Mystic, Get Your Ohm On - *probably needs a different title*

By Cathleen Norman

People seeking some respite and solace in these tumultuous times are stopping into Mystic in downtown Silver City. Iris Laging opened the store three years ago, renting the space at 505A North Bullard Street. "Family circumstances allowed me to open this store and manifest my long-held dream," she says. Last November she bought it and the adjoining storefront (505B).

"I opened the store because I saw the need," Iris explains. "There were a couple of shops like this in Austin that I dearly loved." Mystic carries many items you would find in a well-stocked metaphysical store - crystals, candles, books, cards and jewelry. Items cover an array of spiritual beliefs and practices "outside the Abrahamic tradition," she says, including Buddhist, Hindu, Greek, Roman, Viking, Celtic, Druidic and pagan.

After buying the property, Iris removed the dividing wall between 505A and 505B, restoring the original configuration. This allowed her to increase inventory, create a dedicated reading room and offer workshops.

Like many of us, Iris moved here after passing through several times. "I visited friends I met at the Kerrville Folk Festival in Texas. I fell in love with Silver City, its chill arts scene, the inclusive community. And I loved that you could get to the mountains in ten minutes or the desert in ten minutes."

"I pulled into Faywood for an overnight in 2021 and stayed two weeks. That's how I landed here in Silver City," she smiles

Born and raised in a south Texas town, Iris lived nearly 20 years in a rural area outside Austin: Bastrop County in central Texas, "Home of the Lost Pines." She was involved in business accounting in the automotive industry, but retired after a back injury. In 2011 she lost her house in a blaze that burned 100,000 acres and destroyed 1,600 houses in Bastrop County. She moved to Austin, but "after five years there I was ready to not be in a city anymore. So I lived touring in my van in 2018 and 2019, enjoying the road and attending festivals including the Kerrville Festival." She traveled all over the west, especially visiting hot springs in Colorado and Utah.

"I'm here to serve the spiritual needs of the community," explains Iris. "I have a dedicated local base, as well as people from Deming and Las Cruces."

She strives to carry unique gift items: wind chimes large and small; Pashmina wool shawls in a rainbow of colors; waist bags that are more chic than the ubiquitous fanny pack; and brooms hand-made by a family in Oregon. “I’m aiming for sustainable fair-trade products,” she adds.

Mystic represents a handful of artists, such as Blue Fox Artworks wands made from cholla, bones and points harvested on the artist’s land in Hachita.” She appreciates crafts from Mexican artisans and has art from nine Silver City artists. She still seeks local art that fits into the store’s broader spiritual perspective.

You can find costumes, hats, masks and velveteen capes favored for Renaissance festivals and other costume events. Shelves display a variety of stones, lapidary specimens and stone jewelry. There are musical instruments including flutes, drums and finger cymbals for belly dancing. A row of Tibetan “singing” bowls invites your finger to circle the rim to create a high-pitched hum. A quiet reading corner is a peaceful place to retreat for a moment, surrounded by books.

The storefronts at 505A-B Bullard had most recently contained a law office, Guadalupe specializing in religious and spiritual items, and Lydia Villanueva’s store of art, antiques and collectibles. The building opened in 1954. 505A Bullard housed the Bingaman Insurance Company for 30 years. In the 1980s and ‘90s, it contained a series of shops and offices. 505B Bullard was the site of a series of dentist offices for more than 60 years.

The 1954 portion is tacked onto an 1890s commercial building, which necessitated some maintenance and repairs. Improvements included painting the interior and thoroughly upgrading the bathroom.

Iris invites you to stop by and take a look. “We are always changing. And we’ve brought back all the LGBQT things for our lovely rainbow family.” Her three employees are Bek Marquez, Merry Phillips and Sami Gonzales. Sami is going to paint a morning glory mural on the south-facing red-brick wall, and plans are afoot to plant wildflower seeds in the gravelly gap out front in an area now favored by dog walkers and their pooches.