

# CHANGES FLOW INTO CHERRY CREEK

Four business owners react as  
shops shuffle and rents rise

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Things in Cherry Creek North are changing. Rents are rising, and some fear that the influx of chains and high density development will threaten the survival of independent business owners.

But what's almost more interesting is what is not changing: The majority of businesses are still independently owned and determined to hold onto their neighborhood both in aesthetics and in ideology. They still want to be the place to stroll, shop and stop for a cappuccino.

Collectively, the independent business owners of Cherry Creek North have the district's best interests in mind. It's one of the reasons why this area of boutiques, restaurants, galleries and salons functions as a community.

Here, four small business owners share their thoughts:

## **CINDY JOHNSON AND JEANIE PETERSON, SISTERS AND CO-OWNERS OF SOL, STORE OF LINGERIE**



Ten years ago Cindy Johnson knew Cherry Creek North was the perfect spot for her lingerie boutique. A lifelong lingerie lover, Johnson had been dreaming of opening a lingerie store since she was a teenager. She opened SOL, Store of Lingerie while still in her 20s, and her younger sister, Jeanie Peterson, became her partner about a year after opening.

The boutique sells beautiful bras, panties, nightgowns, pajamas, robes and more. The customer service at SOL, where they specialize in bra fitting, is exceptional because staff members train for at least four weeks learning to fit bras professionally. The bra-fitting event in itself can be an enlightening experience, especially when a customer discovers that it's possible to find a bra that fits properly and is sexy yet tasteful.

Fifteen years ago, Americans thought of lingerie in two ways: wholly practical or overtly sexy. But with the success of Victoria's Secret and the interest generated by Oprah Winfrey's bra-fitting episodes, American women are learning what European women have known for decades — that elegant, beautiful, well-made items for everyday wear will improve one's appearance and self-esteem. Johnson and Peterson were on the cusp of these trends when SOL opened a decade ago, and they love to educate women on these ideas.

Johnson says SOL has grown in tandem with Cherry Creek North. "Obviously, the look and feel of the area has changed with the increased building and construction, but I think integrating residential and hotels among the restaurants and boutiques gives the entire area a more hip, urban feel," says Johnson. "I think SOL's success is a testament to the positive nature of change. The fact that we are celebrating our 10-year anniversary and are still enjoying continued growth shows that the changes in Cherry Creek North have been good for SOL."

A fountain filled with fish and a toy box for kids help to make a visit to SOL fun for everyone. With a loyal following and a great reputation, Johnson and Peterson are excited about the future. "Honing our systems and our inventory is always our goal," says Peterson. "We believe those two things will ensure the success of whatever future expansion we choose to pursue."