

# Travels result in specialty shop

All eyes on

# Sue Wandel

The French blew me away with their take on the whole culinary experience.

BY JULIA HANSEN  
Staff Reporter

Self-proclaimed as fun-loving, bossy, a foodie and a gypsy, Sue Wandel, owner of the specialty foods store Sugar, located on the Square, has passions other than selling, buying and cooking food.

Wandel's extraordinary life began in the suburbs of Chicago in the 1960s. After her father got a new job when she was 12 years old, she and her family moved to Los Angeles where she stayed until she was 35. In 1999 her former husband accepted a job to be a professor at Truman, so the couple uprooted from urban California to rural Missouri.

"From big old L.A. to little old Kirksville," Wandel said with a smile. "[It was] depressing. Culture shock is an understatement. ... I left a job, I left my best friends, I left my family. The first year was very difficult. ... I'm a city girl at heart — I always will be — but I appreciate the things a small town like this has to offer."

Wandel said the thing she loves most about Kirksville is the people, who are friendly, genuine, straightforward and shoot from the hip. She also said there are certain things she misses about living in a big city including museums, fairs, music and the expansive selection of restaurants.

"I would love to have back the variety of food [in Los Angeles]," Wandel said. "Just on one block where we lived there was Ethiopian, Chinese, Thai, Cuban and Mexican food. Being a foodie, I thrive on that."

After the move to Kirksville, Wandel taught preschool for a few years but always had a different career in mind. She said in her travels throughout Europe a lifelong dream came to the surface.

"I have always kept in the back of my mind, on the back burner, [the idea] of

having my own store — being a shopkeeper and developing friendships with my customers," Wandel said. "My inspiration came when we lived in Paris for three months. It opened my eyes the way the Parisians lived. Their love and appreciation of food and taking the time to enjoy a meal. The French blew me away with their take on the whole culinary experience."

Wandel said the research for her store was walking the streets of Paris and hanging out at restaurants and local shops. She said she enjoyed the friendships she developed with Parisian shop owners, the coziness of their small stores and the thoughtfully chosen foods.

When she arrived back in Missouri from France, Wandel was full of ideas for a new store in Kirksville but was scared to open it because she was afraid her dream would be ruined if the store failed, she said.

Wandel said she called her mother in Los Angeles for suggestions and advice. Wandel's mother planned a trip to come help with ideas for the store. This is when Wandel's life changed forever: On Oct. 19, 2004 Wandel's mother was killed in an accident during the trip to Kirksville.

"With her tragic death I didn't look at the world the same way — I couldn't," Wandel said. "She was my best friend. She was an inspiration for me and my sister. ... It took me about a year to just come out of shock."

Wandel said that after her mother's death, the idea of opening a store seemed silly and trivial. But she said

that through her mother's death she also gained something.

"When I lost her, I lost a lot of my bearing in the world, but through her death she gave me one of the greatest gifts — I had no fear of anything," she said. "She took away my fear. I've always been a fun-loving — if I do say so myself — free spirit, but big changes terrified me and that is not a way to live a life. Mom's death liberated me as well as my sister. So her death saved us. It made me appreciate every moment I have. That may sound cliché, but it's the truth. I am grateful for every day that is given to me. I'm kinder, softer, stronger and happier because of Mom."

Nearly a year after her mother's death, Wandel decided to open the shop she had dreamed about. Wandel said that although her mother was not physically there, she knew her mother was helping her while she prepared to open the store.

"I feel her energy telling me, 'Don't be afraid,'" Wandel said. "'I want you to live this life to the fullest, and I want you to grab it by the horns and go.' The way you fail in life is not to try. You've got to try. If you fall down or it doesn't measure up to what you thought it would be at least you gave it a try and you don't live in regret."

Sugar opened in May 2005. Wandel said she is interested in taking Sugar to the next level by making it partly into a café. She said the menu would be small and simple, with homemade food.

Apart from the expansion of Sugar's services, Wandel said she has oth-

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Sue Wandel  
Sugar Owner



Krista Goodman/Index

Sue Wandel, owner of the specialty food store Sugar, plans on taking the next step and turning the store into a small café as well.

er future plans. Next spring she plans to take her 5-year-old son on a trip to Belgrade, Serbia, where much of her family lives. Wandel's parents immigrated from Serbia in the 1960s, and when she was young she traveled to the country many times, she said. After her mother passed away, Wandel said she had little interest in visiting the country, but now that her son is older she is ready to make the trip.

"I feel in my heart that it's time to go back and reconnect," Wandel said. "[Growing up] I had an amazing experience of having one foot in my European roots and one foot in the American culture, so I benefit from both and I've kind of integrated them. I feel at home here of course, and I wouldn't live anywhere else but the U.S., but I feel [at] home in Europe. It's the best of both worlds."

# Former student pens Main Stage spooker

BY CHRIS BONING  
Staff Reporter

You've been warned: The upcoming production "A Shadow in the Dark" is not for the faint of heart.

The play, written by former student Jared Latore, features a dark tone, which means adult content like violence and sexual situations and the dissemination of complex topics like the line between sanity and insanity.

Latore describes the show as a ghost story involving a children's author who is tormented by forces he will never understand.

"It's not exactly a comedy, and it's not exactly a drama," he said. "I tried to give it a little bit of everything — I wanted something that was funny and scary and sexy and sad all in the same play."

Latore said he wrote the play after he found out last semester that theatre professor Joan Mather was having difficulty selecting a play for the theatre department's fall 2008 Main Stage season. Latore said Mather liked his script, which eventually went through several revisions and readings with feedback all around from actors and Mather herself.

"The reason I wanted to do so much work beforehand [was] because if I had approached it as a learning experience for myself, then I would be rewriting the play as the actors were doing it, and that would have been very hard on the actors," Latore said.

He added that the dark story is not biographical, although it is partially based on his respect for children's authors.

"I made [the main character] a children's author because it creates an important contrasting meta-

phor for the ending of the play," Latore said. "It becomes important that he is a children's author as opposed to a mystery novelist. The effect children's authors have is sometimes, I think, underestimated. The work that they do is popular among humans in their formative years, and that's the most influential time of a person's life. ... I think children's authors are the authors with the most impact."

Latore said "A Shadow in the Dark" is his first full-length play, although he has written short plays and screenplays prior to this piece. He added that he was ecstatic when Mather told him that she wanted to put on his play, although he experienced quite a bit of anxiety beforehand.

"Any time you show your art or any type of work to someone, you're really exposing yourself, and that makes you feel vulnerable," Latore said. "When I found out [Mather] liked it, it was very uplifting because I put myself in a fragile position and it paid off."

He added that he will be content if people who see the show take away something meaningful.

"There's a school of thought that says the author is dead and that audiences will take away their own messages from a piece of work and what the author intended is irrelevant because what makes it meaningful to them is what makes it art, not what it means to me," Latore said.

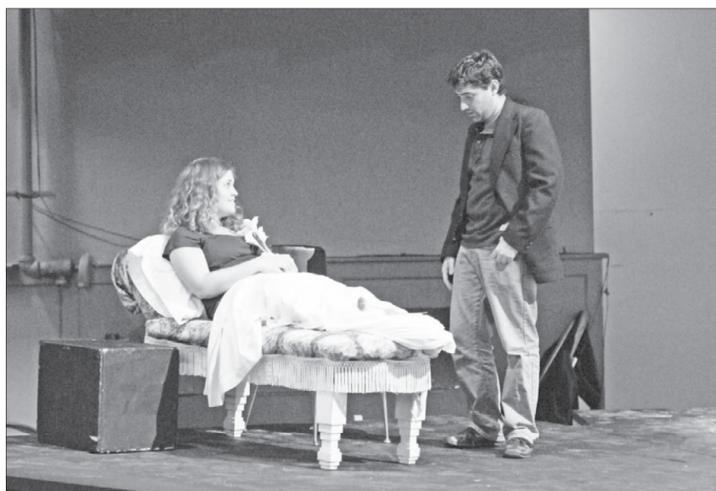
Mather, the director of "A Shadow in the Dark," said Latore's show is difficult to describe effectively.

"As we've rehearsed it, I've come to think of it as sort of a microcosm of what's going on in this man's head," Mather said. "It starts out relatively realistic and quickly becomes quite surreal."

She added that the show references previous

"I tried to give it a little bit of everything — I wanted something that was funny and scary and sexy and sad all in the same play."

Jared Latore  
Former Student



Brian O'Shaughnessy/Index

Junior Casey Scoggins and senior Aaron Chester rehearse the opening scene of "A Shadow in the Dark" Monday night in the James G. Severns theater.

Main Stage productions at Truman, including some that Latore himself appeared in, various global mythologies and even courses at the University.

Mather, who directs a Main Stage production almost every year, said she chooses shows with balanced casts and intelligent themes. She added that when Latore offered to write a play for her, she didn't think he would follow through on his promise.

"I knew that he would write, he would start it and I knew it would be clever because he is a very gifted writer," Mather said. "[But] I honestly figured I had a 50-50 chance that he wouldn't follow through to completion on it."

She said it is unusual for the theatre department to put on a Main Stage show written by a student because such productions don't always fulfill the needs of the department, such as a sufficient number of characters or good acting and design challenges. Mather added that Latore wrote with those very specifications in mind. Still, directing the show has been a challenge because of its complex-

ity, she said.

"The biggest challenge is working with the playwright sitting in the room, which I've done before," Mather said. "The show itself is dense. It refers to a lot of things that I myself need to research so I can guide the students to bring it to life."

She added that despite the subject matter, audiences, especially Truman audiences, should be able to understand "A Shadow in the Dark."

"I have a pretty high opinion of how complex we can be with a show and [how much] Truman students will be able to enjoy it," Mather said.

Freshman Sam Kyker said he plays the Man in Brown, who, among other things, torments the play's other characters.

Kyker added that his role is challenging because some of the terrible things his character does during the course of the show are difficult to understand.

"[The Man in Brown] is the embodiment of masochism at one point, and that was the biggest struggle for me being able to just let go and be incredibly ... evil," he said.

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