

## A new chapter begins for Aesthetic Sense

“Behind every one of the items in our store is a story,” says Karen Schecter, co-owner with her husband, Jay, of the recently reopened and repurposed Aesthetic Sense. The store’s tagline, “Goods for the soul,” speaks to the couple’s commitment to, and belief in, merchandise that is either ethically sourced or hews to fair trade principles.

The Aesthetic Sense had been a Mount Kisco fixture for 17 years, before closing in 2013. In addition to their store, both the Schecters were involved in volunteering for not-for-profit organizations. “It defined the lives of our families in many ways,” Mr. Schecter said. They quickly came to two realizations: first, that retail was in their blood and second, that they could marry the business of the past with a more socially responsible model.

“We found this new store is really resonating with the community,” Mr. Schecter said. The couple has also invested heavily in e-commerce. “As our merchandise has no borders, we wanted to open up our concept and mission to a wider audience,” he said.

Two lines of products in the store exemplify what the Schecters are striving to bring to the community. Food slabs from American Stonecraft, a Massachusetts-based company which teams with working farmers and uses their unearthed fieldstones to create, literally, farm-to-table serving pieces. And there are tallit bags, which hold traditional prayer shawls, from Cambodia, made from recycled fishing nets by an artisans group called Smateria. Ms. Schecter saw computer bags produced by the artisan group at a trade show, and thought of a different purpose and look.

“Working with Helping Hands, the organization that brings Smateria’s goods to the United States, we were able to expand the product line to go beyond providing a living wage to help build a sustainable industry,” she said.

While the name Aesthetic Sense remains the same “because there was a great deal



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**Karen and Jay Schecter at their recently reopened Mount Kisco store, Aesthetic Sense, which promises “goods for the soul.”**

of goodwill in our name in this community,” the owners said, the store sells items beyond its extensive Judaica line. “We have clients shopping for all types of occasions,” Mr. Schecter noted. There’s a lovely collection of jewelry, great copper planters in the shapes of a variety of animals, and a selection of other home goods.

“I call this shopping for good,” Mrs. Schecter said. “We’ve been a part of a great number of our clients’ milestones throughout the years and now we’re back, offering a broader array of products with a new sense of purpose.”

In keeping with their store’s vision, the Schecters are donating a percentage of their

profits to two organizations — The Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester and Birthday Angels, based in Israel. Both organizations were chosen for their dedication to helping children. Birthday Angels provides birthday parties for children who can’t celebrate because of financial hardship. Mr. Schecter is a member of the Board of Directors of the Boys & Girls Club of Northern Westchester. “Both organizations are focused on local populations, which is where effective change starts,” he said.

For more information, call 864-1600, or visit [theaestheticsense.com](http://theaestheticsense.com)

The Aesthetic Sense is located at 222 East Main St., Mount Kisco.