



# *Chaloner & Company*

IN DOWNTOWN ADRIAN, LAURA WANKE ENSURES THE LEGACY OF ONE OF MICHIGAN'S OLDEST CONTINUALLY OPERATING BUSINESSES

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Photos and Story by Phil Eich, Storyville Social, as part of the Michigan Main Street Story Series

The original store on the first floor of the Chaloner & Company building was established in 1874, making it one of Michigan's oldest continuously operating businesses. The Chaloners ran the store until they sold it in the mid-1970s, when local residents continued to keep it running, and the current owners felt a strong desire to revive it and contribute to the revitalization of downtown Adrian.

The project had two key driving forces behind it. One of the owners was passionate about preserving the historical significance of the store and wanted to bring it back to life. The other owner had a deep interest in cigars; not only envisioning it as a cigar shop, but also the best cigar lounge in the state of Michigan. So

they decided to rehabilitate both the building we are in, but also the one adjacent to it, a process of remodeling and renovating that took a total of two years.

Today, we have a beautiful place with soft leather chairs, mahogany, and brick—but the vibe here is 'Come relax, come as you are.' You can come in wearing jeans and a t-shirt. You can come in as a plumber or come in as a lawyer. It's a place where great conversations can happen because pretenses go out the window, and people can just be who they are.

We aim for high-end hospitality, and we have a very high selection of bourbons, scotches, and whiskies. But if you want to come in for a water just to relax, that's OK, too! We have so many people



who use this place as an office away from their office, or an extension of their home because they feel comfortable being here.

The historical significance of the store has undeniably played a significant role in attracting people to our establishment. Hearing a 75-year-old woman tell you about the time her grandfather brought her here as a kid—you just don't get to hear those stories every day, and the stories that get told on the first floor are amazing.

In terms of community impact, our presence has drawn people from various cities such as Ann Arbor, Detroit, Toledo, and even from farther locations like

Chicago and Cleveland. We have been published a few times in Cigar Aficionado, so people read about this cool lounge in the 'middle of nowhere,' want to see it, and then come here and say, 'Let's see what else Adrian has to offer.'

And 100%, Adrian's greatest strength is its people. We have professors and students of various backgrounds from three universities living alongside people who have been living here for 50 years or more. It's a beautiful blend of backgrounds and cultures that you wouldn't normally see in a similar-sized city.

-Laura Wanke of Chaloner & Company, Adrian, Michigan

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# Michigan Main Street Story Series



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