

Local Thrift Store Topanga Vintage Reopens Under New Owner

Topanga Vintage is now Revolution Retro, following a shift in leadership

Cassandra Chabot, Staff Writer

Tucked away on Jenkins Court in Durham, NH sits a locally owned business, barely identifiable by a small white sign reading “Thrift Store.” Following a shift in ownership, what was once known on campus as Topanga Vintage is now named Revolution Retro. Despite the shift, the team has kept its roots as a funky and curated shop, promoting inclusivity and activism.

Revolution Retro is owned by former University of New Hampshire (UNH) student Helena De Martin, who is now a small business owner at 22.



Helena De Martin at Revolution Retro

“I came to UNH in August of 2020, and I found Topanga in 2021. I came in [to Topanga] for the first time, and was mesmerized,” De Martin said.

Inside, customers are greeted by hot pink walls, fur-trimmed mirrors, neon lights, and of course, clothes and accessories galore. It’s easy to get lost in the color-coded racks and eclectic décor.

De Martin described having always loved thrifting, particularly back home in Worcester, Massachusetts. When she saw a job opening for Topanga during her sophomore year, she immediately applied.

“I basically wrote the owner an essay on how awesome I am, and she totally ate it up, and called me in for an interview. And that was that,” she said.

This past winter, De Martin was asked if she wanted to take on more responsibility after three years working under the previous owner, who often traveled to and from Los Angeles. She needed someone at the store who could run things in her absence. Eagerly, De Martin accepted the offer, and thus the scramble to create Revolution Retro began. De Martin remarked that she had just a couple of weeks to turn the store into her very own vision.

“I was never one of those kids who knew exactly what they wanted to do. I just knew I liked pretty things. I liked clothes, and I was super creative and very imaginative,” she said. “And by the grace of something, I came upon my neon mecca.”

More than anything, De Martin said she wants to open up a space for the Durham community. She has been able to give back to the college town by providing free Plan B, an emergency contraceptive, behind the counter, no questions asked. De Martin is also working on a fundraiser for the children of Palestine.

“I just want to make the most good, as much as I can, for as long as I can, for as many people as I can,” she said. “And if that’s giving people a place to come in and express themselves with fashion and music and art and activism, I’m fine with that. That’s my legacy and I’m cool with it.”

Revolution Retro is open Tuesdays through Sundays, from 12 to 5 p.m. And if you decide to stop by, “chances are, we are in the corner having a little dance party,” De Martin said, as punk rock continued to play in the background.