

Emerson Grace brings West Coast style to 12South

Nashville Business Journal - Dec 18, 2013



Inside the Emerson Grace clothing boutique in 12South Flats.

To see Nashville's boom firsthand, look no further than the 12South neighborhood, where a crop of new restaurants and retailers have opened their doors in recent years, capped off this fall by the opening of 12South Flats, a mixed-use development from H.G. Hill and Southeast Venture.

The ground-floor retail space attracted local restaurateur Miranda Whitcomb Pontes, who recently opened Josephine there, and a second Nashville outpost of Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams.

It also attracted California-based boutique owner Courtnay Page, who is looking to bring a bit of West Coast style to Nashville with her new clothing boutique, Emerson Grace. Opened this week, the boutique is Page's fourth, and the first one she has opened outside of the West Coast.

Page first considered Nashville at the urging of local businessman Jim Lewis, now one of her business partners, and immediately saw a potential for the market.

"There are other great stores in Nashville, but just not anything like what we were doing," Page said. "What we are doing and what we thought would compliment Nashville is a bit more sophisticated and not too much flair ... we try not to be too trendy."

At around 2,800 square feet of space, Emerson Grace carries both men's and women's everyday wear and accessories, including shoes and jewelry. Price-points range from under \$100 to near \$1,000 for investment pieces like a leather jacket.

To carve out a niche, Emerson Grace is carrying brands not abundantly found elsewhere (or at all) in Nashville, including Rag & Bone and Jacob Holston for men, and Won Hundred and Current/Elliott denim for women

"The men's market [in Nashville] is so minimal," said Page. "The response we've had to the men's has been crazy."

Mimicking the clothing's clean aesthetic in the shop's design was important, said Page, who enlisted Nashville-based architect Nick Dryden, of DA|AD, to lead the build out. The concept, created by Stilife Creative, features white walls, minimal color and sleek tables and displays.

Page has been posting pictures of products and sneak peaks on the shop's Instagram account.

"We use social media a lot," she said. "It's a great way to connect with your client base as advertising, but also for inspiration. We love following our own clients to see what they are into. You can post something and get a lot of activity and feedback and know that we should invest in more of those."

"It's a great tool for the managers and for the buyer."