

ST. ARMANDS CIRCLE INTRODUCES Leaping Lizards

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Leaping Lizards began on St. Armands Circle in 2001, opened by a local woman balancing a new business and a growing family. When Leaping Lizards first appeared on St. Armands Circle, it quickly became one of those places people remembered. Bright, playful, and full of personality, it felt less like a shop and more like a happy pause in the day. And then, it was gone—closed not because it failed, but because life asked for something different. Nearly twenty years later, Leaping Lizards is back. And this time, it returns with even more meaning behind the name. Leaping Lizards first opened its doors on St. Armands Circle at a moment of profound personal change. Its founder, Gina, was pregnant with her first child, newly married, and dreaming of owning a gift shop in her hometown—one that felt joyful, colorful, and thoughtfully curated.

She poured herself into the store, working day and night to bring her vision to life. The result was immediate and memorable. Leaping Lizards quickly became known not only for its playful name, but for its distinctive assortment, vibrant energy, and the sense of delight customers felt the moment they walked inside. But life, as it often does, shifted the path. By 2005, with two young daughters at home and family needs calling her in a different direction, she made the intentional decision to close Leaping Lizards. Motherhood came first. She stepped into a new role managing family-owned properties across

Florida and Maine—a responsibility that provided stability, flexibility, and the ability to be fully present for her girls as they grew. Leaping Lizards became a cherished chapter, fondly remembered by many, but lovingly set aside. Until time—and timing—brought it back. Nearly twenty years later, after hurricanes reshaped plans and priorities, an unexpected opportunity emerged. Her daughters, Bella and Megan, now grown and finishing college, were standing at the threshold of their own futures. Together, the three of them began talking—not just about reopening a store, but about building something meaningful, collaborative, and enduring. What started as a spark quickly became a shared decision: Leaping Lizards would return, this time as a family business shaped equally by all three women.



Today's Leaping Lizards feels both familiar and refreshed. While modern tastes influence the mix, the heart of the shop remains unchanged. The assortment is guided by instinct and joy—items Bella, Megan, and their mother, Gina, genuinely love, balanced with thoughtful attention to what customers respond to and request. Trends come and go, and sometimes circle back again, but flexibility has always been part of the formula. The result is a store that feels current without chasing the moment, playful without being fleeting.



Walking through the doors, customers are met with warmth, color, and a sense of lighthearted escape. The space is filled with small treasures meant to spark laughter—fun mugs, charming trinkets, unexpected finds that remind people shopping can be joyful rather than transactional. Every item is chosen with intention: to lift spirits, to make someone smile, to leave people feeling a little happier than when they arrived.

That sense of joy is what ties Leaping Lizards so naturally to the spirit of St. Armands Circle itself. Surrounded by independent, family-owned shops—each with its own voice and story—the Circle reflects Sarasota's character at its best.

There is pride in contributing to a place shaped by generations of visitors and locals alike, and gratitude in being part of a community that values individuality, charm, and tradition.

For those who remember the original Leaping Lizards, its return feels like a reunion. For those discovering it for the first time, it's a welcome surprise. And for the three women behind it, it represents something even deeper: a full-circle moment where family, timing, and joy meet—once again—on the Circle.