

Ashley's Lingerie & Swimwear expands into Lewiston

LEFT OF CENTER BY JOSHUA MALONI

Ashley Doll sure picked the right day to launch Ashley's Lingerie & Swimwear in Lewiston.

"Today is my first day. I opened specifically for the 'Sip and Shop' event," she said Saturday.

The business – Doll's third in Western New York – was featured as part of the fifth annual "Sip, Shop and Eat – Lewiston Style" event.

Ashley's is located at 411 Center St., the former home of The Rose Hanger. As the title suggests, the store offers lingerie and swimwear, including specialty garments, loungewear and resortwear.

Doll noted, "I'll have some limited hours through February, and then I'll go full steam ahead in March, and be here probably seven days a week."

She shared more in this edited Q&A.

Q: Can you give me an overview of your store and what you offer?

Ashley Doll: I have a lingerie and swimwear store. I customize. I do professional bra fittings. I also cater to every age, shape and size. So, we're a very inclusive environment. We're a very empowering store. We really like to make every woman that comes into our store feel comfortable and get them the best support that they can in an undergarment.

We cater to two of the things that women hate shopping for the most. We try and make it easy from the minute you walk in to the minute you leave. You're greeted; you're helped; we're one on one; and we take care of you when you come in.

Q: Is this a store that you had run other places, or is this your first time operating a store?

Ashley Doll: I worked for an-



Ashley Doll is shown inside the new Lewiston branch of her business, Ashley's Lingerie & Swimwear, on opening day.

other company called Blum's, out in Williamsville, for about 13 years, and was given the opportunity of a lifetime to go off on my own back in November of '21. My main store is actually out in Williamsville. Our store is about 5,500 square feet. It's a massive department store.

In September of 2023, I expanded out to East Aurora. And now, February of 2024, I am here in Lewiston.

Q: What was it about Lewiston that appealed to you?

Ashley Doll: Selfishly, I live here (laughs).

I really, actually, like the three villages in general. I feel like they

bring a very similar customer base. And being so mainstream and in the middle of Western New York, in Williamsville, I really have found over the last couple of years that a lot of my customers have a hard time getting to me as often or as frequent. And because we have such a service, I do feel like it made sense if I went 25 miles north and 25 miles south. I really can kind of hit everybody all at once.

Q: Where's the best place for people, in the interim, to find out more about days and hours?

Ashley Doll: Our social media. So, you can find us on Instagram and Facebook @shopashleysbuf-

falo. You can also go to my website, shopashleys.com. We're very communicative. We like to get all of our information out there as much as possible. Our store number that you can call is for all three stores, and that's 716-633-8999.

Q: What sort of feedback have you gotten – either from customers you've seen today or people on social media who knew you were coming to Lewiston?

Ashley Doll: I've done this three times now. The first time I was transitioning from Blum's to Ashley's, so I already had a built-in clientele. I already knew every-

one that was coming to me. East Aurora was a little bit more of a challenge, because it was my first opportunity to do whatever I wanted to do; so, it was just like a free-for-all. I got like a really good response, but it's still a slow go.

I think, because I live in Lewiston, it's the first time my family can really support me. I mean, growing up in Niagara Falls, no one goes over the Grand Island bridge (laughs). So, I feel like having everyone come here to Lewiston is so much easier – and it's only a four-minute drive for me.

My mom went to the hair salon and people were like, "Oh my god, I heard your daughter's opening a store – this is so great." My dad works at a dealership and everyone there was talking about it. So, I feel like the buzz has been so much more well received. Even through the (Upward Niagara) Chamber and the community pages on Facebook – which I'm used to everyone being like super salty there! There has not been one bad comment – and I follow those! I am on top of it!

For me to see people actually respond in a positive manner was extremely empowering for me. And to see the people comment and say, "Wow; all sizes, all shapes, all ages." I'm very multigenerational. So, I think it really kind of amped me up to, like, "Yeah, let's do it. Let's open for the 'Sip and Shop!' We'll figure it out. We'll do it."

Ashley's Lingerie & Swimwear is located at:

- √ 411 Center St., Lewiston
- √ 5501 Main St., Suite 2, Williamsville
- √ 712 Main St., East Aurora
- Online at shopashleys.com

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HAL hosts talk on Niagara Power Project

The Historical Association of Lewiston's next program, "The Niagara Power Project, An Inside Look," will be presented at 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 22, at the Lutheran Church of the Messiah Fellowship Hall, 915 Oneida St.

Event organizers stated, "Jim Zeames will present the ins and outs of Niagara Falls electricity generation. From the first company to generate electricity from the Niagara Falls in 1882, through the disaster that led to the planning of the Niagara Power Project. He will present the Niagara Power Project history through construction and into present day contributions.

Zeames received a BSEE from the University at Buffalo in 1994. He was hired by Occidental Chemical in May 1995 as a maintenance electrical engineer and promoted to supervisor in 1997. Zeames was hired by NYPA in 2001 as an electrical maintenance supervisor and presently is the electrical maintenance superintendent. While with NYPA, he received his master's degree in engineering from the University at Buffalo and his New York state professional engineer license.

Zeames served in the 107th Air National Guard, retiring in 2010 after serving for 25 years. He is a Lewiston resident who became committee chairman for Boy Scout Troop 855 – and a proud father of three Eagle Scouts.

This community event is free and open to all, but donations "are greatly appreciated to help support our museum," the press release noted.

Refreshments will be served.

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