

Heather Kochin: Fills Rainy Day with Sunshine

There's nothing gloomy about Rainy Day or its 29-year-old owner Heather Kochin. From its ever-



changing windows to its soft sea-foam green walls, painted wide plank floors, wainscoting and floor-to-ceiling merchandise, both this Main Street Vineyard Haven shop and its proprietress are brimming with imagination.

Candles and calendars, tweezers and toys, baby bags and barware, linens and lamps, purses and plastic ware, belts and beaded jewelry, soaps and shower curtains, cookbooks and crafts, . . . Rainy Day has everything but the kitchen sink. But wait – there it is! Laden with luxurious bath products.

Rainy Day was established in 1973 and operated for the next 30 years by husband and wife team Ann Milstein and Frank Piccione. In 1999 Heather was hired by the Piccione's as Store Manager. "I was only 21 and I felt like telling them that I was too young for all the responsibility even though I was excited about the job. Once I started it was instant gratification! I felt like part of a family and I could see the results of my

work right away."

It's easy to see why the store's long-time owners were won over. Heather is energetic and exuberant. She bought Rainy Day in March 2003 and has had a 60-hour-a-week passion for it ever since. "I love design, creating new spaces, buying and managing a sales team. We do it all, from sweeping the sidewalk to merchandising the store."

Since assuming ownership, Heather has expanded the selling floor, built custom shelving and displays, added new product lines, created a new logo and signage. She is now working to develop a website so both her on-island and off-Island customers can



keep in touch with what's new at Rainy Day year round. And if that isn't enough, several upcoming events to include: A year-round Customer appreciation discount card, A senior discount day, Late night shopping events, trunk shows and so much more.

What makes Rainy Day different from other shops on the Island? According to its proud owner, the total shopping experience: "From the cheerfulness of the overall atmosphere to the colors,



makes me feel better about selling gifts," she says.

And while Heather misses the mountains and rivers of



Heather Kochin (above) at her store on Main St. in Vineyard Haven.

music, customer service, ever-changing displays and products – it's never the same." Heather combines a keen savvy for the buying and displaying of gifts she knows her customers will find appealing. I love piecing together hundreds of companies to have an overall effect and look.

The reward for all the hard work, Heather says, is the loyalty she has earned from the local community. "I cater to the year-round Islanders," Heather explains. "I wouldn't want a seasonal slant. The Island people make it all worthwhile." She believes vehemently in giving back, donating time and merchandise to local charities. She hopes, in fact, to be able to earmark a percentage of overall sales to a charity of her choice in the near future. "It

her native western Massachusetts, she has discovered the unique pleasures of life on the Vineyard. She and her husband Josh enjoy fly-fishing together, quiet off-season Sheriff's Meadow walks and



the satisfaction of tending their own vegetable and perennial gardens. "I love the Vineyard in the winter," she says. "I embrace it!" she concludes with characteristic enthusiasm. **VS**

~Karla Araujo

Rainy Day is located at 66 Main Street in Vineyard Haven. Store hours vary depending upon the time of year. Off-season: open six days a week 10am to 6pm; from the end of June through Labor Day open daily 9:30am to 9:30pm. Phone: 508-693-1830.