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Sayville boutique's vintage prom celebrates individuality



Hannah Schneider, 19, of Flanders, and Cecilia Young, 21, of Centereach, attend the fifth annual Paper Doll Vintage Boutique Prom in Sayville on Sunday, May 21, 2017. Credit: Jennifer A. Uihlein

By Marlo Jappen

Special to newsday.com

Updated May 28, 2017 8:41 AM

At Paper Doll Vintage Boutique in Sayville, guests attending the store's annual prom channeled the past with pin curls, patterned suits, top hats and live jazz.

The event, held on May 21, also marked Paper Doll's five-year anniversary. Although it was open to all ages, many teens and young adults were drawn there because of the store's environment.

"We embrace uniqueness," owner Dominique Maciejka said. "Some of my customers don't feel comfortable around their peers but feel comfortable around the store."

Paper Doll Vintage Boutique sells thrifted clothing as well as pieces which are retro reproduction, or "made to look vintage."

Last year, Maciejka opened an additional store in Huntington and her new gift store, Paper Doll Curiosity Shoppe, debuted in Patchogue earlier this month.



Alex Pittari, 16, center, from Sayville, was voted prom king at the annual Paper Doll Vintage Boutique prom in Sayville on May 21, 2017. Credit: Jennifer A. Uihlein

Hannah Schneider, 21, of Flanders, represented the 1980s with vibrant blue eye shadow and an aqua-colored gown with lace and frills, which cost her 50 cents from the Salvation Army in Ronkonkoma.

“At my high school prom, I felt like I had to dress more muted down,” she said. “I can express myself more here and go all out.”

Cecelia Young, 19 and also of Centereach, wore an outfit inspired by the 1982 movie "Blade Runner."

“I’m so happy that people understood the reference,” said Young, who enjoys cosplay -- dressing up as characters from movies or comics -- in her free time.

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Julia Carusa, 18, of Bayport, chose not to attend her high school senior prom. She said none of her classmates wear old-fashioned clothing.

“I like this scene better,” Carusa said.

Sueey Gutierrez, 30, from Massapequa, takes a moment to pose during the 5th Annual Paper Doll Vintage Boutique Prom in Sayville on Sunday, May 21st. Credit: Jennifer A. Uihlein

Alex Pittari calls himself an “old soul.” He wore stage makeup and a suit inspired by the drag scene of the 1980s and '90s in Manhattan.

“You can let go and have a really fun time without having to think about anyone’s opinion,” Pittari said.



He and Erika Powers, both 16 and from Sayville, agreed that they would have more fun at this event than they would at their own high school prom.

“It’s cool to be with like-minded people,” Powers said. “You get to see other people being unique and embracing themselves.”

Maciejka says she relates to her regulars because she and her best friend referred to themselves as the “immaculate others” when they were in high school.

“We were perfect just the way we were even though we were totally different from everyone else,” Maciejka said. “I like to find other people like that.”

Toward the end of the prom, she announced the winners for “prom king” and “prom queen” based on the applause each candidate received for their vintage outfits.

Pittari beamed when he was announced as king.

“Be yourself and people will love you for it,” he said.

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