

POWER

by Melia Dicker
Photos by Tom Beck





LIVE

Downtown resident and Fondren business owner Suzanne Moak lives a Carrie Bradshaw existence—at affordable rents that would make a New Yorker cry.

Beauty

Standing in her closet at home in downtown Jackson, stylist Suzanne Moak holds up a pair of silver and gold platform shoes by Gwen Stefani. They have stitched seams like baseballs and look like steel-toed high heels. She kisses them. "Tell me you can't feel powerful when you wear these," she says.

This particular pair of shoes seems to represent Moak her-

"Jackson is just home."

self: an eclectic mix of elements impossible to categorize, who combines power with beauty. She is a woman who knows what she wants and knows how to look good while getting it.

This spring Moak, 36, opened S.Moak, a salon in Fondren Place. She loves the challenge of running a new business.

"I like adventure," Moak says, her green eyes sparkling.

"Learning things, seeing what's around the corner."

Living downtown has suited the Jackson native's passion for "hustle and bustle." For two and a half years, Moak has lived in a large apartment on the 11th floor of the Plaza Building on North Congress Street. She likes being able to walk to a café or to the dry cleaners, and loves taking her dogs, Gigi and Buddy, to the park across the street.

Moak helped start the Downtown Neighborhood Association of Jackson (known as "Jackson's DNA") to publicize the fact that people live downtown and to foster community

among downtown residents. Moak is JDNA's social chair and party planner, hosting regular happy hours at Tye's Restaurant and Bar, downstairs in the Plaza building.

With the help of friend and antique dealer John Graf, Moak decorated her two-bedroom, two-bathroom apartment in black and white. She likes the neutral colors because they blend

well with eclectic accents that are both modern and classic. Her living room, for example, features a mercury glass lamp from the 1940s, a sleek white vase filled with purple irises and original prints from Jackson artist Robyn Jayne Henderson on the walls.

Moak's "closet" is actually a bedroom converted into a private fashion boutique. Party dresses and flowing printed tops hang on two metal racks. Shoes of all kinds are stacked on shelves or hanging neatly in organizers, and a vanity sits in the corner.

"I like to play dress-up," Moak says.

She sees every day as a new opportunity to express her mood and the different facets of her personality: business profes-



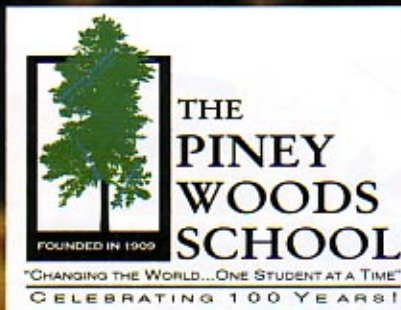
Black and white provides the backdrop for Moak's eclectic accents.

sional, social butterfly and creative artist.

The oldest of 10 kids in a blended Jackson family (and a distant relation to auto dealer Paul Moak), Moak began to cut her siblings' hair at age 14. At 21, she sold everything she had to attend the prestigious Vidal Sassoon Academy in London. She returned to the U.S. and has worked as a stylist ever since.

Moak's intention in living downtown and opening a fashionable salon is to be part of Jackson's revitalization. Though she has traveled widely and has a worldly sense of style, Moak is proud to be helping make her city as cosmopolitan as any other.

"Jackson is just home," Moak says. ■



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