

## Fifth Avenue Meets Morgantown

As Black Friday shoppers around the country prepared for yet another big day this Thanksgiving holiday, Park and Madison, West Virginia's newest boutique, was preparing for its grand opening in Morgantown's Suncrest Towne Centre.

With a plethora of designers ranging from Betsey Johnson to BCBG, the locally owned specialty shop provides the ambiance of Fifth Avenue for fashionistas of all ages in the West Virginia college town.

The sister store of Vance's Blues, Park and Madison is owned by Shannon Coombs and Brittany Palumbo. While Coombs is the sole proprietor to Vance's, Palumbo was the assistant manager and buyer until the establishment of Park and Madison.

"When Shannon and Brittany went to New York to do purchasing for Vance's, they had the idea to open a sister store, carrying more designer brands," says Morgan Constable, a West Virginia University student and intern at Park and Madison. "It was an idea that the two had been talking about for a while apparently, and they finally decided to go on with their idea."

Coombs, a Morgantown local, opened her first store in 2005 while Palumbo joined her side several years after in 2009 following graduation from WVU.

The boutique itself is now home to many top-name brands and specializes in unique, boutique-style fashion.

"Customers are able to walk into the store and find clothes usually they could only find at higher-end department stores or other specialty stores," says Constable.

"Everything offered here is very unique to Morgantown and very appropriate in such a large college town."

From casual sweaters and blouses that can be worn in the daytime to dresses that can only be seen on High Street, Park and Madison provides a variety of clothes for any occasion.

Besides clothing, the boutique offers footwear, primarily by Steve Madden, accessories, such as large handbags, jewelry and scarves, and Stila cosmetics. Also, besides everyday trends for the fashionista, Park and Madison offers home goods in soy candles by Traviata and Reserve.

“It’s so nice to have a store around where I can buy things I usually would have to get at home,” says Lindsay Carr, a WVU student who was in town over Thanksgiving break and made a Black Friday appearance at the boutique. “Being from out of town it’s so convenient to have the brands I love right here.”

Carr, along with her roommate, Ashley Jones, and many other Morgantown locals, seemed to be impressed with the opening last Friday.

“Where I’m from it’s even hard to find a good makeup like ones cosmetic stores specialize in,” says Jones, a southern West Virginia native and cosmetics enthusiast. “It’s so nice knowing where I live most of the year has something for me I usually wouldn’t be able to buy.”

According to Constable, the two roommates were just a number in the crowd of the happy faces who left the store on opening day, as many others were pleased with Coombs and Palumbo’s new boutique.

“It’s so nice to see people leave pleased and everyone on staff is really excited to see what’s going to happen next,” says Constable.

Although the store has already opened to the public, a grand opening celebration is scheduled for Thursday, Dec. 1 at 5 p.m., where special discounts and events will happen throughout the store for the rest of the evening.