Omaha's Pull Too Strong to Resist

Alice Kim could and did make it in New York, New York. But she decided that Omaha was where she'd rather be.

Kim made a move in 2007 of the kind only seen in movies – she left a successful job in fashion publishing in New York to move halfway across the country, buy a home, begin her own business and start a family. Five years later, she's running a bustling little lifestyle accessories boutique known as Trocadero in the Old Market.

What was interesting is that Kim made those life-altering decisions without even seeing the city.

A native of Ohio, and raised in Buffalo and Pittsburgh, Kim lived in New York for 15 years. In January of 2007, she celebrated her tenth anniversary with InStyle magazine, at that time accessories director for the publication. A colleague passed along an article stating that if you're in the same place after ten years, you're probably stagnating and it's time to move on. "It made me think," Kim said. "I wanted to maybe be the creative director of a fashion company at that point, but I also desperately wanted to have children."

Two months later she read an article in the New York Times by Omaha native Kurt Andersen about the city's "culture club" and the renaissance movement and contributions of the Old Market. Visions of cobblestone and horse-drawn carriages in a slower-paced environment appealed to Kim.

"I had many recurring 'Omaha connections' before the move," Kim said. "I didn't put them together immediately, but over the months it eventually became too much to ignore."

She began thinking that the city not only might but would be her new home and new life. "I told myself 'What if I started a store?'" Kim said. "I'd be able to bring my child to work when I had one and would definitely have a lot less stress in my life."

Alice Kim (In her store) **Trocadero** Located in the Old Market

Convinced the move was the only choice, Kim made the plunge. She resigned from her job on Monday, May 14, 2007, flew to Omaha on Friday, bought a home on Sunday, and was in escrow on Monday.

"I was back in New York the next week and came into my office," she said. "They had held my resignation, thinking I'd change my mind. They asked 'How was Omaha?' and I replied 'Great – I bought a house.' They were absolutely shocked." Kim had found a space for her store in the Old Market during her May visit as well. "The brick walls, the high ceiling, the great size – my imagination went wild," she said. "It was absolutely perfect."

She was expecting she'd have to self-fund the business, but her accountant convinced her she could partner with First National Bank on the venture. "I'd never been in business before, but I demonstrated my experience and my knowing what would sell (from my position at the magazine)," Kim said. "I knew people trusted my taste – I was always a step ahead of the other girls in school, kind of a trend setter."

Kim drew the name Trocadero from the Place du Trocadero in Paris. "It's the site of a lot of fashion shows, with a perfect view of the Eiffel Tower," she said. "It's one of my favorite places to visit." She also found that "trocadero" meant a place of trade or an emporium. She knew her store would be a boutique with her favorite things and also feature a lounge for an exchange of ideas. The name took.

Kim signed for her space at 1208-½ Howard St. in September, and – almost unbelievably – succeeded in getting Trocadero opened within a month.

In the almost five years since the opening, Kim has also gotten married and started a family with husband Adrian – her one-year-old Annabel occasionally is with her at Trocadero. "There have been highs and lows and it's not an easy business," she says, "but I have no desire to be anywhere else. The Old Market is slower than New York, but it's nice to have time to smell the roses."