

START HERE

Downtown: As Austin As It Gets



The Irony of Authenticity

Corporate executive, Mary Ober, once jokingly told co-workers her ideal job would be running a fine gift gallery – something like the one she had frequented during college. At that moment Mary had no intention to pursue a career change.

But the seed of her dream had sprouted and she soon found herself seeking advice from that college town gallery owner and researching cities where her vision for a unique, art-filled shop could be realized. As a Dallas resident, she considered founding the shop locally. But no local locale fit her dream.

“The shop I loved in college was in a downtown district that bustled with life and energy,” Ober says. “I wanted that energy and I couldn’t find it in North Texas.”

Ober became excited after meeting with the Downtown Austin Alliance about the strategy to bring more retail shops to the downtown district. She and her husband resolved to move to Austin and open Authenticity Gallery.

The Main Street of Texas

“I looked at spaces off of Congress Avenue, but for me, being on The Avenue was very important,” Ober says. “Looking back, I made the right choice. Congress is an incredible place and I love being here - the look, the feel, the beautiful historic buildings.”

She says opening her store on the city’s main street, home to marathons, festivals, and other popular events, provides her with a steady stream of customers.

“Probably 80 percent of my customers are tourists,” Ober says. “Everyone People like to walk Congress Avenue, to visit the Capitol, and experience downtown Austin. I’m right in the middle of it all.”

In addition, she says her proximity to many of the city’s destination restaurants, theaters and hotels has positively impacted her business. Authenticity Gallery now stays open late on weekends to cater to Congress Avenue’s evening patrons who stroll past her shop on their way to downtown nightlife destinations.

The Right Move

“I came to Congress Avenue early in the game, so it’s exciting for me to watch new businesses open and the district grow,” Ober says. “There’s a great camaraderie among local owners; we’re all excited about what this district is becoming. After my first year of business, I can absolutely say that the choice to open here was the right one.”



“Probably 80 percent of my customers are tourists. Everyone likes to walk Congress Avenue, to visit the Capitol and to experience downtown Austin, and I’m right in the middle of it all.”

Mary Ober
Owner

For more information:
Linda Asaf
Retail Recruiter
Downtown Austin Alliance
P: 512.619.3303
linda@downtownaustin.com