



## A Hometown Hub in the Making

An inside look at Fox & Holly, one of Bucks County's leading stores in retail and hospitality

*Kerran Thompson, Merchandising Manager and Karen Thompson, Founder & President, LSL Brands*

It all began 1988 when Karen Thompson opened her first store in Peddler's Village. Thirty-five years later she has built some of the area's most recognizable names in retail, brought to life through more than 10 store locations along the East Coast: Lace Silhouettes Lingerie, Cotton Company, Sunflowers, Village Outfitters and, most recently, Fox & Holly (F&H). The retail store came to fruition in 2017 as a seasonal holiday pop-up in Peddler's Village. Then, the retail brand was reinvented through one of Thompson's biggest undertakings in her career: She opened a pop-up, boutique department store in the big-box setting of the old Bon Ton location in the Doylestown Shopping Center. It quickly won the hearts of the community and continued to stay open due to popular demand until 2020, when Thompson was forced to close the doors during the pandemic government shutdown. She eventually reopened F&H in Peddler's Village where it remains open today and continues to be a hometown shopping hub for the local community. Karen Thompson sat down with me for an inside look at her Fox & Holly journey:

### Why did you decide to open a holiday-themed pop-up in 2017?

I love Christmas in Peddler's Village—it's so magical. I love seeing the excitement in people as they enjoy the Village with their families. It makes me so happy to see them make new memories and traditions.

### Where did you come up with the store name 'Fox & Holly'?

It was a combination of two thoughts. Foxes are one of my favorite animals, and Bucks County has a lot of red fox in the area. I also had the opportunity to live in one of the most stunning farm homes in Bucks County. It's now the Inn at Fox Briar Farm. I liked the idea of having 'holly' in the name to represent the holiday season, since F&H started as a holiday pop-up. I put the two concepts together and loved how it sounded.

### How did Fox & Holly evolve from a small holiday pop-up to a full-size, boutique department store?

The Doylestown Shopping Center had been home to our community's department store for decades. First, it was Hess's in 1959, and in 1994 it became Bon Ton. When Bon Ton announced its closure in 2018, the news was felt throughout our community. It represented so much more than just a place to shop. My family and I had shopped there for years just like so many others. People even started leaving flowers, cards and notes outside of the store once it closed. I knew it wouldn't be easy, but I wanted to give the community their department store back.

### What was it like opening a 26,000 square-foot department store as opposed to the smaller boutique settings you were used to?

It was so fun working together with my team... coming up with new ideas, brands, and visuals and to push the limits once again to entertain and maintain a shopping tradition. We had the store ready to open—from renovations to acquiring fixtures and new product—in six weeks. It was crazy! I couldn't have done it without my amazing team.

### How did it feel to have to close the F&H department store pop-up location in the Doylestown Shopping Center during the height of the pandemic?

It was a very difficult decision. I was so sad to have to close the pop-up location. Realizing 26,000 square feet might not be the easiest to navigate during a worldwide pandemic, I had to look at all options to create something new again...something, again, unique. I wanted to create a new wave of a boutique department store, filled with the brands our guests love. I have always believed that, when one door closes, another door opens, and when I walked into the new Peddler's Village space that in the past I loved as Left Bank Home and Village Flower Shop, I had a vision... a multilevel shopping experience.

### How would you describe F&H today?

Like a fine wine—it just gets better with age! I think the space in Peddler's Village where F&H is today really fits the store's personality. The men's department is inside an old solarium—I don't think



I have ever seen a clothing store in such a unique setting like that before. The split-level aspect of the store also allows us to curate special shopping settings throughout the store. Most recently, we expanded our shoe salon in the lower-level of the store. The goal was to create a department-style store in a boutique setting that was socially engaging, inspirational, and offers a one-of-a-kind, multigenerational shopping experience. I always like to say that I am not just in the retail industry but the hospitality business as well.



**FOX & HOLLY**



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