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Melanie Manning Storekeeper Inspired by her many travels as much as by her own creative energy, Manning has developed a personal philosophy of refined simplicity. From her Czechoslovakian Grandmother's kitchen in the Midwest to her adventures as a location scout in the film industry, Manning's life is a colorful canvas of exploration, passion and pure enjoyment of life's simpler offerings.

Her love of exploration has led Manning on many adventures, both near and far. As a girl she would set out on her bicycle to explore the uncharted territories of her hometown, Springfield, Illinois. Later she began to explore the larger world, hungrily learning about diverse people and customs. On her travels she seeks out local culture rather than heading for the usual tourist attractions. She has developed a penchant for the local artisan crafts and culinary delights that make each part of the world unique, be it southern Georgia or the south of France.

Photography, illustration and location scouting have all served as creative outlets for the fruits of her exploration. As a photography student at Atlanta Art Institute, Manning would wander the streets capturing candid and vivid images of city life. A colleague who appreciated her talent for uncovering out of the way places introduced her to the film industry. She soon became a respected location scout, known for ferreting out the perfect location for any story line. Professionally exploring led Manning down many a less traveled path and introduced her to people and traditions largely hidden from public view. Small Georgia towns with bustling general stores and tight knit communities appealed to her love of eras gone by, which she first developed as a child watching "Little House on the Prairie, her favorite television show.

Combining her love of travel with her creative vision, Manning has scouted the perfect location to host her latest production. Belly General Store in Virginia Highlands is the latest fruit of her artistic expression and adventurous spirit. Her vision for Belly General Store is to introduce Atlantans to the comfort foods and artisan crafts that she has discovered on her journeys both near and far. She hopes to create a space where neighbors can meet, create community and pause for a moment to enjoy the refined simplicity that is Melanie Manning's personal philosophy.