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Media Release

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Jade Celebrates Five Fashionable Years

Rockford Boutique Continues to Bring Big City Style to West Michigan

Rockford, Mich., Aug. 12, 2008---Jade arrives at its fifth anniversary this month, still aglow and thriving as owner Julie Cronkright envisioned it would be when she dared to pursue her dream of opening a quaint store that would be truly unique.

“At the beginning of 2002, I was working as a hair stylist and wanted a career change,” said Cronkright. “About that same time, local research and consensus were revealing a demand for more women’s clothing options in Rockford – that’s where the idea for Jade was born.”

This contemporary women’s boutique nestled in the charm of downtown Rockford at 17 Squires St. is a mere 10 minutes north of Grand Rapids and specializes in women’s clothing, jewelry, handbags, shoes and extraordinary gift items. Featured designer apparel lines include Rock and Republic, Sweet Pea, Citizens of Humanity, Michael Stars, True Religion and BCBGeneration.

Anniversary festivities and specials occur at Jade the weekend of Aug. 21-23 and include discounts, free gifts, food and more. Cronkright will showcase Jade’s new fall collection during the celebration.

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“The response to Jade has been incredible these past five years,” said Cronkright. “From day one the boutique’s atmosphere and offerings have resonated with a wide range of people. Most of our customers are women in their 20’s to 40’s, but we’ve enjoyed a clientele of fashionable women anywhere from 16 to 60 years of age who love coming in to see the new items that arrive daily.”

But Cronkright also recalls her challenges along the catwalk, so to speak.

“It’s hard when you’re just starting a retail store because you don’t fully know who your most loyal customers will be. I have tried very hard to buy items that I believe will make a woman look and feel her best, while being mindful of price points.”

“I also remember how in the fall of 2002, I went door to door in the Rockford shopping district, hoping for someone who would sell me their building.”

On that same day, she found an interested seller and had the building for Jade under a purchase contract within 48 hours. After ten months of renovation, Jade opened its doors at its current location. The boutique’s first inventory selection, which Cronkright thought would last four months, was sold within seven weeks and she had to make an impromptu trip to New York for more merchandise. By 2006, Jade’s building space was doubled to accommodate additional product variety and fitting rooms.

“That expansion allowed us to take the store to the next level,” said Cronkright. “I was able to offer West Michigan’s first Denim Bar as well as add several new product lines including baby, swimwear, home accents, novelty pet items and a more diverse selection of jewelry.”

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Jade currently occupies 2,400 square feet in a 100-year-old building alongside the Rogue River. In keeping with the appeal of downtown Rockford's shopping district, Jade's vintage-design building features exposed, distressed-looking brick, a 25-foot vaulted wood ceiling with chandelier lighting, a wrought iron gate, a spiral staircase, a terrace overlooking the river, an early 1900s fireplace mantle, and custom made furniture and fixtures.

"Over the next five years I plan to expand our private buying parties, the Jade private label clothing line, and continue to offer great items at reasonable price points with excellent customer service," adds Cronkright. "I'm humbled by the tremendous customer support for Jade's success."

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Editorial Accessories/ Additional Information:

Julie Cronkright, Owner of Jade, was honored as a winner of the 2007 Business Leaders Under 40 award presented by the Business Review Western Michigan.

Jade has been featured in numerous publications including Lucky magazine, Grand Rapids Magazine, Women's Lifestyle and the West Michigan Business Review.

Store hours are Monday through Friday 10 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.