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**NEW: Shop Local campaign popular**

By Michael Harthorne

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SHOPPERS KEEP IT LOCAL. Photo by Michael Harthorne

Almost 100 people lined up at Camellion Design Dec. 3 on Ballard Avenue to get into the debut Sit and Sip event.

Sit and Sip and Shop Local/Think Local are encouraging shoppers to stay in Ballard and support local independent merchants this holiday season and beyond.



SHOPPERS KEEP IT LOCAL: Piper Salogga, owner of Natural Balance, addresses the nearly 100 people crammed into Camellion Design on Ballard Avenue Dec. 3 during the debut Sit and Sip event. Sit and Sip and Shop Local/Think Local are encouraging shoppers to stay in Ballard and support local independent merchants. Photo by Michael Harthorne

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On a chilly night in December, nearly 100 people lined up along Ballard Avenue, some an hour early, to support local businesses and strive for a more environmentally sustainable holiday.

The Sit and Sip event, held Dec. 3 at Camellion Design, is the first of what hosts Piper Salogga and Sara Eizen hope will be a quarterly event focusing on sustainability and shopping locally.

"We are so thrilled," said Salogga, owner of Natural Balance Home and Office. "We had no idea there would be a line for an hour."

Sit and Sip comes during a plethora of efforts to support independent businesses in the area, including Sonic Boom owner Jason Hughes' Shop Local/Think Local campaign.

At Sit and Sip, guests were given gift bags full of goods and services from Ballard businesses, coupons for local businesses and the chance to win a raffle for more locally-sold products. There were also green holiday ideas from Camellion Design such as recycled aluminum ornaments and cards made of 100 percent post-consumer waste.

Salogga said she hoped the event would convince more people to come back to Ballard to do their Christmas shopping.

It's important that shoppers remember local businesses during the holidays because there are many innovative merchants in Ballard that need more support than larger stores, she said.

Eizen, owner of Nest, said it is especially important to support independent local stores during the current tough economic times.

"It seems like there's so much doom and gloom out there," she said. "It was nice to spend time with people who had such positive energy."

The next Sit and Sip event will be a home accessory swap Feb. 28.

Michael Harthorne may be reached at 783-1244 or michaelh@robinsonnews.com.

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