

Shops Breathe Life Into 170 Year Old Building



Around 1840, Peter Van Every built his mansion on top of the hill at 14 Mile and Franklin Roads. It was a common practice to build your residence near your place of work. Van Every's grist mill (the current Cider Mill) was kitty-corner from him. He also had a distillery and a potashery located nearby.

Peter and Amy had 14 children. He was a colonel in the War of 1812, managed a meat and hotel business in Detroit before buying land in Franklin, and was a member of the Territorial Legislature from Wayne County in 1837, the year Michigan became a state. From 1841-1846 he served as a postmaster in the village.

Three generations of Van Everys would occupy the structure and utilize the nearby barns and carriage house.

The property was the site of the elopement of one of the Van Every daughters who slipped out one wintry night with her beau Thomas Broughton in the 1850's. The frantic pursuit to interfere with the marriage was unsuccessful. It was the home of two Civil War soldiers.

Could Van Every ever envision how his home and property would be transformed in the years after his passing? Fred Van Every, a grandson, was the last family member to live here. He moved to Southfield in the mid 1940's. After one hundred years of Van Every occupancy, things were about to change. Plumbing and electricity would be added. Walls would be taken down, pillars built, a chimney removed and windows altered. The coal bin would become a kitchen. Yet the essence of the structure remained. Its use changed over and over.

In the 1870s, an addition was built perpendicular to the main house. The mansion had become the Temperance Hotel. It was also a stagecoach stop between Pontiac and Detroit.

From 1894 to 1898 Dr. Edward Andrew Smith lived in the hotel and had his office in the mansion.

In the mid 1940s, Marguerite Ford Ritner created one of the earliest full-time day care centers. Once again, there were young children running through the house and down the Van Every hill.

Through the years, there were several tenants. Bucky's Sweet Shop offered old fashioned soda drinks and all day lollipops! Franklin Interiors specialized in the three F's--furniture, furnishings and fabric. Other establishments included the Franklin Boutique, The Nail Store, Franklin Tea Cozy, Alley Arts and Antiques, the Curiosity Shoppe, Everything Animals, Bess Orman Jewelry, Mesa Arts, The Saddlery and Zieben-Mare.

Today, the house on the hill is home to several businesses. Karen Brown owns Savvy Chic, an eclectic home and garden shop located in the back of the house. At the front entrance, Linda Gee's hair salon specializes in organic color, make up and skin care. Shannon Aldridge has a private pilates studio upstairs.

The Van Every Carriage House

A carriage house is an outbuilding originally built to house horse-drawn carriages and horses. When horses were still the main source of transportation, families had their own carriage house. It was located away from the main residence to keep the odor of the horses at a distance.

The Van Every carriage house was no exception. It was used for the family carriage and horses and was located behind the large main house at an acceptable distance.

On May 30, 1879 the Pontiac Gazette stated that Peter Van Every Jr. recently moved the building used as a store room and was fitting it up as a wagon and carriage



shop. This occurred about 20 years after his father's demise.

Around 1900 Henry Spicer, whose farm was located on the Oakland Hills Country Club property, would stop along Maple Road and pick up people on his bobsled. His horses were kept at the Van Everys while his passengers attended activities at the Community Hall (location of the Fire Station) down the street.

In 1914 several teams of men and horses installed a concrete wastewear to divert the flow of the river. The men were well liked Belgians who stayed at the Temperance Hotel and kept their horses at the carriage house.

In the 1970s a Detroit-based candy manufacturer opened a branch in Franklin. It was called Vair-E-Best. Howard Vair started the business in his home in the 1930s. The carriage house was converted into a country store with calico prints, candy stripe carpet and wonderful confections. Herbert Segal turned the candy shop into a jewelry gallery. In the 1990s it became a business called Cheers!

Through the years carriage houses have been modified into guest houses, automobile garages, offices, workshops, retail shops, restaurants or storage buildings.

The newest tenant is La Spezia, a spice shop operated by Joe and Kelly Lampertius. Kelly and her mom Donna Higgins take care of the daily operations. They opened in late Summer 2011. They specialize in spices, dips and mixes, vinegars, oils, sugar, salts and soups.

Today the Van Every property is a one stop shop. You can work out, get your hair done, buy a gift and pick up some ingredients for dinner. How's that for consolidating your needs?!