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POT & BOX COMING TO DETROIT

By [Erica Hobbs \(/erica\)](#) | April 29, 2013

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PHOTO: [J. Singleton](#) (<http://wearemodeshift.org/jsingletonphoto>)

DETROIT—Scattered garbage lines the guard rail near the freeway. Broken pavement fills the parking lot long abandoned. Across the street, dilapidated Michigan Central Station dominates the skyline. Only fresh graffiti marking the brand new coat of white paint shows signs of recent life for the old service station on the corner of Michigan Avenue and 17th streets in Detroit. For many, the area is a long-forgotten part of Corktown, but for Lisa Waud, it's a vision for something beautiful.

Waud, 35, is the owner of Ann Arbor's [Pot & Box](#) (<http://potandbox.com/>) flower shop and plans to open a second Pot & Box at 2520 Michigan Ave. by the end of this year.

Pot & Box is not your typical flower shop. While the shop will contain a variety of plants, flowers, containers and supplies Waud said she wants it to be a place where people can hang out and maybe even play foosball.

"It's not just like a convenience store where you pop in and grab something," she said. "It's like this great place of plants and flowers, who doesn't love that?"



The space, about 1,000 square feet with few windows, large bay doors and a run-down

interior, is not what one would think of when picturing a shop known for greenery and light. But Waud said she loves the idea of turning a space that used to service cars into something entirely different full of flowers and colors. And her plans are not only for the inside. Waud said she plans to repave the parking area around the building and create an outdoor space to hold weddings and other events.

"I just love to picture people coming down, like, 'Where is this place? Where is this wedding? And seeing this tent all lit up with the train station and everything."

Waud's inspiration comes from [Flora Grubb Gardens](http://www.floragrubb.com/) (<http://www.floragrubb.com/>) in San Francisco, a flower shop she described as being in the middle of nowhere but a verdant space for up-and-coming artists full of greenhouses, plants and flowers.

"Everyone's happy and drinking coffee and buying plants and flowers...that is exactly what I want it to look like," she said. "I want it to just be this place where people come and buy flowers, but it's a part of the conversation."

Waud, a Petoskey native, studied horticulture at Michigan State University and has worked with plants all over the country. It was when she was working with tropical plants in Hawaii when she realized she missed Michigan. Waud moved to Ann Arbor and waited tables for a couple years before opening the original Pot & Box in her basement and eventually her own shop in 2010.

While she said she loves Ann Arbor, Waud said she has been drawn to Detroit in the past few years. She said she started visiting the city to attend Tiger's games or shows and eventually made friends with other small business owners in the area.

"I just developed this amazing network, and I just wanted to be here more and more and then it was obvious that I should move here," she said.

That network includes Peter Bailey, founder of [Two James Spirits](http://twojames.com/) (<http://twojames.com/>) distillery that plans to open across the street from Pot & Box in early June.



Waud credited Bailey as the connector between her shop and the more populated area of Corktown, which she hopes will draw more traffic to her end.

Bailey said he hopes their two shops will work together to create more vitality in Corktown and said Waud was a great advocate of Detroit.

"It's a great opportunity to highlight the beauty of Detroit, the unspoken beauty of Detroit," he said. "There are likeminded people who do find it beautiful and unique. I think it's going to help change the reputation of Detroit as well."

James Xavier Slade, owner of [Xavier's 20th Century Furniture](http://www.x20th.com/) (<http://www.x20th.com/>) shop next door to Pot & Box said he, too, is excited about his new neighbor. Slade said he has owned his shop on Michigan Ave. for 17 years but credits his online store for the bulk of his business. He said he is excited to get more foot traffic in their area and hopes the change will clean up the neighborhood.

"I'm thinking with a little bit more population down here we might be able to curtail some of this destruction of our neighborhood," he said. "All this writing on people's things has got to stop."

Though there is still a ways to go before Detroit's Pot & Box is up and running, Waud said she will open a pop-up shop from May – July downtown which she described as a mini

version of the full-service shop. Waud said she also recently purchased an ice cream truck and plans to drive around town offering flowers at different locations around the city.

For Waud, the shop is more than a business but a way to interact with the community.

"It's how you live in the world," she said. "It gives you a reason to chat people up. It's just so darn heart-warming, and I get to do what I love."

Want to learn more about Pot & Box. Attend their meet & greet at D:Hive May 2 (<http://on.fb.me/15TfH0L>)!



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