

Vintage Shopping Guide

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Meet Jim Buckley,

founder of The Clothing Warehouse.

I first heard about The Clothing Warehouse about two years ago when I first started the Vintage Shopping Guide. I was listing their current stores in Atlanta and had spoken to one of their managers who was telling me about their very interesting wholesale business. At the time, that was a concept I had never heard of. When they called to tell me they were opening a store in NYC I just had to be there and meet the owners. They are all such a great group of people and they are doing something in the vintage business that no one else is doing. I decided I had to interview the founder Jim because he has such a different approach to the vintage business.---MSR

Little tots loves vintage too...

I've been into fashion longer than I can remember. There are pictures of me wearing suits on the playground at 5 and 6 years old. Vintage was a natural progression when I was old enough to get to the stores on my own. I liked the original styles and affordability. I'd always worked for myself while growing up and in college, so when I decided to get serious about a business I naturally gravitated to fashion and vintage. The vintage business is relatively easy to get into and I always liked the idea of traveling and looking for clothing.

Finding a great match...

I started the business on my own in 1992 and had 3 stores when I met my current sister in law and business partner, Erin Faulman. Erin had a great personality and sense of style and fit right in as a salesperson at our main store in Little 5 Points in Atlanta. After 5 years spent working the floor and being promoted to manager, we worked out a deal where she could buy into the business. She now owns half of that Atlanta store and has a share in the wholesale business, franchise business, and all corporate stores. She has been an invaluable business partner and a great friend.



Jim Buckley - founder

www.theclothingwarehouse.com

Mo Bunnel was a good friend, who was a very successful HR consultant for a big firm in Atlanta, and was disenchanted with the corporate world. He approached me about franchising the Clothing Warehouse in 2005. After many meetings and many drinks we finalized a plan where Mo would partner up in the franchise business, wholesale business, and future corporate stores. He brings a different mentality to our small business that enables us to move ahead quicker and more efficiently. We're lucky to have him, and he, Erin and I make a great team.

Simple concepts...

We try to be different from most vintage stores and carry a lot of each item in the store and cater to a wider market than just vintage aficionados. I believe vintage should be worn 1 or 2 pieces at a time along with other contemporary items. At most of our stores there are 1500 dresses at any given time; 2000 t-shirts, 300 pairs of jeans, 500+ cowboy boots. We try to stock the vintage staples and make our business out of that, then add anything we can find that goes well with it and compliments the brand.

Expanding by the pound...

I bought 2 warehouses next to each other a few years ago. I intended on using the larger one for our vintage clothing wholesale business (Clothing Warehouse Wholesale), and renting out the smaller one. We quickly found out that, with the volume we were doing in the wholesale business, we were producing a ton of great vintage that wasn't necessarily good for the wholesale business but still really cool stuff. We moved it all into the warehouse next door, separated it into large mail carts and sold it for \$6 per pound. Customers dig through the bins, fill up large bags, then hang it from a hanging scale to determine the price. We attract people from all over Atlanta who enjoy paying lower prices and digging around for something they couldn't find in the stores. It's been very popular.

I started The Clothing Warehouse Wholesale back in 2000 to alleviate the problem [of keeping inventory stocked]. Now we can afford to have buyers all over looking for inventory and sending it to our facility that receives the vintage, sorts it, grades it, packages it and ships it to customers all over the world. We're lucky to have Liam McKaharay, who runs this side of the business and does a great job. He talks to every customer personally, and finds them exactly what they're looking for. He knows a ton about not only vintage, but how to retail it. He's a valuable member of the business.

My favorite part of the job...

Although I don't get to do it much anymore, I love digging through the clothes when we get a new shipment in. I also love designing a new store and working with everyone to get it open. We currently have 8 stores. The first was in Atlanta, then Jacksonville, FL, Greenville, SC, Savannah, Atlanta again, Baltimore, Chapel Hill, and the Nolita area of New York City. We have a great group of managers and employees that make it easy to come to work every day.

Mo, Erin and I all have different strengths so if one of us faces a challenge we don't particularly thrive at we pass it on to the one who does. Otherwise traveling sometimes gets old, but at least we're going to fun cities.



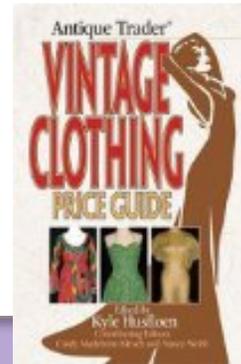
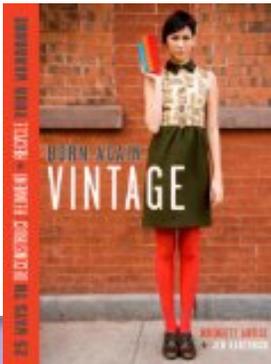
We're in the movies...

We love when we get the opportunity to do a movie, TV show, runway show, whatever. There are more opportunities for this kind of thing in Atlanta than I originally thought. Basically, anytime something is shot in the south, the costume people come to our warehouse in Atlanta. We're set up to have someone assist the costume designer during the entire shoot. We'll pull additional items, wash them and overnight them so they don't have to keep coming back to the warehouse. For "Remember the Titans", a high school football movie set in the 50's and shot in North Carolina, we had people working 24 hours a day for 3 weeks getting all of the costumes ready for the extras. Lots of fun!

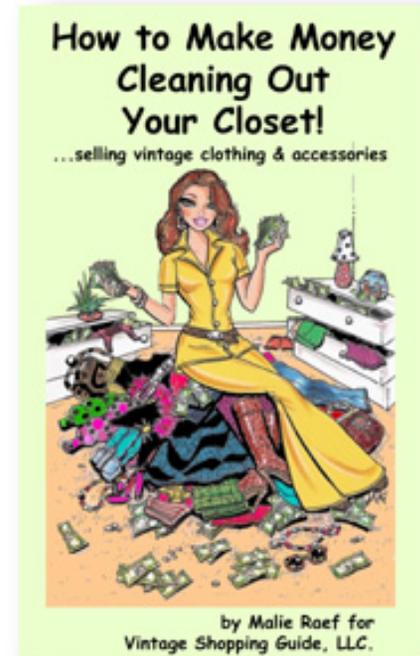
Coming soon...

More corporate stores, more franchises. We'd love to open 2 or 3 more in NYC. It's so much fun to visit and easier to have stores in such close proximity. Business has gotten better almost every year since I started back in 1992 and the last 3 years have been our strongest. We been weathering the recession without a hitch so we're going to keep expanding and keep opening stores.

***We hope that you have enjoyed reading about Jim Buckley and The Clothing Warehouse. For more information on The Clothing Warehouse please visit www.theclothingwarehouse.com. For information on their franchise opportunities please visit www.theclothingwarehouse.com/franchise.htm.



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