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MORE
THAN A
CLASSIC

WRITTEN BY JOY FREEMAN AND PHOTOGRAPHED BY KELLI TINDALL
VENICE GULF COAST LIVING MAGAZINE

Last year, when Aimee Odette and her husband Michael Rank (below), worked to prepare the space that would become The Island Bookshop, they were delighted to meet locals who began stopping by daily to watch their progress, excitedly anticipating the store's opening. With these encounters, the realization hit them that their dream was becoming a reality. Since then, all their expectations have been far exceeded as their bookshop has become an almost magical community hub, bringing both locals, part-time residents, and visitors together through their shared love of books, reading, art, and discovery.



Aimee shares, "Michael and I love living in Venice and wanted to create a community space that would support the arts and reflect the warm spirit

of the town we love so much. We wanted it to be a place where people could meet for lively discussions and exchange ideas freely, where children could learn and explore."

As college professors, both Aimee and Michael are strong advocates of improving literacy across all age groups. She further explains that is why they have included books that cover all genres for all ages and why they have reached out to schools to create partnerships to support them directly in their classrooms and to coordinate open mic nights where students can read poems and short stories that they have written. From classics and poetry to fiction and biographies and everything in between, there is always something for everyone at The Island Bookshop, including a lightly used section where you might find a treasure for \$1 to \$10.



The Island Bookshop offers much more than books. If you look up along all the walls, you will find a gallery of local artists' work that is there not only for your pleasure but is available for purchase. Just ask, and Aimee or Michael, who are always ready to answer questions or help you, will fill you in on the artist. Additionally, the bookshop hosts a spirited book club and Aimee notes that there is talk of starting another. She says that people particularly enjoy visits by authors and guest lecturers that spark question-and-answer sessions and discussions.

She points out, "There's something about a neighborhood bookshop that you just can't find in a warehouse or big commercial setting. We have tried to create a peaceful, comfortable



atmosphere that invites you to browse, ask questions, have a chat, relax, have a seat, enjoy the art, and read. I like to say that it's just like "Old Florida" because it's about a special feeling that can't quite be put into words."

The Island Bookshop is just like the town of Venice...unique, charming, friendly, relaxed, and inviting you to stay for a while.

For more information about this advertorial, call Aimee Odette and Michael Rank at The Island Bookshop at 941.416.5511 or log on to TheIslandBookshop.com. Located in The Merchants of Venice building at 206 West Miami Avenue on Venice Island, The Island Bookshop is open 10 a.m.—5 p.m. Mon., Wed., Thurs., and Sat., 10 a.m.—6 p.m. Tues. and Fri., and noon—5 p.m. Sun. Ample parking is available in the adjoining parking lot.

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