue that is the trend – its blues paired with greens,” she said. “And it is any shade of green that is currently paired to work with the blues.”

While some may not think of greens and blues as being a complimentary combination, especially when considering certain shades of each, Hugunin assures that they do work well together.

There are several living room displays at Paper Dolls that incorporate lighter colors along with blues and greens, as well as other combinations that project a very different look.

Darker woods, with masculine looking, heavier chairs often made of leather are also on display. They may include a library type bookcase equipped with a ladder for decoration or to reach the books on the top shelves.

**Here to help**

For those needing assistance in designing a new look in their homes, there are two interior designers on staff, Betty Braly Molinaro and Kelli Garecht. They guide customers in achieving a space that will meet their needs with quality products

carried by Paper Dolls.

Hugunin said some people stop in and find the perfect sofa or set of side chairs in the color and pattern they desire, in stock, meaning they can purchase it off the floor if it's not available in the on-site warehouse.

But there are others who want to look at a variety of fabric options.

“We carry a number of quality upholstered furniture lines, including Lexington, Norwalk, Lee, Fairfield, Rowe, Hancock & Moore. The customer chooses the style and the upholstery fabric in the color and type of fabric they desire,” Hugunin said.

She said today's fabrics are more of a performance type, which are durable and very easy to clean.

“Stains come out well – even red wine can be removed, and the more sophisticated velvet fabrics are making a comeback,” Hugunin said.

For customers who like leather furniture, Paper Dolls has many options for high quality leather pieces in a variety of styles and colors – not all leather is brown – a customer may desire.

“We carry Hancock & Moore, creators of fine line leather furniture. They have been considered the top of the line for the past 100 years. All their pieces are handmade of solid wood in North Carolina,” according to Brock Kolstad, the expert on leather furniture at Paper Dolls.

“They have hundreds of leathers and self-dye the leathers to the specific colors ordered,” said Kolstad, who has a degree in



Many of the prints at Paper Dolls make a statement in size and depict water, boats and fish, such as this ship hull, which is split into three separate frames.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *Women in Business*

floor design and is responsible for many of the displays in the store.

Both Kolstad and Hugunin said Hancock & Moore are known for their recliner lines and produce comfortable yet sophisticated recliner styles that can be added to any room in a home and fit right in.

**So much more**

While Hugunin no longer hangs wallpaper herself – even though there is an increase in wallpaper demand – she does carry a variety of popular wallpaper, and

said staff can recommend several quality people in the area to hang wallpaper.

If light fixtures need to be updated in a home, or additional ones added, the store has many options including a variety of chandeliers, which are popular again.

Accessorizing a room is an important part of achieving the finished look most homeowners strive to obtain, and in some cases, a few new items are all that's needed.

“We have an accessorizing service that will come into your home and help with accessories needed for the completion of the room. They will use a combination of items you currently have in your home – and love – and some from the store,” Hugunin said. “When they are finished, you will enjoy the beautiful, finished look of the space... far more beautiful than you imagined the room could ever look.”

Many may not realize that Paper Dolls is known for its large selection of artwork and prints. Many feature boats, fish and water – fitting for the Southern Lakes area – and several are large, to adequately use space on a bigger wall or make a statement.

Hugunin said they serve customers all over, including out of state.

“We do not just provide furniture and décor service to the Lake Geneva area but service Milwaukee, Kenosha, and Chicago and their suburb areas. We have even done a home in Florida,” she said.

“We offer white glove delivery service where we don't just drop off your furniture but put the room together. Every piece of furniture is where it needs to be before we leave,” Hugunin added.

Paper Dolls Home Furnishings is at 138 E. Geneva Square, Lake Geneva. Store hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Saturday; closed on Sunday. For more information, call 262-248-6268, visit the website at [www.paperdollinteriors.com](http://www.paperdollinteriors.com) or follow their Facebook page.

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