**DMC’s Urban Evolution Podcast – Louise and Walter Hanson, The Nordic Shop**

Bill Von Bank:

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Walter:

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And we had just taken delivery of all of our spring shipments. We had, rain gear from Helly Hansen and new Dale of Norway sweaters. And all of a sudden we had a store full of beautiful new merchandise, and no customers.

Walter:

No customers.

Bill Von Bank:

Welcome to Urban Evolution, a podcast about harnessing creativity and innovation to transform communities. I'm your host, Bill Vaughn Bank. A Scandinavian retailer in Rochester, Minnesota is proof that you can be successful during a pandemic. The Nordic Shop has seen a nearly 300% growth in its online sales in 2020, thanks to a robust digital strategy. A keen understanding of its customer base, and a forewarning of the impact of COVID by its European vendors. Today, I'm joined by Louise and Walter Hanson, who own and operate the Nordic Shop, and are celebrating 47 years in business and in marriage. Louise and Walter Hanson, welcome to the Urban Evolution Podcast.

Louise:

Thank you very much, we are very happy to be here.

Walter:

Yeah. It's kind of an honor to be here.

Bill Von Bank:

Louise let's start with you. Can you take us back to 1974 in the beginning of the Nordic Shop in Rochester, Minnesota. Tell us why the Nordic Shop in terms of product and tell us why Rochester, Minnesota.

Louise:

I am from the area. I'm from Blooming Prairie which is a tiny town just west of here. And I grew up with a very Scandinavian Norwegian family who cooked the food and celebrated the holidays in a specific Scandinavian way. I decided to take a little pivot even back then and go to Lindenwood University in Saint Charles, Missouri for my further education, I majored in communication and art. I wanted to meet other people, live in a new place, and grow in a different way. My junior year, I went to Copenhagen, which was wonderful-

Bill Von Bank:

Is that life changing.

Louise:

It was life changing. I studied Danish design and heritage. And I had a renewed interest in Scandinavia after that. I think that's partly why we decided to come back to our Scandinavian roots when I met Walter and start a shop. And Rochester, Minnesota was the place that we decided to come back to.

Bill Von Bank:

Walter, when did you and Louise meet?

Walter:

We met on a blind date.

Bill Von Bank:

It's been how many years?

Walter:

Well, since 1972 till now we got married in 1974 when we launched the store, what was interesting about selecting Rochester, back to your question. Was that Louise had a familiarity with the area. But we were really looking to try to find where one would be able to set up a store that would feature the best of Scandinavian design because that's kind of what we were interested in. We weren't interested in selling products that said, "Kiss the Cook, She's Norwegian." Or selling, goof to [inaudible 00:04:10] things like that.

Bill Von Bank:

Plenty of places have those.

Walter:

Yeah, yeah. And back in those days, there was a Scandinavian shop in every strip mall in the upper Midwest.

Louise:

And every small town as well.

Walter:

Every small town as well.

Bill Von Bank:

And especially in Minnesota given [crosstalk 00:04:27].

Walter:

So one had to be different. And we decided early that if we were going to try a store concept, it was going to be something totally different that focused on the best of Scandinavian design, and the best of Scandinavia craftsmanship. So those were the lines that we went after. And back in those days, we were in our early 20s, people kind of looked at us a little strange. It's like two little kids starting a store. Okay.

Bill Von Bank:

Well, you survived 47 years. If I do my math correctly. 1974, and right now we're in 2021. Amazing.

Walter:

February 21, was our first day of operation.

Louise:

It was.

Bill Von Bank:

Tell us a bit about your customer base. And I'm just wondering, has it evolved? Has it changed? Is it still changing?

Walter:

It's been an ever evolving mix. We've identified that there are three separate components to what we call our mail and our Rochester base. There's the local customer, who's within a short drive of Rochester, all the bedroom communities. Then there's the area, which is kind of our demographic, trade area where we do draw people from Northern Iowa, from Western Wisconsin along the river, we draw people from all the way up to the cities, to the store. And to the west, as far as pretty much as you want to go. And that's what we call our area. And then after that, then it's our Mayo patients. So those have always been very important to us. And we've always wanted to make sure that we played to all of the groups at the times that were appropriate, with limited budgets, for advertising and that's been something that seems to never change.

Walter:

And so you had to be very targeted. We identified early, thankfully, that the Mayo Clinic component, those people way back in 1974, were here for a week at a time, usually two weekends, and the full week in between, and then you wouldn't see them for a year. Or some in six months, whatever, but mostly a year.

Walter:

And so it was like very early on that we decided that, we wanted to be able to keep track of them. So back in those days, there were no computer programs that were available for small businesses to maintain a mailing base. So we actually wrote our own. I can remember when we first started, we kind of looked at the computer and said, "Okay."

Bill Von Bank:

Here we go.

Walter:

Here we go.

Bill Von Bank:

Louise, question for you. You've always been in Rochester, you've always been downtown Rochester with this business.

Louise:

We have had a few satellites over the years, which were great learning opportunities. But obviously, we're not long term investments so we have come back to Rochester every time.

Walter:

Well we never left downtown. We did have two satellites as Louise said. Our first one was Apache mall. And we had a little store in the middle of Apache Mall [crosstalk 00:08:19].

Bill Von Bank:

In Rochester.

Louise:

Just the kiosk.

Walter:

Because everybody kept saying, all of our advisors that kept saying, "Well, you got to be out of the Apache Mall, that's where all the people are." And now it's like, "Okay, well, we'll try it." Well, it's a great place. And we were busier than heck on the weekends. And then after that, you could have a bowling alley during the week there. And it was just not for us so at the end of the lease, we just said, "Thank you." And now and we're back downtown. Then after a while we had been around at 82, I believe we opened a store in the Hyatt up in the cities.

Bill Von Bank:

In the Minneapolis St. Paul area.

Walter:

Right. Yeah. Right on Nicollet Mall, right on the Greenway. Because-

Louise:

Yeah, again, it was the biggest convention Hotel in the city at the time. And, again, advisors, people in business said, "Oh, you got to be in Minneapolis, because you're selling all these exclusive brands. And that's where the people are." So again, we tried it.

Walter:

Yeah. And we'd kind of done our homework, we'd looked at our database. We had all the data, we knew we had lots of customers, and we actually had a lot of customers right on the Greenway. So it's like okay, well, this is kind of a natural. And so we tried that only to end up with that customer who we had in the cities was very busy, usually do all professionals, and they didn't have the time to shop. They like walk by the front of our store and wave. And if we were there, one of us was there, we would recognize them. But they wouldn't stop-

Bill Von Bank:

They wouldn't buy.

Walter:

No. However, they'd pick up a phone, and they'd place a phone order downtown here in Rochester, and they'd ship it up to the city [inaudible 00:10:30]. And I remember answering a lot of those calls and say, "Well, it's right there in the store. I know he walked by it every day, twice a day." It's like, "Well, it's a lot easier, just send it to me. Send it to my office, send it to my condo, whatever." It was like, okay, we have proved to ourselves, we do not need to be in multiple places. We just need to be able to get to the people in those multiple places. So we started growing mail order, probably for our third time at that point, when we closed that store.

Louise:

Which was the best way to connect with our customer who was beginning to become from all over the world.

Bill Von Bank:

And building loyalty.

Louise:

Yes, yes. One of the happy surprises of being in Downtown Rochester is the connections we have to our medical tourists. And they come in often whenever they're in town. And it's fun to see them, fun to help them find what they would like and catch up with them personally. And given your location, you have a great skyway connection to them, and that must be important. It's very important, it's very important.

Walter:

In these days, it is.

Louise:

Our landlord, the late Gus Chafoulias was very smart in designing the building, which was going to be connected to the major hotels and all of them Mayo Clinic buildings, and some of the other outlying areas within Rochester Downtown. And that has been a great benefit to both us as retailers, the restaurants, and also our all of our Mayo Clinic, workers and visitors.

Bill Von Bank:

The history is very interesting and thank you for that. And I envision we'll talk a little bit more about your history and maybe a few stories along the way. I do want to get to the here and now a bit because we've had a pretty challenging 12 months with the COVID-19 pandemic. And in a recent news article I read you shared that your European vendors gave you a forewarning of the impact that COVID would eventually have on US retail. Tell us how armed with that information, you prepared to weather the challenges that the pandemic inflicted.

Walter:

We were fortunate as you said. All of our vendors are in Europe and we have strong ties to them after all these years. People like Dale of Norway, they know us. And we talked a lot. And other smaller vendors Oleana some of our other small vendors and even Helly Hansen. It's based in Oslo, those people we talked to on a regular basis. They were getting very nervous about the fact that central Europe was closing down. Italy, closed down I think first, then it was just a domino effect as it moved north. And they were very, very, very visibly shaken that that was occurring. And they were wondering what the United States was doing. And at that time, we were saying things like, "Oh it's kind of like the flu, it'll be gone in no time. This is nothing to worry about." It was something to worry about. And we kind of looked at it.

Walter:

And in February, you started seeing a decrease number of people traveling to Mayo. And all of a sudden, it was getting pretty slow around here. And we're talking among ourselves and saying, "Okay, this is serious. This is not going to be something that goes away quickly." Our friends in Europe were saying that this is major. And none of us had ever ever ever lived through anything like this before.

Louise:

And we had just taken delivery of all of our spring shipments. We had rain gear from Helly Hansen and new Dale of Norway sweaters. And all of a sudden we had a store full of beautiful new merchandise and no customers.

Walter:

No customers.

Bill Von Bank:

So as you fast forward and we start to realize the impact of this, what did you do?

Walter:

Really actually, back in February. The end of February, we were talking between us about what we should do. And we decided that, we had a fairly big budget for the year for our marketing to the Mayo patients and things like that. If they're not going to be around, why spend that money? Let's repurpose that money and let's start putting some of that into expanding, again, our market and our footprint for our digital side of our business, which is the web these days. Way back in early days, that was mail order.

Louise:

I think the efforts were almost twofold. First of all, we had to set up the website. We have a very active website, the website is maybe almost 20 years old now. But-

Walter:

It's about as old as the internet.

Louise:

That is true. So we had to put all of this merchandise that had just come into the store on the website. And Walter and one of our employees, were working very hard to get many of those products on. And the other side of the coin is, okay, now people are going to have to find this web website. More people than just the ones that might know us, or the ones that might Google enough times to find us. So digital advertising was important at that time. So we've tried a number of different things over the past year, but we started doing the digital advertising more.

Louise:

We started some regional push. We had some rain coats in by our Norwegian vendor Helly Hansen and we thought maybe people up in the north would like these because it was rainy in April and so we used some of the digital placements for Bemidji, Brainerd those kinds of places.

Bill Von Bank:

Northern Minnesota.

Louise:

Yeah.

Walter:

Northern Minnesota, the Dakotas, northern Wisconsin. It was interesting, we got some really good response out of that. But probably what really helped us the most, not only did we expand our digital advertising to reach more people, but one of our vendors, Helly Hansen, had developed some facemask. Now, Helly Hansen's never done medical equipment ever in their lives. They're known for all their rainwear, fall weather gear. If you're a blue water sailor, you own Helly Hansen, storm suits, etc. Then what you basically Bet your life on if you're out in deep water, and sailing. So they're very good at protective clothing. Never done anything like this, they decided that here's a bunch of guys that haven't had anything to do. And it's like, let's just play around with the idea and let's make our own mask for our own use.

Walter:

They did, got one of the factories to run a small little thing. Don't know how they got people into the factory to do it. But they did develop these masks they were going to used for internally. And then the World Health Organization came along and said, "If you're making any sort of mask, send us some samples. They did and then all of a sudden there's this call from WHO, world health, and they're saying, "Did you make these?" And there they're going, "Well, yeah, we could stop though. If we've done something wrong just tell us. We don't normally make this."

Louise:

That's very Norwegian.

Walter:

And we've heard the story so many times from the Helly people that it's true. They really were very concerned that maybe they'd done something wrong. And [crosstalk 00:19:22].

Bill Von Bank:

But in essence, they created a necessity.

Walter:

They did. They created something that WHO used and is still using for their frontline workers. It's the only mask on the market that's a commercial mask, that is bidirectional protection. That means that, there's protection from me speaking or breathing and from anybody in the room speaking or breathing. So nothing comes through the mask. It has a wonderful filter in it that keeps everything out. It's antiviral and antibacterial, all these good things. And then the one kicker, that makes it probably one of the most sought after mask is that it's extremely comfortable. They have a fabric that they call LIFALOFT that they used for the inside. And it's one of their proprietary fabrics.

Walter:

And what it does is that it really moves any moisture, or any buildup of moisture out away from your face right away so that you don't have that kind of petri dish feeling as you're breathing. And also you aren't fogging your glasses up and things like that easily because, it provides for really good breathe ability. We were offered this from them early on, they said, look, "You're the only people in the US that we know, that would probably think this was a neat idea. We'll give you an exclusive."

Louise:

Yes. And I think that was a real honor to us because, they knew that even though we were the small company, we have a niche of customers who may be interested in this and a need first of all living and working in a medical community but also with our website and our customer base that may be interested in this type of protection and it's Norwegian. So the new we could market it.

Bill Von Bank:

And you received the masks when? And then let's talk about the success of the sales of these masks.

Walter:

Well, the success is continuing daily. We received them probably the second week of March.

Louise:

Yes. Right.

Walter:

Right when the governor close the state.

Louise:

Yep, it was about the time we were [crosstalk 00:21:57].

Bill Von Bank:

The first executive order, [crosstalk 00:21:58].

Walter:

Yeah. I mean very close to that same time. Because we, I think, got them delivered to the house.

Louise:

We may have, I believe so. And here we are with all of this merchandise from spring and raincoats and the sweaters and what now. And now we've got several $1,000 worth of masks. What are we going to do?

Bill Von Bank:

So what did you do?

Louise:

We marketed them everywhere. We marketed them in the city of Rochester, and we were sending masks or having people pick them up, because we were closed. And-

Walter:

Well, back then we didn't have curbside.

Louise:

No, we didn't. They were a few people walked by our front door.

Walter:

But most 99.99% of the first ones because, we were essentially closed. We would come in every other day, and process 40 to 50 or more orders for a mask. And then all of a sudden people started shopping the rest of the site. And we just took off like crazy.

Bill Von Bank:

Well, I read 200% growth [crosstalk 00:23:15].

Walter:

Over 200%, we almost hit 300.

Bill Von Bank:

Seriously, wow. That's remarkable.

Walter:

Yeah.

Bill Von Bank:

And you talked a lot about the digital marketing aspect of it. How has that evolved just in over the last couple of years? Because prior to 2020, your web presence had success. You had a good 2019 as well. So you've really taken on the digital marketing approach.

Walter:

Yeah, we had started in 2019, thankfully. We had kind of looked at each other, because everybody was asking us at that point, "When are you going to retire? When are you going to do this? When you're going to do that?" When are they going... We're still having a lot of fun, let's see what we can do with the web? Because it was always a part of the store. And it was always an integral part of it. But we decided that we were going to start moving it to become its own individual, actually division that would stand on its own. And so in 19, we started and we put in an impressive 50% increase in sales. Which, with the volume that we've been doing, that was huge. I mean, that was time to pop the corks and celebrate, and we did. All of our advisors, all of our banker and everything, were just amazed that we could pull off something like that.

Louise:

But I think the digital learning experience is still a learning experience. We learned that we were a niche business. And it's hard to communicate with some of the digital offerings that are put before us, because whoever's placing the item for sale, has to know that this is a very niche item. It's not something that everybody's going to check out our website on.

Walter:

So we started playing around with different other avenues, working with some of the Scandinavian publications that existed, some of the Scandinavian events, advertising with them. And that gave us a much better return on our investment. And started us down a path that we've been just branching out on every day and expanding. That's been very helpful for us. We also got a grant that was through RDA.

Bill Von Bank:

The Rochester Downtown Alliance.

Walter:

Right. Yeah. Early for $2,000 to help us work with a local business. We chose Tulip Tree because they have a very good marketing person who is good at marketing Google things. And we thought, well, let's go back and try it.

Bill Von Bank:

Some research I've done specifically, in some articles on Forbes, is they're really pushing the digital first, for retail. Do you agree with that?

Walter:

No, I think that it's a two pronged thing, especially here in Rochester. We have a unique customer base here because of the Mayo Clinic Destination Medical Center phase that we're in right now, as far as Mayo's growth is going to expand our market even more. Which I'd never thought that there would actually be a word that would describe it, but the one that keeps coming up always says medical tourism. And that seems to be on the rise. And even though we've taken a brief break, due to COVID, I think Mayo is committed to that growth. And we're going to see that start up, probably more towards the end of this year. And definitely, we'll be able to see some very positive things in 2022 to the first quarter.

Louise:

And that being said, I think small niche retail, specialty retail, is always going to be relevant, if we who are in the business are doing it well and creating great service for our customers. Customers from all over the world, and young and old respond to it very well. And the digital side is also the side that will enhance that experience.

Bill Von Bank:

How are you continuing to capitalize on the trend of finding one's roots in terms of the merchandise you're carrying? Are there some products that now seem to be more in demand? And as a result, is your customer profile changing?

Walter:

Yeah.

Louise:

Yes.

Walter:

Very definitely.

Louise:

First of all, our merchandise has changed dramatically over the years.

Walter:

When we started back in 1974, we were 99% hard goods, meaning things like dinnerware, flatware, glassware, gift items, things such as that. We sold lots of design items, and we had very little soft goods, very little sweaters. We had started with one little spiral rack that held by 15 sweaters. And that was our first thing was soft goods. As we've progressed over the years, now we're at probably 80% soft goods in the store and 20% hard goods.

Louise:

And I think that reflects what's happening as a trend here in the States, and maybe in the Europe as well. Our customers today are interested in experiences and things that will enhance those experiences. And that is where we're great right? Coats for rain or bad weather, great sweaters for doing interviews, or being on Zoom or just having a nice Saturday stroll are important and will enhance and help people's lives. That's a good reason why we have so many more soft goods as Walter would say, instead of the hard goods.

Bill Von Bank:

And specifically the Dale of Norway sweaters, your store is number one, outside of Norway in the sale of these-

Walter:

Actually number one.

Bill Von Bank:

Number one period. Amazing. Tell us about these sweaters and the evolution of have them becoming so popular for you.

Walter:

Just over time, we started noticing that people were very interested in, something that that they could wear. And that was part of a little bit of their heritage. But slowly, we started to see that people were buying things like in our store. And I guess we'd always know in it, that they're buying it because of design. They weren't Scandinavian. I mean, we have male guests from all over the world. They're not all Norwegian.

Louise:

I think it's the design, the quality and the authenticity that people are drawn to.

Walter:

Right. Dale has been able to show with a lot of help from us, I might say. We were the ones that got them in the early years to move away from just doing the same sweaters over and over again.

Bill Von Bank:

Bring some variety.

Walter:

[crosstalk 00:31:16] selling, but there was no change in the collection really. We got them to focus a little bit on changing the collection. Then we realized that the biggest comment that we had is that the sweaters were too heavy to wear. And they were heavy handed sweaters, great sweaters, but they were heavy. And this thing called central heating seems to be something that's catching on in our country. So you don't need that sweater that the further you get away from the cookstove the better it felt.

Louise:

So we encouraged them to go do lightweight sweaters.

Walter:

Lightweight sweaters.

Louise:

Yes. And more modern and contemporary designs and even bring in some fashion colors once in a while.

Bill Von Bank:

Well, when you're the global leader in sales, they'll listen to you, right?

Louise:

That's true. And we listen to our customers and our employees listen to our customers. And I think that's very, very important.

Walter:

One of the things that we've been able to offer to Dale throw away into a few of our other vendors is the ability to measure a product in our store. Because we have a unique clientele, which is from everywhere. And it's a nice, good snapshot that you don't get anywhere else in the world. That has been kind of important to them. And they've learned from being in our store several times, many times, what it's like to be there. And all of a sudden, there's a person from Spain, from France, from Saudi Arabia, from wherever, it is an international community. So that's been very good. And [inaudible 00:33:08] because we've had a lot of success with them, we drove them to do the first lightweight sweater and sold that out in no time at all. They produced it for us exclusively, thinking that well, let the crazy Americans try. That's [crosstalk 00:33:30].

Bill Von Bank:

Not so crazy.

Walter:

And within 45 days, we were yelling and screaming for more sweaters. And that was like, well, that's impossible. And it's like, "No, we've sold down." That was our beginning with them to prove that we knew what we were doing.

Bill Von Bank:

Understanding your customer.

Louise:

Yes. That's true. And in 2018, we had some suggestions of designs. And they said, "Oh, okay, again, won't just show us what you're thinking and we'll kind of take a look." They actually took a serious look. I submitted a design, just on paper, just a concept. And I said, "I think this would sell for you. And this is a new look. It's a little longer sweater. And it's the type of things that ladies want to wear right now with their leggings. And I think it'll go." We didn't really hear back from them. And then in the spring, when the new book came out, I said, "Oh, that's our sweater."

Bill Von Bank:

There's your design.

Louise:

They made it without even telling us. So we ordered it and hoping it would sell, it did and it has become one of their top five sellers in the whole line.

Bill Von Bank:

Congratulations. Let's talk a little bit more about some of the changes you've experienced with your business and your client base, but also as longtime residents of Rochester, Minnesota, how has the community changed? You've seen a lot.

Walter:

Yeah, we have. The biggest change is that Rochester is getting younger. There are a lot more younger faces showing up. And there're young people that are working for Mayo or for affiliates of Mayo. And they bring a totally new vibe to Rochester a very positive one. And it's really kind of interesting because, as they started showing up, things like 23 and me, and a bunch of the other genetic find your Retts type things. We're starting to come out, and all of a sudden, these people are finding that, "Oh, my God, I have some Scandinavian blood in me." And so it's like they'll go back and they'll talk to mom and dad. And mom and dad really didn't pay attention, when grandma was around for them, who really was the Scandinavian in the family, and then that's kind of trailed off and trailed off.

Walter:

And then all of a sudden, there's this rebirth of, well, "Where did I come from? This is really exciting." And especially the ones that we talk to are very excited about finding their Scandinavian roots because, Scandinavia was and still is the forefront of a lot of things that young kids really, really identify with. In Scandinavia, it's always been fewer but nicer things. It's not a throwaway society at all. So you have a real respect for materials and for quality of things that are going to last you. And that's important to a younger customer. That whole idea of a quality and sustainability. I mean, Dale of Norway is proof of that.

Walter:

Here's 141 year old company that has always produced woolen products. They not only produce the sweaters that we sell, but they also have developed the sheep throughout the years to get the quality of yarn they want. They've always been working with different types of ways to dye the yarn. Everything is done with natural dyes so that there's no caustic materials in them, which is really important. A Norwegian sweater is totally biodegradable, very few people will end up actually doing that because they don't wear out, which is another good thing.

Bill Von Bank:

For the younger shopper, there is that sense of wanting retailers to have the sustainable products as well as the social responsibility behind what they're selling.

Walter:

Right.

Louise:

That is true.

Walter:

And that's been something that I think has been always key with us, is that our lifestyle is a Scandinavian lifestyle. We promote that way of living, and have always done that. So they find it's very genuine when they come into the store. They like that it's part of us.

Louise:

And many of our products are sustainably made manufactured. Many of them are long term contract companies that have learned how to use the dyes and the materials properly.

Bill Von Bank:

You're proof that couples can start a business together and succeed. Your 47 years as a Rochester retailer begs the question, when your spouse is your co-worker, what agreement or understanding must firmly be in place in order to succeed? Who's going to answer?

Louise:

We never had a formal agreement. Right? We both have shared a love for design and arts and specifically Scandinavian over the years. Also, knowing that we are on the same team, if we don't agree with how some thing's being done, or someone is buying. At the end of the day, we know that person is doing it for the benefit of the business and of the team. And we just roll with that and sometimes we're right, sometimes we're not.

Walter:

We actually fit together extremely well. Louise is our detailed person. I'm always our vision person, I'm the one that's out, trying to figure out where we're going to be in 10 years, 20 years, what we need to do to continue our growth. And Louise is the one who is always trying to make sure that we're dotting our I's crossing our T's. Making sure we're kind of following through correctly and not missing things. And that's always been our strength is that, where one person is not as strong the other person is. So you get a very tight organization that's very focused. Our focus has always been to provide the best quality Scandinavian design that we can. And we found out early that quality always pays.

Walter:

And we're kind of a tribute to our store, or the store is a tribute to us. We've always tried to compartmentalize what is the shop and what is Louise and Walter?

Bill Von Bank:

One final question and I want you both to answer about each other. So Louise, what inspires you about Walter? And Walter what inspires you about Louise? Louise, why don't you start?

Louise:

Walter works very hard at learning new things all the time. He has always pushed us to have our computers and be digital and go forward and try new things. Whether it's new merchandise, new equipment, in the store, new programs on the computer, that's very inspiring. And I also love that he loves Scandinavian design and the functionality and the quality of it, and the heritage of it.

Bill Von Bank:

Walter, what inspires you about Louise?

Walter:

Louise is a never ending source of creativity. She's the artist, out of the two of us. I might be the architect but, Louise is an artist. And she always has that new fresh idea. That new, whatever it is, many times it's a little out there. But in time, we usually come to a way of embracing that and moving forward. We really do complement each other very well. All of our vendors kind of realize that. They understand that we're they're buying, that it's the two of us, and they're not playing to one or the other of us there, it's both of us. And we both have to be happy, if we're not this is not going to happen. Because, if we don't both agree on it, it's probably not a good product. At least not for us.

Bill Von Bank:

Louise and Walter Hanson, this has been a fun conversation. Congratulations on all of your success. And thank you for being our guests on Urban Evolution.

Louise:

Thank you so much. It's been an honor and fun to be here. It's great experience. Thank you.

Bill Von Bank:

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