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Family



LORI AND OLIVIA RUNNFELDT

Affair

LORI AND OLIVIA RUNNFELDT ARE THE MOTHER-DAUGHTER DUO BEHIND ECLECTIC MONTECITO BOUTIQUE TRUE LOVE ALWAYS

BY Alexandra Lee | PHOTOGRAPHY Kelly Fajack

On any given day, a casual jaunt along Coast Village Road predicts stopping at a few Montecito mainstays. A coffee and croissant at Breeòsh, a burger at The Honor Bar, or, on a particularly remarkable afternoon, a Lucky's extra-dirty martini. Perhaps you'll dip into quintessential boutiques like Angel, to freshen up those white linens you'll be living in all summer

long. Be informed, however, that there's a new kid on the block—and if it hasn't already, this eclectic collection of "favorite things" is about to become a permanent fixture in your usual rotation. At True Love Always, you may run into Lori, with her signature blonde pixie cut, or her eldest daughter Olivia, if she's taking a break from scouting out fashion shows in New York City.

Should you not fall in love with their collection of Italian cashmere scarves and slouchy suede bags right off the bat, then it will surely be the story of a mother and daughter pursuing a lifelong dream that'll win you over—and, the heartfelt symbolism behind what, exactly, is *true love always*.

This eclectic, personality-rich haven of treasures for the inspired Montecito woman is helmed by Lori and Olivia Runnfeldt, owner and assistant buyer, respectively. Hailing originally from the charming San Francisco-adjacent community of Tiburon, California, the Runnfeldt family of five switched their home base for the hills of Montecito come pandemic-era. As a former interior designer and project manager who'd just put her finishing touches on their remodeled chateau, Lori was stuck for ways in which to further pursue her creative itch. "Jeff [my husband] was driving up Coast Village Road and saw the space was for rent. He's like, 'Lori's always wanted to do something like this. I'm going to find out about it,'" she says.

Long story short, TLA Goods officially opened its doors in June 2022, celebrating its one year anniversary on the Montecito thoroughfare last month. Lori defines it as a "favorite things" type of store—as in, your favorite leather jacket that'll last the next 20 years. Your collection of favorite statement rings. Your authentic suede bag that's traveled the world over by your side. Combing the shelves, you'll encounter ostrich feather tops, a rainbow of Italian cashmere scarves, furry knit bucket hats, throw pillows from Turkey. The boutique orders only in small quantities, making everything feel like a collector's item you've got to get your hands on before it's truly gone.

"The both of us, for years, have been thinking Montecito needs something new, fresh and different," Olivia explains. "We love the stores on

Coast Village, but TLA is a different option for people who are there all the time."

In very Lori fashion, the TLA aesthetic heavily aligns with her own personally heterogenous taste, drawing on her own world travels and experience as an interior designer—especially, as one who was heavily involved in the process of curating her own home. "We live in what you would call a French chateau, it was built in the 1930s. I didn't want to take away from the era, but at the same time, I had to bring my style," she says. What it wound up as, in her words, is a space that's very *un-stuffy*. "I think if you live your life authentically, you walk into someone's home and you want to see their personality and where they've been," she says. "Instead of walking into a home that looks like it was torn out of a catalog," Olivia adds. "That's what the store is, too."

When Lori first started curating the boutique, it was simply a collection of pieces she loved most—not, necessarily, what customers would buy. A lifetime of travels with her husband and children informs the store's cosmopolitan aesthetic, and it's one that embraces breaking the rules with mix-and-match colors, patterns, textures, and even gender roles, meant to introduce people to new ways of looking at fashion and home decor. "I started with, 'What do I love? What have I loved over the years? What do I want to share with people?'" Lori says. "I had to get away from who my target audience is. It's sort of like, my target audience will find me, right?"

That's where Olivia comes in. Representing a youthful demographic and with a keen eye for trends, she brings a fresh perspective to the store's already-diverse collection. As assistant buyer, Olivia overlaps with Lori in almost every line of business, running their social media and



consistently collaborating behind-the-scenes on fresh ideas. “We’re definitely in constant contact,” she jokes. Being based full-time in New York, she offers the leg-up advantage of access to fashion shows and fresh releases, benefitting TLA’s search for the eclectic. “I love the idea that people can come into the store and find something unique, that they’re not going to see when they go back to LA or are walking around day to day,” she says.

A recent Milan buying trip exemplifies the duo’s dedication to sourcing one-of-a-kind pieces from niche, small-production, non-name brand designers. “The origins of the store always had an element of travel and things that Lori loved from all over, so this was exciting to do that purposefully,” says Olivia. You get the feeling that you’re spending autumn in Milan while browsing their Italian cashmere scarves, or traipsing through Istanbul with their handcrafted Turkish pillows. “It makes you travel the world without leaving Montecito,” Lori says. While we’d all love a shopping trip in Italy, you can save the plane ticket and rest assured you’ll discover those worldly treasures right here in our own backyard.

As for the unconventional dynamics of a mother-daughter run business? Lucky for us, they love it. “When I tell people that I work with and for my mom, people who have good relationships with their mom are like, ‘Oh, that’s so cool!’ Some are like ‘Why would you want to?’” Olivia laughs. “It’s just not something that ever concerned me. It’s fun! We have similar style and taste and ways of doing things, so it’s an easy collaboration.” After moving to New York to work in fashion, doing freelance styling jobs and events at a fashion company, joining her mom’s clothing store as assistant buyer seemed like an obvious next step.

“It really has been a family affair,” Lori embellishes. “Working with Olivia has been wonderful, and it’s lovely too because there’s that automatic trust.” Owning a boutique together has been somewhat of a lifelong dream come true for the duo. “When we were in Tiburon, and we’d see a store had closed, we were always like ‘We could open that.’ And it was just a passing comment, but it always was such a fun idea to me, and I studied entrepreneurship in college,” says Olivia. “I always wanted to start something on my own, and getting to watch her do that is a great learning experience for both of us. It’s been so cool to get to figure it out together and be a part of the team.”

That doesn’t mean the process of business-building hasn’t been without its challenges. “If you haven’t done it before, it’s like walking in the dark. But she’s a problem solver,” Olivia says of the matriarch. Lori adds, “I knew once we were open, it’s gonna happen. It’s sort of like ‘If you build it, they will come.’” And come they have—TLA even hosted a clothing pop-up at the Rosewood Miramar Beach’s esteemed Miramar Club last November, less than six months after their hard opening.

So, what’s the real Runnfeldt definition of *true love always*? Lori, self-admittedly, has a penchant for naming things, whether it be children, cars, dogs, et cetera, but she admits this was a tough one. After stalling on what to name her long-awaited boutique, it came almost divinely one day as Lori and her youngest daughter, Alli, watched their favorite show together. “In one episode, there was something painted on a door that kind of looked like a carving on a tree, and it said ‘True Love Always.’ I was like pause it, pause it...that’s it! That’s the name of the store.” For her, the name needed to have significance, and not only is this one meaningful because of the connection to her daughter, but because “true love always is what I was trying to convey with the opening of this boutique.” It’s all of her loves wrapped up in one—three strong daughters, a supportive family, travel, a collection of favorite things gathered from across the globe.

Browsing their website, you’ll encounter this motto: “Wherever you roam, there’s True Love Always.” To Lori, it’s a sentiment that TLA will, quite literally, always have your back—because clothes are so much more than items you put on your body. They’re a vehicle of sentimental value, a medium of memories; whether it be what you wore on your honeymoon, dressed your first child in, or what accompanied you on that once-in-a-lifetime journey around the world. The value of those long-lasting heirlooms compounds over time, rendering them priceless at the end of the day.

“Everything we do really boils down to love. It’s where you love to go, what makes you feel happy, and Montecito is a happy place for us,” says Lori. “It’s about loving what you do, bringing what you love to people, and sticking to what your conviction is. Which is, you know, True Love Always!” On that note, if you ever feel like you’re lacking in a little love, or have let that conviction go fuzzy, you know exactly where to find it.*

