

## Hello Tallulah's Origin Story

Vintage Boutique: San Antonio, TX  
Opened November 2017

Written by owner, Kristina Uriegas-Reyes

Hello Tallulah is a personal labor of love, coming full circle from thrift store adventures to entrepreneurship. I've always had a clear brand and vision, but timing is everything. I had to fly away before I could come back and create this business. My style, my experience, and my supportive family have come together serendipitously to create a vintage shop that has been thoroughly embraced by the neighborhood this past year.

Since I can remember, I have loved vintage clothing. The uniqueness, the history, and the colors all evoke a feeling of self-expression that, as a teen, I simply adored. I went to an all-girls Catholic high school, which meant uniforms, the bane of my style existence! I spent my younger years scouring thrift shops, looking for something unique to wear. I shopped at a local vintage boutique, where I experimented with my style and co-created a blog dedicated to street fashion in my hometown of San Antonio, TX.

As the years passed, my style evolved, as did my dreams. Owning a vintage shop was a glimmer in the back of my mind, a fleeting fancy that seemed impossible at the time. I put it to the back of my mind and locked it away. Instead, I focused on another dream. I honed my skills as a writer and, after college, headed to New York City. I dreamt of getting a byline from my favorite publications, such as BUST Magazine and xoJane. Even then, I craved entrepreneurship and scratched that itch by starting a fashion blog that concentrated on my personal style.

Throughout my time in NYC, I was published numerous times, attended Fashion Week; and worked in marketing and social media. I also modeled for plus-size brands, styled photo shoots, and worked at countless vintage shops. Each shop was different from the next. From fancy and high-end to quirky and inexpensive, these stores taught me the things I liked and didn't like about each business. I spent seven years in NYC, unknowingly collecting experience that would eventually propel my new business.

The writing industry has changed drastically the past few years. It's harder than ever to make a living and get your name out there. I realized I wasn't where I wanted to be in my career and I needed a change. I wasn't happy and my mind drifted to the fantasy of owning a vintage shop. It felt like a fantasy but, in hindsight, it was just a lack of education. After a six-week course in business, it felt a lot more doable. I knew New York City was bursting at the seams with vintage shops, but not my hometown. Brooklyn appreciated my eccentric style, but was Texas ready for it? I decided to find out! I made the drastic decision to move back home and put the wheels in motion.

Cut to my adorable rescue pup, Tallulah. I rescued her five years ago and named her after 1940's Hollywood actress, Tallulah Bankhead. My pup is my best friend and my shop's namesake. The idea was that she could greet customers and they would exclaim, "Hello Tallulah!" as they walked in. I liked that the name was unique, personal and evoked a vintage vibe. I started creating a website, social media handles, and contacted a designer to create my

logo. I didn't know if having a storefront was truly feasible, but I believed in the brand and I knew it was strong.

I got back to San Antonio, not knowing where to start and not knowing if I made the right choice by leaving a dynamic city like New York. Just as I got to Texas, confused about my next step, an opportunity fell into my lap. A friend told me about an upcoming vintage expo. I inquired, paid the fee and, just like that, I was a vendor. I was in business! I gathered the vintage items I had collected over time and set up for the two-day event. As small as my space, the whole event had me exhilarated! The logo, the clothes, and the setup was my vision and people seemed to enjoy it. I imagined the things I would do if only I had a real space!

Over the next few months, my mom helped me enter a variety of fairs. I started to build a following and a name for myself as the girl with the pink hair. Vending had its ups and downs, but my mom and I kept our eyes peeled for a permanent location. My mom was key to this part of my business. She was supportive, encouraging and incredibly helpful. She has always supported my dreams and was there each step of the way as I learned to adjust to a new city, one that had grown so much since I left.

During this time, I started going to the Small Business Development Center at the University of San Antonio in Texas. I didn't have a permanent location for my store, but I wanted to be educated. There were so many things to learn and it felt overwhelming at times. I started taking individual seminars of all kinds, all which helped me understand the ins and outs of small business. I was paired with a fantastic business advisor named Crystal Darby, who helped me with every detail along the way.

After building a small brand and educating myself specifically about business in Texas, things started to fall into place. A local business owner of a pizza place I frequent spotted an empty location down the street. He helped me get in touch with the landlord and position myself into this open space. The area was called Deco District, which felt like a "sign" that the neighborhood was primed and ready for a vintage shop!

The space was a fixer upper, previously a salon, which meant that there were open pipes and a few rough spots. My family came together in a way that still touches my heart. Immediate family and cousins I hadn't seen in years came to help me clean the space and paint it. I used pastel colors and whimsical accessories to create the store of my dreams. People used to walk into my NYC apartment and exclaim that it looked like a store. I wanted to recreate that feeling by putting together a colorful, homey atmosphere that was the ultimate happy place. I hope that I've accomplished that!

The grand opening for my vintage boutique, Hello Tallulah, was November 16th, 2017. It was a grand success as my family, friends and new customers filled the store with exuberance and lovely vibes. Since my opening, I've used my space to bring people together and support fellow business women.

As a body positivity advocate and a former plus-size model, sizing is at the forefront of my mind, as I curate my collection. It's important that I carry a variety of sizes. Everyone should have the opportunity to feel fabulous in something unique. Vintage fashion is my true passion and I hope my shop makes people happy. I pick each item individually and I aim to create a welcoming wonderland of whimsy to help people express themselves and push their style boundaries. I

want vintage to feel special, but accessible. I carry affordable, easy dresses that you can throw on and go. I also create retro jewelry that is sparkly and fun.

My one year is fast approaching and it still feels unreal to be my own boss and bring my brand to life. I couldn't have done this alone and I'm so grateful to each and every person that has helped me fulfill my dream. The outpouring of love and support has been amazing. Each day brings something new and the options are endless!

Hello Tallulah is located at 1912 Fredericksburg Rd, San Antonio, Tx 78201.