

### WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Rebranding your shop? There's much to consider.

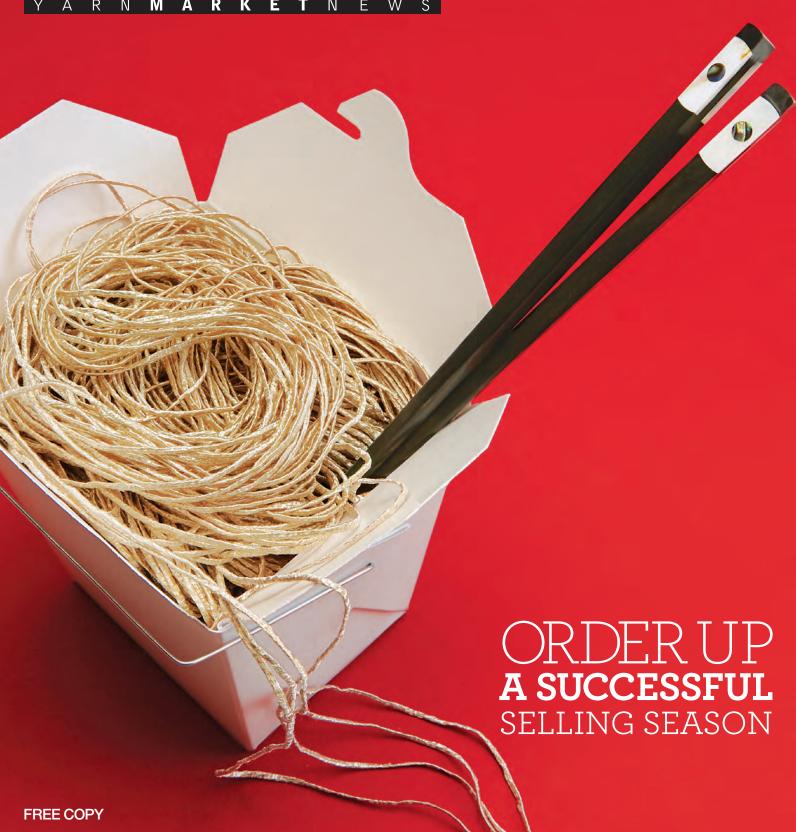
## SPRUCE IT UP

Showing off your space to best effect.

### KNOW, LIKE, TRUST

How personalized marketing can increase sales.

OCTOBER 2017





An ebook featuring 8 projects to Enchant in Deluxe Bulky Superwash





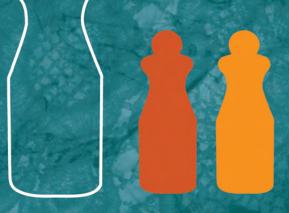
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## Getting Intimate



## When I assign articles for an issue of Yarn Market News,

I take inspiration from many different sources. A conversation at TNNA will spark an idea, an actual retail experience I've had will get me thinking, or I'll read an article on trends in the workplace. I find writers from across the country and in different areas of the industry (and a few outside the yarn world). And then, inevitably, when the articles all come in, I find there's a repeated phrase or point, one I did not plan or anticipate.

The trend this issue is knowing your customer. Of course, YMN has covered this topic from the very beginning—and it's one we delved into deeply at our business conferences—but it's particularly striking in this issue. Mari Chiba Luke's piece on the "Know, Like, Trust funnel" on page 28 talks at length about your ideal customer. The owners of Wool & Honey, profiled on page 32, changed the store's stock to better align with their vision of who their customer is. That principle can also be applied should you decide to change the name of your shop, as Daryl Brower explores in her Smart Branding article on page 26. In the so-called Age of the Consumer, the customer is king. To entice buyers to spend their discretionary income at your store, make it your business to discover who these people really are and what makes them tick. Because really, how can you sell your products if you don't know to whom you are selling?

On an entirely different note, I'd like to take a moment to remember Rose Ann Pollani, YMN's first advertising manager, who worked closely with our advertisers until her retirement a few years ago. In her time at the magazine, she helped it expand its reach, bring in new advertisers and even suggest article ideas. Rose Ann died last summer, and her former colleagues miss her very much.





#### on the cover

Berroco's Captiva, which comes in eight lustrous shades, is a 60% cotton/23% polyester/17% acrylic blend that makes us think of delicious lo mein noodles. www.berroco.com

Photograph by Marcus Tullis







OCTOBER 2017

#### features

#### 36 REFRESHER COURSE

When customers walk into your shop, what do they see? A well-organized space makes it easier for customers to shop—and spend.





Handspun Hope yarn provides Rwandan war widows with tools for survival.



Vickie Howell set a goal for her next-gen YouTube series: foment enthusiasm for the yarn arts as a whole.



Wool & Honey yarn shop reflects the beauty of the northern Michigan landscape.



Maggie Jackson celebrates 40 stellar years as a designer.

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## Autumn Winter 2017 Collection



Knitting & Crochet Magazine 62



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\* Journeyman



\*Cashmere Tweed



\* Timeless DK



\* Brushed Fleece Knits



\* Timeless Cocoon



\* Timeless Worsted

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## MARKET REPORT BY LESLIE PETROVSKI

## KNIT TV

▼ Get ready for the first community-funded, studio-quality, internationally accessible, episodic how-to knitting and crochet series. Funded in part by a successful Kickstarter campaign, The Knit Show With Vickie Howell launched on YouTube on October 5 with 10 episodes. Each features two guest experts (knitterati including Meghan Fernandes of Pompom Quarterly, Taiu Landra of Koigu Wool Designs, and Kelley Deal, enthusiastic knitter and lead guitarist for The Breeders); appearances by in-studio stitchers ranging from fans and hobbyists to designers and varn shop owners; a quick tip or technique from Howell; and glimpses into the larger knitosphere—local yarn mills, the lives of Central Asian cashmere goat herders, mindfulness knitting discussions, advice from a personal trainer about taking care of your wrists and back, and more.

But it doesn't stop there. In November, Howell and her production company partner, ProductionFor, will release an insiders' playlist of shorts featuring educational content about



industry-focused companies and their products. "We're at a period of insatiable content consumption," Howell explains. "This opens up opportunities to partner with individual companies on a one-off or bundled basis to create 'bonus' video shorts that feature their brands in a way that offers informational value to The Knit Show audience."

Howell has kept the LYS firmly in mind, and she shares these ideas on how to make The Knit Show work for you: Download patterns from

www.theknitshow.com for your customers to make using one of your yarns (samples help!); hold a physical or virtual KAL/CAL for a show project; throw a screening event in your space and offer thematic kits or products; create classes based on an episode project or technique; embed episodes (found on The Knit Show YouTube channel) in your blog or newsletter and create your own coordinating content to promote your business and products.

Ultimately, Howell hopes The Knit Show will do its part to help foment more enthusiasm for the yarn arts as a whole. "I believe that the only way to rise is by joining forces as a community -independent designers, corporate companies, local yarn shops and mainstream craft chains to form a collective that at its very core promotes excitement in yarn crafts and nurtures creativity," she says. "We can use each other as resources. From there, as individual entities, it will be our duty to find the strengths and strategy that serve our respective industry niches. The rising tide makes all yarn-y boats float."







## SAVING **SHETLANDER** SKILLS

▼ Now there's another reason to love Shetland: This fall, all elementary school children on the Shetland Islands will have the opportunity to learn to knit as part of the Shetland PeerieMakkers program.

Shetland PeerieMakkers ("peeriemakkers" means "small knitters" in the Shetland dialect) was started by the Brough Lodge Trust to preserve Shetland knitting skills. In 2010, concerned about the dwindling number of commercial hand knitters and the cessation of knitting education in local schools, the trust sought to develop a strategy to secure the future of knitting on the islands.

After many discussions, two years ago Shetland PeerieMakkers was launched as a pilot project in which volunteer knitting instructors taught Shetland knitting skills to 100 or so students in schools in Unst, Whalsay, Ollaberry, Skeld, Lerwick, Burra, Cunningsburgh and Dunrossness. The pilots were funded through a crowdfunding platform that attracted donations from around the world. (Though the program is volunteer based, there are costs for knitting belts, notebooks, pencils and car mileage. Yarn is provided by Jamiesons of Shetland.)

Kids in the knitting groups have been enthusiastic, observes Pierre Cambillard, chairman of the Brough Lodge Trust. "They love it, girls and boys equally. When asked what they thought about knitting in one word, [the children] replied with things like 'awesome,' 'relaxing,' 'fun' and even 'epic.'"

This academic year, a £27,480 grant from a Scottish rural development program called LEADER and a gift of £20,100 from an anonymous private donor have enabled the program to grow to 28 primary schools and will reach approximately 336 children. "Our goal is to maintain Shetland as the only place in the world where Shetland knitting skills can be passed on by expert volunteers through the generations, using locally produced Shetland wool knitting yarns in an incredible range of yarn colors," Cambillard explains. "Having the opportunity to learn the skills, and the knowledge of how to use them, gives the children life skills for all kinds of outcomes."

The program is still seeking about \$9,000, which will carry it through 2020. To contribute, visit www.broughlodge.org/hand-knitting.

## TO DYE FOR

▼ Are you one of those knitters who never met a neutral you didn't like? Dye mistress and SweetGeorgia yarns's mastermind Felicia Lo has created a virtual workshop for those of us partial to 50 shades of beige to get us out of our all-neutral rut. (Not that there's anything wrong with that.)

Part of a new offering called the **School of SweetGeorgia** (SOS)—Lo's online educational platform, which delivers content about color and craft—Colour Play is a video color-theory workshop that yarn shops, guilds, knitting groups and even individual fiber artists can use to develop confidence with color.

Popular knits and knit-alongs—like Andrea Mowry's recent What the Fade?—can paralyze color-confounded knitters who are asked to choose several different colors, Lo explains. "This workshop will address the needs of knitters who have difficulty choosing colors and will help yarn shops sell more yarn."

Here's how it works: For \$175, participating yarn shops (or guilds or groups) receive 36 different-colored mini skeins of Sweet-Georgia Tough Love Sock yarn, which must be wound onto chips. (Each skein makes about five chips.) The chips are the tools students use during the workshop to create their color palettes. The Colour Play course also comes with a digital facilitator's lesson plan guide, cardstock chips, a workbook to be printed out and distributed to class members, and access to the videos.

Lo teaches the workshop, which accommodates about 10 students and consists of five short videos, each about 28 minutes long (about two-and-a-half hours of workshop time). The video workshop covers elementary color theory—concepts such as hue, value, temperature, saturation and harmony—while offering exercises that allow students time to explore colors and combinations that push beyond their comfort zones.

By the end of the workshop, students will have developed four color palettes made up of the color chips and knitted a swatch from one palette. They will also take home about 360 yards of yarn on their color-chip bobbins.

Lo's goal with the workshop isn't so much to make money from fees but to help yarn shops move yarn. She envisions students investing in skeins they can combine with their color-chip yarns or going all-in on building their own colorful project kits.

"I am trying to provide more education and become more of a leader in the area of providing fiber arts education," Lo says, "even if the students buy yarn from somebody else."

From a content perspective, this is only the beginning for the School of SweetGeorgia. Using a crowdfunding and community-building tool called Patreon, Lo has generated financial support and developed a community that is both watching updates about the school and contributing ideas to it. Upcoming classes to watch for include a more in-





depth color theory course and dyeing classes.

Chatting with yarn shop owners at TNNA in June, Lo encountered much enthusiasm for SOS. "The reception was great," she says. "Shop owners are excited about being able to offer workshops without having to develop the content themselves. And I'm excited about finding new ways to help retailers increase sales."

www.schoolofsweetgeorgia.com

## **CURRICULUM** IN A BOX



▼ What if everything you need to host a class showed up on your store's doorstep with the mail carrier or UPS guy? That's what yarn shops get when they sign up for **Sprout Scouts**, the 10-month educational program from Stitch Sprouts. Every other month—in October, December, February, April and June—participating shops receive a skill-building pattern, achievement patches (à la scout badges) and activities related to the pattern that can be offered to five scouts, including a scout leader.

"I started this program to help yarn shops offer something that will help them bring customers back into their stores and to help them to realize that they have something that online shops don't: community," said Heather Zoppetti, owner of Stitch Sprouts. "Stitch Sprouts can help by providing handouts, activity sheets, goodies, etc. The shop just needs to provide the space, the yarn and the willingness to offer these events."

This year's scouting adventure curriculum, Aster, featured five small knits: Alpinus, a sport-weight, textured hat; Glehni, worsted-weight colorwork mittens; Maackii, fingering-weight cuff-down socks; Tripolium, a chunky cabled cowl; and Hayatae, a fingering-weight shawl. As part of the program, yarn shops also receive five tote bags and a Scout Leader Handbook with yarn ideas to pair with each project.

"We've had a lot of interest from knitters who want to join, and we are pointing them to their local yarn shops," Zoppetti says. "Hopefully this means [more and more] shops will sign up. There was a lot of excitement about it at TNNA." **www.stitchsprouts.com** 

## MARKET REPORT

## **CRAFTSY GOES CORPORATE**

▼ Craftsy, the Denver-based startup that began offering online craft classes in 2011, has been acquired by Comcast NBCUniversal to become part of the company's NBCU Cable Entertainment Portfolio.

The sale, which was announced in May, will provide the crafting juggernaut with the resources and distribution platform "to further pursue our vision of becoming an iconic brand in the makerspace via 'edutainment,'

classes and supplies," wrote Craftsy Founder and CEO John Levisay in a letter posted on the Craftsy blog.

According to the announcement, the company will maintain its current offices in Denver and Indianapolis and will continue to focus on online classes and product sales. Levisay has agreed to stay on as CEO for at least four years.

## JO-ANN STORES BUYS CREATIVEBUG

▼ Offering subscriptions to 1,000 online classes in everything from how to make drinking vinegars to sweater mending, **Creativebug**, **LLC** was purchased by the big-box retailer Jo-Ann Fabric & Craft Stores in April. The sale gives Creativebug access to Jo-Ann Stores' audience and provides the large sewing and craft retailer with "inspirational and educational content" for its customers.

Creativebug will keep its headquarters in San Francisco and will operate as a separate business unit in Jo-Ann, led by Creativebug President and CEO Ursula Morgan. "We both share a deep commitment to producing the best inspiration," said Morgan in a press release, "and we look forward to growing our community of avid creators and crafters who share our passion for all things handmade."

## WEBS "ADOPTS" TWIST COLLECTIVE



▼ Kate Gilbert, who founded the online magazine *Twist Collective* in 2008, was at a crossroads. With the website needing a refresh and Gilbert feeling both burdened by it and anxious to take the magazine in new directions, she began considering a partnership.

**Webs** came to mind. The Northampton, Massachusetts, yarn store had been a long-time *Twist Collective* advertiser, and Gilbert thought there might be "good synergy" between both groups. "They don't have a publishing arm, and I do," she says. "And I

don't have a distribution network, but they do."

Equipped with a short proposal, she approached Webs' owners, Steve and Kathy Elkins. After lengthy discussions, the Elkinses agreed to acquire *Twist Collective*, a move all parties are calling an "adoption." Designers who develop patterns for the digital magazine will receive the same compensation based on pattern sales, and yarns used in featured knitwear will still

skew toward those from independent and small yarn companies, whether or not Webs sells those yarns.

For *Twist Collective* fans, here's what's changing: The frequency of the magazine will double from three times a year to six, though each issue will be smaller. Over time, the *Twist* website will be upgraded, and *Twist* patterns and kits will also be sold on Webs' site, www.yarn.com.

"We're excited to work with our current vendors to sell whole projects [featured in *Twist*] and also with companies that we might

# IS LIBERTY OF LONDON TAKING OVER THE WORLD?

▼ In 2016, BlueGem II LP, a London-based private equity firm that owns assets including Liberty of London and British clothing brand Jack Wills, acquired cool-kid yarn company Wool and The Gang and the 200-plus-year-old French thread company DMC. Now BlueGem has added the 137-year-old spinning business Sirdar to its crafty portfolio, creating the DMC Group, what *The Telegraph* has called the world's largest needlecraft company.

"People are intoxicated by their phones and computers these days and want to take a break and do something with their hands," said Massimo Saracchi, group executive chairman, in a press release. "Wool and The Gang offers simple patterns with videos for beginners while Sirdar and DMC have the expertise that appeals to customers who are already very familiar with knitting and embroidery."

not do business with on an everyday basis but who can partner on *Twist* projects," explained Steve Elkins in an email. "We'll sell kits for the independent yarn companies that we don't work with regularly so we can support the projects. *Twist* will always stay independent, and we are excited that the magazine will now be able to provide customers with all the things they need to complete the great independent designs, not just the patterns. It will make for a great partnership."

For her part, Gilbert is thrilled to have colleagues and the opportunity to grow and enhance her brainchild. "I am really jazzed about it," she says. "I've worked for so long by myself in my cave in Montreal, so it's nice to have conversations with people and think about the future in a different way."

Because the next issue of *Twist* (due out in October) was completed before the merger, changes in the magazine won't become apparent until next year. The magazine will continue to reside at **www.twist collective.com**.

## **LORNA'S** NEW CHAPTER

▼ After 14-and-a-half years working as **Lorna's Laces** manager and owner Beth Casey's right-hand person, Amanda Jarvis has taken the helm of the Lorna's Laces and Mrs. Crosby yarn brands.

As of July 31, Jarvis and her husband assumed ownership of the longstanding hand-dyed-yarn company founded by dyer and designer Lorna Miser in the late 1980s. "I've been in this industry for a long time and have dedicated myself to it, so it seemed like the logical next step," Jarvis says. "Had I left Lorna's Laces, I'd be working in some other industry, and I can't imagine that."

Casey, who had owned the business since 2003, has retired and is relaxing, reading and keeping bees. "I love Lorna's Laces and always will," Casey says. "But there are times in every artist's life when she feels the need to grow and move beyond what she is currently doing. It is time for me to rediscover myself and grow as an artist. What form or direction that will take I have yet to discover. When I announced my 'retirement,' a friend said, 'Welcome to the field of all possibilities,' and that is the way I am thinking about the future, for myself and for Amanda."

For the time being, don't expect too much to change. "In a way, I've already put my mark on the business," Jarvis says, "so I don't feel a need to 'make it mine.' I'm proud of what it is already. I'm sure there will be new yarns and colors. We're working on fun projects for next year to make sure everyone stays excited." www.lornaslaces.net



▼ A T-shirt with removable sleeves. A pullover with a keyhole cuff. A flattering peekaboo Henley. These are just some of the modern, sustainable kits available from new yarn kid on the block, The Rare Creature. Jump-started by a Kickstarter campaign, The Rare Creature is a fashion-forward yarn company offering sustainable yarns and kits along with clean, contemporary patterns by founder Lisa Li. Alarmed by the amount of waste generated by the fashion industry, Li, a Parsons grad, turned to hand knitting as an alternative. "Scrap yarn can be reused," she said. "Sweaters can be reknit. I fell in love."

The Rare Creature debuted last fall with a bulky 95% alpaca/5% polyamide blend called The Big Softy in six neutrals, supported by a collection of cozy accessories and garments. Last spring, she added an organic cotton loopy tape—again in six tightly edited neutrals—and another batch of contemporary designs for tops.

Yarns and patterns are sold separately or in kits complete with sustainably harvested wooden knitting needles, a sewing needle, yarn, pattern



and notions. Patterns are also labeled 1–10 for level of difficulty and geared toward beginning to intermediate knitters.

The kits, Li says, make projects easier for customers. "It can be very overwhelming if you don't know people who are already passionate about knitting. It can be hard to figure out where to start. Kits make it easy." The Rare Creature sells both wholesale to yarn shops and retail. www.therarecreature.com

## KITS ARE FOR KIDS

▼ With seemingly everything available in a subscription box or kit, **Classic Elite Yarns** wondered if the time was right for baby and toddler knit kits to step into the spotlight. Turns out, it was. In May, Classic Elite released nine kits for the pint-sized set that include hats, pullovers and cardigans and feature a variety of the company's popular yarns, most of them washable. The kits come packaged store-ready in a gossamer bag complete with yarn and pattern.

"We thought the kits would be a good way for us to help meet the 'grab-and-go' needs of today's consumers and allow shops and their customers to try out yarns that aren't fully stocked in the shop," says Tracy Russell, Classic Elite's director of sales. "They are a small commitment, a quick sale and a fun project, so everybody wins." The kiddie kits have proved so successful that the yarn company already has new designs in the pipeline. **www.classiceliteyarns.com** 



# INDUSTRY VETERAN RECEIVES TEN AWARD

▼ For the first time ever, The National NeedleArts Association has awarded its prestigious Tribute to Excellence in NeedleArts (TEN) Award to an industry sales representative. The TEN Award is presented annually to an individual who represents the finest in the needlearts industry and exemplifies the TNNA mission statement.

At the June trade show, veteran sales rep **Stuart Berg** (pictured above) was presented with the award. "Stu has been in our industry for 50 years and has been a TNNA advocate since the beginning," says TNNA President Dave Van Stralen. "It's great to be able to honor someone who has done so much for the industry."

Berg began his career in 1965, when department stores still had yarn departments. Over the years he has worked with companies and brands including Bucilla, Brunswick Worsted Mills, Colinette, Muench, Phildar, Pingouin and many others. He continues to cover the southeastern United States as a rep for Trendsetter, Prism, Malabrigo, Knit One Crochet Too and Knitter's Pride needles.

"I love doing what I'm doing," says Berg.
"I enjoy color and texture and marvel at how fabulous some of these things are. I'll keep going until the body says 'enough.'"

## MARKET REPORT

## LIFE-CHANGING YARN



Last summer, Diana Wiley, founder and executive director of True Vineyard Ministries, walked into the Manhattan yarn shop Purl Soho clutching a skein of yarn. Equipped with only the most rudimentary understanding of yarn crafting ("I can crochet a chain," she says), she nonetheless knew that beyond the yarn's handspun-organic-merino-natural-dye credentials, it had an amazing backstory.

Grown, spun and dyed in Rwanda, **Handspun Hope** yarn and hand-knit goods are created by about 75 widows and otherwise marginalized women, many of whom were victims of rape during the 1994 genocide and are now struggling with HIV/AIDS. "There are 600,000 widows from the 1994 genocide living in Rwanda," Wiley explains. "Rape

campaigns were carried out to infect women with HIV so the killing would continue. Ninety percent of our women [have the virus]."

Launched in 2007, today True Vineyard Ministries owns a small plot of land in Rwanda that houses a small center, where the women work, and leases 12 acres of land at the base of a volcano for grazing sheep. TVM employees receive job training, monthly salaries, health insurance for themselves and their children, fees to cover children's educational costs, psychological counseling, the chance to participate in a microfinancing program and bonuses based on production demands.

The yarn, dyed with onion skins, flower petals, eucalyptus and other plants, comes in 100g skeins of a 2-ply handspun worsted-weight organic merino, in 11 earthy colors. (Handspun Hope intends to eventually produce angora and angora-blend yarns, recently adding three German angora rabbits to its "flock.")

It was one of these skeins that Wiley was carrying when she walked into Purl Soho. The shop placed an order and then contacted Wiley to ask what it would take to get an online exclusive to the product. When Purl Soho





announced the yarn on Instagram, Handspun Hope's followers jumped by a third. (Handspun Hope also has provided yarn to Kate Spade's Rwandan trade initiative On Purpose, as well as

counseling training for Kate Spade's operation in Masoro.)

"If a woman has a job, she can be in control of her life and take care of her children," Wiley says. "When she can take care of her family, her kids will grow up stronger."

Editor's note: Handspun Hope yarn is available at select yarn shops and online at www.purlsoho.com. Finished goods can be found at handspunhope.com.

## ACQUISITIONS **DOWN** UNDER

**Bendigo Woollen Mills**, Australia's largest craft-yarn mail-order manufacturer, has purchased the much-larger **Australian Country Spinners**, making it the biggest manufacturer and distributor of hand-knitting yarn in Australia and New Zealand. Australian Country Spinners and its historic Wangaratta Woollen Mills produce the

popular brands Patons, Cleckheaton, Panda and Shepherd. Bendigo will continue to manufacture these brands once the full takeover is complete. In a *Wangaratta Chronicle* article, Bendigo owner Colin Walker said he "wanted to invest in these iconic Australian yarn brands, so their future as truly Australian-made products is now assured."

## YMN CALENDAR

#### Events to keep you in stitches this fall.

#### September 30–October 1 Vermont Sheep & Wool Festival

Tunbridge Fairgrounds Tunbridge, Vermont vtsheepandwoolfest.com

#### October 2–8 Spinzilla

Various locations spinzilla.org

#### October 4–8 Trailing of the Sheep Festival

Various locations Sun Valley, Ketchum and Hailey, Idaho trailingofthesheep.org

#### October 6–8 Kentucky Wool Festival

48 Concord Caddo Road Falmouth, Kentucky kywoolfest.org

### October 6–15 Best Little Yarn Crawl in Texas

Hill Country, Texas thebestlittleyarncrawlintexas.com

#### October 7 King's County Fiber Festival

Old Stone House & Washington Park Brooklyn, New York kingscountyfiberfestival.org

#### October 7–8 Fall Fiber Festival and Montpelier Sheepdog Trials

James Madison's Montpelier Montpelier Station, Virginia fallfiberfestival.org

#### October 7–8 Fosston Fiber Festival

Magelssen Elementary Fosston, Minnesota fosstonfiberfestival.com

#### October 7-8 Lambtown Festival

Dixon May Fair Grounds Dixon, California lambtown.org

#### October 7-8

#### Michigan International Alpacafest

The Summit Sports and Ice Complex Dimondale, Michigan alpacafest.org

#### October 7-8

#### New Hampshire Wool Arts Tour

Back roads of New Hampshire woolartstournh.com

#### October 7–8

#### Vista Fiber Arts Fiesta

Antique Gas and Steam Engine Museum Vista, California vistafiberartsfiesta.yolasite.com

#### October 7–8 Wool Festival at Taos

Kit Carson Park Taos, New Mexico taoswoolfestival.org

#### October 8 Palisade Quilt and Fiber Arts Festival

Veterans Memorial Park Palisade, Colorado visitpalisade.com/portfolio-item/palisadequilt-fiber-arts-festival

#### October 10–14

#### **Nova Scotia Fibre Arts Festival** Amherst, Northumberland Shore,

Nova Scotia, Canada fibreartsfestival.com

## October 11–15 The Knitting & Stitching Show

Alexandra Palace London, England theknittingandstitchingshow.com/London

#### October 21-22

#### Fiber Expo

Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds Ann Arbor, Michigan fiberexpo.com

#### October 21–22 Fiber Fusion

Northwest Evergreen State Fairgrounds Monroe, Washington fiberfusion.net

#### October 21-22

#### New York Sheep & Wool Festival

Dutchess County Fairgrounds Rhinebeck, New York sheepandwool.com

#### October 26–28 Creativ Festival

Metro Toronto Convention Centre Toronto, Ontario, Canada csnf.com

#### October 26–29

## Vogue Knitting Destinations (with Koigu Wool Designs)

Waterfront Inn at Cobble Beach Kemble, Ontario vogueknittinglive.com/ontario

#### October 27-29

#### Columbia Gorge Fiber Festival

Fort Dalles Readiness Center The Dalles, Oregon columbiagorgefiberfestival.com

#### October 27–29

#### **Southeastern Animal Fiber Fair**

Western NC Agricultural Center Fletcher, North Carolina saffsite.org

#### October 28–29 FiberMania

#### Josephine County Fairgrounds

Grants Pass, Oregon sojaa.com/page/4109/fibermania

#### November 3-4

#### The Ozark Fiber Fling

Meramec Baptist Retreat Center Steelville, Missouri ozarkfiberfling.com

#### November 3-5 Vogue Knitting LIVE! Seattle

Meydenbauer Convention Center Bellevue, Washington vogueknittinglive.com/seattle

#### November 4 Fall Fiber Festival

Eisenhower Community Center Hopkins, Minnesota fallfiberfestival.com

#### November 4-5

#### The Fiber Festival of New England

Mallary Complex at Eastern States Exposition West Springfield, Massachusetts easternstatesexposition.com/p/fiberfestival

#### November 10–12

#### **Carolina Fiber Frolic**

Community Center Sapphire, North Carolina carolinafiberfrolic.wordpress.com

#### November 10–12

#### Knit Fit!

Seattle Center Armory Seattle, Washington knitfitseattle.com

#### November 11–12

#### **Maryland Alpaca and Fleece Festival**

Howard County Fairgrounds West Friendship, Maryland marylandalpacas.org

#### November 17–18 Creative Hand Show & Sale

Old Shawnee Town Hall Shawnee, Kansas creativehandkc.org

#### November 17–18

## **East Texas Fiber Festival** Pickers Pavilion

Lindale, Texas easttexasfiberfestival.weebly.com

#### November 18–19 Fall Fiber Arts Festival

Leesport Farmers Market Leesport, Pennsylvania plaaonline.org/fiber-library

#### November 24–26 Delmarva Wool and Fiber Expo

Ocean City Convention Center Ocean City, Maryland woolandfiber.com

#### November 24-27

#### The Knitting & Stitching Show

Harrogate International Centre Harrogate, UK theknittingandstitchingshow.com/ harrogate

## **CRAFTY COMPETITION**

▼ Part Project Runway, part America's Got Talent, The Handmade Project, hosted by Parks and Recreation alums Amy Poehler and Nick Offerman, is a new reality TV series that will pit crafters against each other in heated competition. Produced by Poehler's Paper Kite Productions and Universal Television Alternative Studio and airing on NBC, the one-hour show offers crafters of all kinds the chance to compete by DIYing increasingly complex projects in different disci-

plines. Poehler, a crafting novice, and Offerman, a well-known woodworker and the author of *Good Clean Fun: Misadventures in Sawdust at Offerman Workshop*, along with a panel of expert judges, will provide feedback. "I'm thrilled to be celebrating artists who make things by hand," said Poehler in a press release, "and I'm looking forward to finally conquering my fear of papier-mâché." No word yet on a date for the premiere.

## **BOOK REVIEWS**

#### **▼ Dimensional Tuck Knitting**

#### By Tracy Purtscher Sixth&Spring Books; \$24.95 ISBN: 978-1942021674

Start with a field of stockinette, sprinkle a few stitches throughout to act as markers, then get ready to go tuck-wild! Purtscher, finalist on the knitting reality show "The Fiber



Factor,"
gives the tuck
stitch new
life by exploring in glorious
detail how it
adds surface
design and

rich dimensionality to knitted fabric. Welts ripple over stockinette stitch, cable-like structures twist and flow, and undulating ribbons stack and loop over Purtscher's creations. Purtscher demystifies these striking effects by walking the reader through the basics of working dimensional tucks, while discussing practical topics like yarn selection and chart reading. The heart of the book is a lavish selection of more than 85 tuck-stitch stitch patterns, illustrating some of the creative possibilities of the technique. Ten chic patterns provide ways to practice these innovative stitches while your mind considers new ways to work tucks into your next project.

#### **▼** Cocoknits Sweater Workshop

#### By Julie Weisenberger Cocoknits; \$35 ISBN: 978-0692823125

Weisenberger, better known to her legions of fans as Cocoknits, has been designing knitwear for more



than 30 years.
Not surprisingly, she has a lot to say about how to create well-fitting sweaters, and this workshop-in-a-book is

chock-full of her accumulated wisdom. The unique "Cocoknits method," demonstrated clearly and concisely throughout the book, helps knitters create tailored garments that become go-to wardrobe staples with an organized approach: sweaters begin at the back neckline, then use

picked-up stitches to create sleeves and shoulders while working from the top down. Color-coded worksheets keep the process easy and stress-free, even for the mathaverse. Nine elegant and versatile patterns showcase the ingenuity of the Cocoknits method, making this a go-to resource for knitters of every skill level.

#### ▼ A Stash of One's Own

#### By Clara Parkes Abrams Press; \$22.99 ISBN: 978-1419727047

Extra balls of yarn, shelves filled with pattern books, an overflowing Ravelry queue... All fiberistas grapple with the accumulation of



tools and the proliferation of yarn commonly known as "stash." Before you ruthlessly cull the herd or grab the latest "joy of minimal-

ism" book, treat yourself to Parkes's anthology, both a meditation on and celebration of the yarn stash. Parkes called on a to-die-for Rolodex of contributors, with knit celebrities including Franklin Habit, Amy Herzog, Kay Gardiner, Ann Shayne and Stephanie Pearl-McPhee sharing their wry and keenly observed insights on what all that yarn really means. Best of all, there's no stern stash-shaming here. Whether you prefer a ruthless one-project-at-atime approach or require a codicil in your will to provide for your skeins, you'll find insight and validation in these pages, along with knowing chuckles and maybe even a bittersweet sigh or two.

## **▼** Knitting Comfortably: The Ergonomics of Handknitting

#### By Carson Demers Ergo I Publishing; \$46.95 ISBN: 978-0692824900

It's a rare knitter indeed who hasn't felt twinges, soreness or pinches as he or she works stitch after stitch. Physical therapist and avid knitter Carson Demers feels your pain—and wants to help you get rid of it. His comprehensive book explores all aspects of knitting ergonomics,



thoughtfully analyzing how posture, repetitive motion and even the tools we choose contribute to

or ameliorate common aches and pains. Plenty of photographs, anatomical drawings and charts help the reader identify sources of ergonomic distress; the author then suggests adaptations, stretches and tips for pain-free knitting.

## **▼** Literary Yarns: Crochet Projects Inspired by Classic Books

#### By Cindy Wang Quirk Books; \$14.99 ISBN: 978-1594749605

Every year, visitors to San Diego's Comic Con go on an amigurumi treasure hunt, collecting superheroes,



pop-culture characters and movie monsters lovingly created by crochet designer Cindy Wang. Wang (whose

nom de con is The Geeky Hooker) now applies her quirky sensibility to some of the best-loved characters from literature. Cherry-picking memorable personalities created by Shakespeare, Fitzgerald, Austen, Orwell, Melville and more, Wang wields her hook with vigor, adding clever details like Scrooge's wire-rimmed glasses and Hester Prynne's teeny scarlet letter. Clear instructions and close-up photos speed the process along. Crocheters will give rave reviews to these "adorkable" patterns, creating fun figures perfect for gift giving or livening up a ho-hum bookshelf.

#### **▼** A Garden of Shawls

#### By Karen Whooley Occhi Blu Press; \$24.95 ISBN: 978-0972323222

Versatile, practical, beautiful—what's not to love about this collection of colorful crocheted shawls? Inspired by a peaceful summer garden, Whooley pairs fingering and lace-weight yarns with basic crochet stitches to create lovely designs that don't require advanced skills to complete. Using classic triangle and rectangular

shapes, designs include charts and a written pattern along with



schematics and photos that zoom in to show off the details of the stitchwork. Winter may be coming, but

these 12 airy beauties will distract you from the chill with dreams of flowers and sunshine.

#### **▼** Grown

#### By Kate Oates Tot Toppers; \$22 ISBN: 978-0996440448

Remember all those times you've swooned over a child-sized sweater, wishing it came in adult sizes too? Kids' knitwear designer Kate Oates has written a book just for you. Founder of the popular kiddie pattern lines Tot Toppers and When I Grow Up, Oates has selected a number of her best-loved children's designs and sized them up for the fully grown. Even better, she's added subtle tweaks and refinements—some waist shaping here, a more sophisticated palette there—cre-



ating patterns that have been styled up as well as sized up. Top-down construction, raglan-style shoulders

and seamless (or nearly seamless) finishing make these projects extraappealing for busy adults. The generous sizing (XS to 3X in most cases) and use of lush handpainted yarns show that kids aren't the only ones who get to have fun.

## **▼** Woven Style for the 15" Rigid Heddle Loom

#### By Tamara Poff Poff Studio; \$24.99 ISBN: 978-0998459004

If you've already discovered the fun of a rigid heddle tabletop loom and are ready to bust out of the rectangular scarf mindset, it's time to explore this book. Poff, a skilled weaver and longtime teacher,



focuses on ways to combine the relatively thin panels created by a 15-inch

loom into stylish designs for a range of body types. Poff assumes the reader knows the basics of working a tabletop loom—this is not a how-to-use-it book—and concentrates instead on techniques to improve finished results and make the process easier. This collection of layering pieces, airy tops, vests and more will have you loving the loom, and whittling down that stash in no time.

#### ▼ Seed Stitch: Beyond Knit 1, Purl 1

By Rosemary Drysdale Sixth&Spring Books; \$21.95 ISBN: 978-1942021643



Knitters who use seed stitch only for the occasional edging should treat themselves to Drysdale's

latest book. Taking a break from her excellent entrelac explorations, Drysdale delves into the creative possibilities of seed stitch, proving over and over again how versatile and elegant this simple stitch can be. Knitters may get lost in the stitch dictionary—Drysdale's 60 seedbased swatches inspire and innovate, incorporating techniques like cables. lace and color-but don't miss the fifteen gorgeous projects that follow, including sweaters, cowls, pillows and a blanket. Drysdale's tips on working with seed stitch, including increasing and decreasing, tips for using multiple colors and hints for creating your own seed-based patterns, are the icing on the (seed)cake.

#### **▼ Yarn Whirled: The Royal Family**

By Pat Olski Dover Publications; \$19.95 ISBN: 978-0486812007

Anglophiles, rejoice: It's time for a brand-new British invasion. Wearing

tiaras instead of moptops, wielding the crown jewels instead of guitars, this invasion features endearing versions of the British royal family, everyone from Queen Elizabeth II



all the way down to the littlest princess, Charlotte. Pat Olski's clever proprietary method creates adorable

dolls by wrapping and tying yarn; she then adds delightful details that give each doll its signature style. Color photographs, along with step-by-step instructions, help the reader create each regal figure, while adding special touches like a beefeater's cap, Princess Diana's iconic wedding gown, and Prince Harry's regimental colors. Not everyone can marry a prince. But thanks to Olski, nearly everyone can create one

## **▼** The Mindfulness in Knitting: Meditations on Craft and Calm

By Rachael Matthews Leaping Hare Press; \$12.99 ISBN: 978-1782404187



Ask a group of knitters why they love the craft and at least a few will mention the soothing rhythm of the needles. Pair that repetitive

motion with conscious awareness, and you've got the recipe for "mindful knitting." Part of a series on mindfulness in various activities. this slim volume is the perfect size to fit in a knitting bag. Pull it out whenever you have a few moments and are looking to expand your ideas about why and how we knit, to learn more about the ways that mindful knitting can positively contribute to one's health and wellbeing, or simply to enjoy Matthews's reflections on the craft and its place in the world. Thick, creamy pages, a delightful cover illustration and thoughtful book design make this a tangible treat as well as a tonic for the spirit.

#### **▼** Hygge Knits

#### By Nicki Trench Cico Books; \$19.95 ISBN: 978-1782494782

Hygge is hot! The Danish concept, pronounced HUE-guh, refers to the warm and cozy atmosphere and feeling of well-being said to be characteristic of Danish culture. Designer Nicky French takes this feeling of cozy contentment and adds a dash of folk tradition, producing a collection of 25 knitted patterns showcasing snug Scandi style. Colorwork abounds, with traditional motifs—think reindeer, flowers and stars—skillfully used as allover patterns or



as focal points in bands of stranded knitting mixed with stripes. Of course, you'll find the classic yoke sweater and

colorwork gloves, staples of Scandinavian knitting, but you'll also find washcloths, mug cozies, throws and a pillow or two. Grab your needles and some colorful yarn and go

hygge-wild with this vibrant collection of inviting designs.

#### **▼** Mittens from Around Norway

#### By Nina Granlund Sæther Trafalgar Books; \$26.95 ISBN: 978-1570768224

When it's nippy outside and your needles are itching for a new project, pull up a seat by the fireplace



and crack open Nina Sæther's comprehensive collection of folk-inspired mittens. Drawing on Norway's rich knitting heritage,

Sæther presents a concise history of Norse mitts, then entices the reader to cast on with a gorgeous collection of more than 40 mitten patterns. The designer isn't content to just grab a motif and go; instead, she drills deeper, linking stitch patterns to historical fragments, explaining stitch variations and fondly describing local knitting traditions. Knitters will have warm hands and a warm heart after working through this lovely collection.

#### TREND WATCH

## Here's what was selling the third week of September 2017:

#### **Amazon Knitting List (print publications)**

- Alterknit, by Andrea Rangel (Interweave/F+W))
- A Stash of One's Own, by Clara Parkes (Abrams)
- Highland Knits (Interweave)
- Japanese Knitting Stitch Bible, by Hitomi Shida and Gayle Roehm (Tuttle Publishing)
- Knit Speak, by Andrea Price (STC Craft)
- Knitted Cable Sourcebook, by Norah Gaughan (Abrams)
- More Last-Minute Knitted Gifts, by Joelle Hoverson (STC Craft)

#### **Amazon Crochet List (print publications)**

- A to Z Crochet (Martingale & Co.)
- Crochet Stitch Dictionary, by Sarah Hazell (Interweave)
- Edward's Menagerie, by Kerry Lord (David & Charles)
- Every Which Way Crochet Borders, by Edie Eckman (Storey)
- Star Wars Crochet, by Lucy Collins (Thunder Bay Press)

#### **Barnes & Noble Knitting List**

- A Stash of One's Own, by Clara Parkes (Abrams)
- The Joy of Sox, by Linda Kopp (Lark Crafts)
- Knit Speak, by Andrea Price (STC Craft)
- · Lace Yarn Studio, by Carol J. Sulcoski (Lark Crafts)

Blending exotic camelids, cashmeres and yak with more conventional fibers makes them much more attainable—yet no less wonderful.

By Christina Behnke
PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARCUS TULLIS



#### Zealana Luxuria Air Laceweight

**Specs:** 15 colors; 40% cashmere/ 40% brushtail possum down/ 20% mulberry silk; 191yds/25g

**Gauge:** 32-46 sts = 4" on U.S. 1 needles

**Distinctions:** Luxuria Air's ethereal halo would seem delicate if not for the yarn's sturdy spin, which results in a fiber that resists pilling and blooms post-block.

**Projects:** With its unsurpassed warmth and huge gauge range, lush Air is an ideal garment yarn. A rare hand-knitting yarn with a Z-twist ply, it's also a crocheter's holy grail.

# WANDERLUST



#### **Prism Madison Layers**

**Specs:** 49 Layers colors (hundreds in all); 75% merino/15% cashmere/10% silk; 170yds/100g

**Gauge:** 16 sts = 4" on U.S. 9 needles

Distinctions: The consummate cashmere/silk blend: Springy, velvety and luminous, Madison Layers boasts a wonderfully rounded 4-ply construction. The buoyant spin yields plump, pillowy stitches that set off Prism's handpainted shades beautifully.

**Projects:** Madison's worsted gauge makes it a versatile choice for cold-weather accessories. Indulgent for a sweater, perhaps, but its resistance to pilling makes it a worthwhile investment.

#### **Cascade Yarns Llamerino**

knitted texture and lace.

Specs: 6 colors; 50% baby llama/
50% merino wool; 291yds/100g

Gauge: 24 sts = 4" on U.S. 5 needles

Distinctions: A rare 3-ply, Llamerino marries
the cobbled look of a farm yarn with the
rounded loft of a worsted-spun. Paired with
a sweet-spot 50/50 blend that's fluffy yet
crisp, the construction creates wonderful
stitch definition with plenty of character.

Projects: Llamerino's natural palette recalls
the rustic elegance of a country estate.
Shawl or sweater, it shines in traditional



#### Blue Sky Fibers Suri Merino

**Specs:** 20 colors; 60% baby suri/40% merino; 164yds/100g **Gauge:** 20–28 sts = 4" on U.S. 5–7 needles

**Distinctions:** Satiny, sleek and cool to the touch, suri alpaca shares more qualities with silk than wool, yet it wears with the same warmth of any alpaca fiber. Suri Merino boosts this languid fiber with a hefty addition of merino, creating a robust and buttery blend that begs to be touched.

**Projects:** Stitch patterns pop in elegantly draped wraps and sweaters.



#### Jade Sapphire Exotic Fibres Sylph

**Specs:** 52 colors; 58% cashmere/ 42% linen; 309yds/50g **Gauge:** 22–24 sts = 4" on U.S. 4–6 needles

**Distinctions:** Sylph proves that "summer cashmere" is not only possible, but also delectable: Filaments of linen twine throughout a base of fluffy cashmere in an airy crepe construction. The linen resists the dye, giving the signature hand-dye an added tweed element.

**Projects:** The linen in Sylph brings out cashmere's toothy side, which shines in crisp stripes and draped lace.

#### Universal Yarn Bella Cash

Specs: 20 colors; 60% fine merino/
30% nylon/10% cashmere; 230yds/50g
Gauge: 24 sts = 4" on U.S. 3 needles
Distinctions: New Bella Cash offers an economical way to experience the joys of cuddly cashmere/merino blends. The predominance of merino, along with a generous dose of nylon, creates a bouncy, squeezable skein with plenty of elasticity in the strand.

**Projects:** While the nylon content and sportweight gauge make Bella Cash a must for heirloom baby projects, it's also great for colorwork.

yarn reviews continue on page 18



Plymouth Yarn Co. Incan Spice

**Specs:** 6 colors; 45% extrafine merino/25% baby alpaca/15% mulberry silk/15% yak; 218yds/50g

**Gauge:** 26 sts = 4" on U.S. 3 needles

**Distinctions:** The finest iterations of four different fibers intermingle in this new gem of a yarn. Incan Spice sports the crisp definition and glow of a fine-weight single, with a soft, downy halo to soften its edges.

**Projects:** The coordinated jewel tones make it a fine choice for Fair Isle, but its singular appearance sings in garter stitch and crochet.

## Mrs. Crosby/Lorna's Laces Due Capre

**Specs:** 29 multis and 21 solids; 85% cashmere/15% kid mohair; 140yds/50g **Gauge:** 20–24 sts = 4" on U.S. 5–6

needles

**Distinctions:** A shimmery dusting of kid mohair teases out cashmere's fluffier tendencies in limited-edition Due Capre. This luminous, exquisite blend marries some of the softest fibers in yarndom to create a downright kittenish hand.

**Projects:** Wear Due Capre close in a luxurious one-skein cowl, keeping patterns simple to showcase its soft patina and hand-dyed colors.





#### THE NATIONAL NEEDLEARTS ASSOCIATION

BY SUSAN LANE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



## Wrapping Up a Busy Year at TNNA

he National NeedleArts Association was hard at work all summer long, preparing for exciting events in the months ahead. But before we talk about what's to come, let's review a few of the year's earlier happenings.

The 2017 TNNA NeedleArts summer trade show was held in Columbus, Ohio, in June. The TNNA Yarn Group's fashion show showcased more than 100 designs from numerous companies and brands. Sample It! offered retailers the chance to purchase sample kits and products before the show opened, allowing them to test-drive items before ordering them for their stores. Many exhibitors participated in Discover What's New, giving show goers a peek at their newest products. The revamped TNNA Lounge hosted tables from each product segment group, as well as a new Education Theater. Stitchcraft Marketing hosted a collaborative art installation as a way for the crafting community to create something beautiful. Everyone was invited to "stitch a little love" when they visited the interactive #stitchlove wall.

TNNA also presented the Tribute to Excellence in NeedleArts (TEN) Award to Stuart Berg. Recognizing outstanding contributions to the needlearts industry by setting new standards in quality, creativity and achievement, this annual award goes to those who have proven themselves as innovators and leaders in the industry. Berg began his career in needlearts in 1965. He passionately promotes the needlearts as an industry sales rep, doing everything possible to make his customers smarter and stronger.

As the leaves begin to change, spinners and weavers around the world are revving up for a monster of a spinning week. Spinzilla 2017 will be in full swing from October 2–8. It's a global spinning event during which competing teams and individuals challenge each other to see who can spin the most yarn in a week. The winning team is awarded a year's worth of bragging rights, the traveling Golden Niddy Noddy, and \$25 gift certificates for all team members. In 2016, 5,507,622 yards of

yarn were spun. We look forward to seeing how everyone does this year.

Don't forget to register for the newly reformatted 2018 Winter NeedleArts Market, which will be held from January 26–28 at Embassy Suites in Las Vegas. The winter market will include approximately 150 suites that exhibitors will turn into showrooms to display their latest products. Visit with your peers as you travel from room to room. Network and relax with friends at the hotel's nightly happy hours, where you can exchange best practices and ideas after the showrooms have closed. Visit tnna.org/winter for the latest news and information.

Join today at tnna.org to take advantage of all the exclusive benefits that the organization has to offer: online education, business marketing tools and advice, industry research, trade show events, networking and more. Already a member? Don't forget to renew your membership for another year of incredible programming, education and resources.

TNNA, founded in 1974, is a professional organization representing wholesalers, manufacturers, distributors, designers, publishers and other companies supporting the needlearts industry. For more information, visit www.tnna.org or call (800) 889-8662.



### **CRAFT YARN COUNCIL**

BY JENNY BESSONETTE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



## Having a Ball

rom clothing to shoes, pillows to earrings, pompoms and tassels are the hot new trend in the fashion world. Since these embellishments are quick and easy to make, CYC and its members have organized a campaign to promote and capitalize on this trend. It's a perfect opportunity for shops to provide inspiration to yarn lovers and newbies alike.

Pompoms and tassels are a great way to accessorize any outfit, bag or sweater; they are a perfect kid-friendly craft project; and they make terrific party decorations and home décor additions. They can be made in an endless array of colors and styles and are a great way to use up or sell odd balls of yarn.

CYC is working with its members to embrace pompoms and tassels and promote them during the fall yarn-selling season. This initiative involves a big push on social media and video content as well. Planning started last spring, with CYC companies developing a design brief that outlined details of the initiative and our theme: Pompom Party. Designers then

went to work creating new patterns featuring the embellishments for a September release. All members of the council, including yarn and accessories companies, publishers and online class companies, are promoting pompoms and tassels on their websites through patterns, social media and newsletters to inspire and engage knitters and crocheters with these quick and fun projects.

CYC developed many key areas on ways to promote the pompom and tassel trend. First we researched #pompomparty to develop a baseline so we could track growth throughout the season. We started pinning pompom and tassel photos in May, gaining 917 followers in just one month. We will also run articles and blog posts about pompoms and tassels, along with street and studio photography.

Several CYC members will be creating videos featuring pattern tutorials. To reach younger consumers, CYC will also focus on marketing to kids, teens and millennials. What is so appealing about this campaign is

that pompoms and tassels are key fashion accessories for all ages and skill levels. Whether a knitter or crocheter works with a richly textured, smooth, hand-dyed or solid yarn, his or her pompom or tassel will be one-of-a-kind. If local yarn stores across the country tie in with the pompom and tassel promotion, the impact of this campaign will increase exponentially. Consider:

- Window and in-store displays of pompom and tassel projects
- Hosting a Pompom Party in your store
- Holding a class on how to make pompoms and tassels
- Pompom yarn bombing your store
- Promoting the trend on your social media sites and making Facebook Live posts showing how to make pompoms and tassels
- Tying the campaign to I Love Yarn Day celebrations on October 14

Visit www.craftyarncouncil.com for ideas and inspiration and email info@craftyarncouncil.com for access to pompom and tassel assets.

The Craft Yarn Council was formed in 1981 to raise awareness about fibers. Visit craftyarncouncil.com or knitandcrochet.com for more information.



#### YARN GROUP

BY HEATHER ZOPPETTI. CHAIR



## There's a Place for You in Yarn Group

s I write my first article as Yarn Group chair, I am humbled and a bit overwhelmed. I'm currently the owner of Stitch Sprouts, a wholesaler; I'm also an active independent designer, technical editor and graphic designer, and I've worked in a retail yarn store. My varied experiences have given me unique insight into the future of our industry. I truly believe that TNNA, and more specifically Yarn Group, is stronger when growers, mills, wholesalers, distributors, retailers, reps, creatives and business services all work together to advance our industry. I look forward to serving TNNA and Yarn Group and will work hard to make sure that our voices are heard and that we stay true to our mission: to "promote the growth of the yarn industry by creating awareness and appreciation of the craft, encourage partnerships between members, and help to foster a strong marketplace through education and initiatives to benefit the diverse members of the handcraft community. We strive to support independent craft businesses with a focus on yarn-related goods and services. No matter the scale or scope of your company, if you recognize independent small businesses as a crucial part of your market, there is a place for you in Yarn Group."

In June we returned to Columbus, Ohio, with considerable eagerness (and a craving for Jeni's ice cream). We had a wonderful response to the show's business education classes; our team pulled out all the stops with a blockbuster lineup of classes taught by outstanding teachers. We hope you were able to take advantage of these classes; we certainly plan to offer similar opportunities in the future.

We're looking ahead to the TNNA winter market in Las Vegas, which is guaranteed to be exciting. First, Vegas! Second, this show will have a distinctly different format, as it will be housed in a hotel, Embassy Suites, instead of our standard convention center. We will still have a small ballroom of traditional booths, but

the majority of the vendors will display their wares in the living room area of their suites. As you hop from room to room, you'll be treated to whimsical window displays and innovative merchandising setups. This format has worked well for the needlepoint segment for a long time, and we are excited to give it a try.

Are you gearing up for the first annual Local Yarn Store Day, April 21, 2018? This coast-to-coast event is designed to drive yarn buyers into your bricks-and-mortar shop. Think of it as a nationwide yarn crawl. It is your opportunity to demonstrate the value of the LYS. What does the local yarn store offer that an online store does not? What in-store experiences can you provide that shoppers can't find elsewhere? Participation is free, but to get the full benefits of links, branding materials and graphics, e-mail lists, cross-promotion support and more, you must be a member of TNNA. For more information or to help with organizational efforts, e-mail us at yarngroup@tnna.org.

TNNA's Yarn Group is an industry-encompassing group that promotes the growth of the yarn industry, creates awareness and appreciation of the craft, and encourages partnerships among members of the community.



#### **SPINNING & WEAVING GROUP**

BY RITA PETTEYS, CHAIRPERSON



## Growing the SWG Community

hat a great TNNA summer show lots of energy, new vendors, new association management and plenty of buzz. If you weren't able to attend, here's a glimpse of the highlights:

The What's New area was revamped for this show, resulting in more foot traffic. Sample It! was also well attended, and there was a discernible buzz in the room as shoppers searched out the newest fiber, yarn, patterns, kits and accessories. In fact, several Sample It! vendors reported selling out on their samples—good news for them and for the industry as a whole.

Spinning and Weaving Group member exhibitors launched new and interesting equipment, yarns, fibers and specials. Sixteen members participated in SWG Bingo, a fun event that drove show shoppers to wholesalers' booths. Shoppers visiting the participating vendors' booths got their SWG Bingo cards punched; completed cards brought back to the SWG booth were entered in a prize drawing. With

this event, everyone is a winner: vendors see increased traffic and attendees hear about show specials. It grows commerce and in turn helps grow the spinning and weaving community. As an exhibitor, you can use SWG Bingo to help launch new products and offer showonly specials that will bring in shops that are looking to introduce spinning and weaving to their communities. If you are exhibiting, make sure that you check out all the opportunities for show add-ons from the Spinning and Weaving Group, Yarn Group and more. These are great opportunities to bring new shoppers and fiberarts enthusiasts to your products.

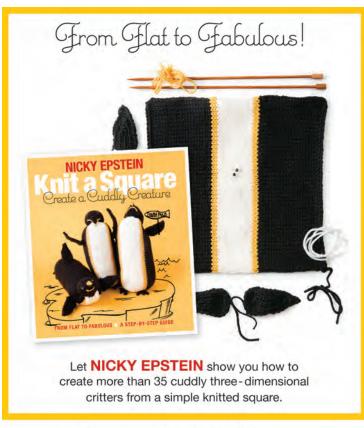
Speaking of community, social media continued to be play important role in the show. Stitchcraft Marketing erected a swatch wall in the TNNA Lounge for people to share their swatches, love letters to yarn and stories. Besides providing an opportunity to meet the Stitchcraft Marketing staff, the wall provided a great backdrop for photos of what was hap-

pening at the show. Check out hashtags #tnna, #tnnashow, and #tnnasummer17 to see what was trending, what excited shoppers, and what your favorite brands were showing.

Facebook also remains a popular destination for your favorite brands to showcase their TNNA booths, wares and community. If you couldn't be at the show, you can watch videos of the opening receptions and demonstrations of spinning wheels, weaving looms and other products that will enhance your store's inventory. Be sure to check out what the National NeedleArts Association and SWG have published on their own Facebook pages—you'll find loads of photos highlighting what's new, colorful and fun.

Lastly, don't forget that Spinzilla is happening October 2–8 to coincide with Spinning and Weaving week. There will be plenty of spaces for spinners to be a part of their favorite teams or spin "rogue." For more information, check out www.spinzilla.org and join in.

The goal of the Spinning & Weaving Group is to ensure a vibrant marketplace by promoting the joys of hand spinning and weaving. We are always looking for volunteers to help execute our vision. For more information, go to spinweave.org and see how you can become involved.









#### **ASSOCIATION FOR CREATIVE INDUSTRIES**

BY KRISTEN FARRELL, MANAGER OF MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS



## AFCI Continues Its Brand Refresh

ere at AFCI, we continue to keep our promise to inspire the next generation of creatives through sharing and teaching. Here's what we've been up to recently: Engaging content. We introduced a new brand and look for our magazine, now named Gradient. The quarterly publication provides an improved platform by which our members can discover thought-provoking content and emerging trends and position themselves as thought leaders and raise awareness of their businesses. Building community. We're fostering a deeper sense of community by supporting industry events. This year we sponsored Craftcation, a four-day business and makers conference, where director of membership Jason Baum discussed how creatives can find a community of likeminded friends by joining an association like AFCI. Also, President and Chief Executive Officer Mark Hill attended the Japan Hobby Show, the largest consumer craft show in Japan, to seek oppor-

tunities for our members abroad and to support

the international creative community. **Year-round education.** Our iDiscover Chats are changing the education landscape. These 15-minute talks are broadcast through Facebook Live, enabling our members to invest a short amount of time to learn about a variety of relevant subjects on demand and on the go. First launched at Creativation, our annual trade event, iDiscover Chats feature top speakers and leaders who share tips, resources and solutions for today's businesses.

Industry research. Did you know 28.8 million U.S. households participated in knitting or crocheting activities in the past 12 months, and 24 percent of them plan to continue or increase their involvement? Our 2016 Creative Products Size of the Industry Study offers compelling data about craft consumers, their purchasing behaviors and their attitudes toward creative activities. The full report is available to our members at no cost and to non-members for a fee at research.afci.global.

Creativation. Our premier trade event for the global creative arts products industry, entering its second year as the Creativation brand, will take place from January 18-22, 2018, in Phoenix. Attendees will have the opportunity to prepare for the 2018 business year through hands-on workshops and seminars, networking events and a twoand-a-half-day trade show. Our city-themed trade-show floor will include a Fashion Avenue where you'll discover new products and trends in the yarn and needlework space. Badge registration is open and is complimentary for AFCI members. Non-members may purchase a badge to access the event. Registration for the Creativation University workshops and events opened on September 12. Register now at CreativationShow.org.

Become a member of the Association for Creative Industries by visiting join.afci.global or by contacting us at membership@afci.global.

The AFCI is the premier trade association for the global creative arts products industries. Our members include the manufacturers, retailers, distributors, designers, educators, digital content providers, professional makers and DIYers and other creative professionals who comprise the \$40 billion+ creative-arts industries around the globe. For more information about AFCI, membership or the annual Creativation trade event, visit afci.global.







BY MARY HEATHER BROWNE, VP OF OPERATIONS AND DO-GOODER



## Making the Most of Ravelry

e enjoyed speaking with shop owners and other yarn businesses at the TNNA show in Columbus, Ohio, last June. We exhibit at TNNA so we can answer questions and get feedback from businesses using our site. Many of the shop owners we spoke with are successfully using our Ravelry Pro In-Store Sales service and wanted to know what else they can do on Ravelry to help their businesses connect with customers in our community.

Our first tip: Make sure your shop's Ravelry directory page is informative and up to date, with store hours, amenities, links to other social media channels and even photos of your store. Listing your shop in our directory is free. Each directory page includes a notes section in which you can list upcoming classes or events (or link to a page on your own website with this information), or share information about your shop's origins or staff. LYS directory pages are public, which means they show up in Internet search results and are viewable by anyone, even when they are not logged in to Ravelry.

We also fielded questions about our Local Yarn Store ads at TNNA. Once you have your Pro account set up, Ravelry's LYS ads are an affordable way to promote sales of all the yarns your bricks-and-mortar shop carries. You can list an unlimited number of yarns for one flat rate of \$10 per month. LYS ads link to your store's directory page on Ravelry, and while you have an active LYS ad we include your full yarn list from your ad on an "inventory" tab on this shop page.

Yarn shop ads are geo-targeted and shown to local users within a 60-mile radius of your shop. They appear under the About This Yarn information box throughout the site wherever a yarn is referenced: pattern pages, project pages and even in members' own stashes. Logo ads are an easy, inexpensive way to show your logo throughout Ravelry to users in your area.

After the LYS ads, our next-step advertising recommendation is for shops to place ads in local groups. With the group banner ads, you have room in your ad image to highlight classes and events, new inventory or any-

thing else you'd like to showcase. When you set up a group banner ad, a group selector tool allows you to search and find groups by zip code or location, showing you a short blurb about each group so that you can be sure they are not competitors' groups and are relevant to your shop.

If you are already using In-Store Sales, you'll see a link allowing you to edit your shop's directory page in the Yarn Shop section of your Pro account and can get started advertising in the Pro account Advertising section. If you are just getting started, visit ravelry.com/yarnshops for information and links that will get you set up and connected to your shop's page so that you can begin using In-Store Sales, advertising your shop and making sure your directory page looks great.

We hope that Ravelry helps you to connect to your customers and community, both nearby and around the globe. If you have questions about how best to use Ravelry for your business, please join us in the Ravelry Advertisers or Ravelry Shopkeepers groups.

For more information about In-Store Pattern Sales and other Ravelry services for local yarn shops, please visit ravelry.com/yarnshops.







# **Naming Rights**

A store by any other name will sell just as much yarn. Or will it?

BY DARYL BROWER

n any given afternoon, Debbi McCarty can look out her plate-glass window and see groups of tourists snapping selfies under the casino-style sign for her Las Vegas shop, Sin City Yarns. The shop's name plays on both its location near the Strip and the favorite vice of its target customers. It also brings it a lot of foot traffic. "You can bet they wouldn't be out there taking pictures if I'd named the store Debbi's Yarns," McCarty observes.

She's no doubt right. A name is a powerful thing. And while Debbi's Yarns would surely carry the same diverse mix of fibers that fill the bins at Sin City, it probably wouldn't pull in as many tourists. "People who aren't knitters stop and take pictures, too," McCarty says. "And lots of them come in and end up walking out with their first project." And why not? It's a lot of fun inside Sin City, as the name suggests.

#### Location, Location, Location

Some shops incorporate the name of a city, street or particular area of town into their names. It's an easy option that explains both where you are and what you sell and can be a lovely way to connect with local customers. But it can also seem a bit uninspired. The solution? Think like McCarty and choose a name that references rather than copies your location. Kris Porritt and Lisa Ruesch of Brookfield, Wisconsin, took their shop's name from the local appellation for the area: Cream City, so called for the light-colored brick that the region is known for. "There are a lot of businesses named Cream City this or that," Porritt explains. "So we are Cream City Yarn. It gives us a connection to the neighborhood."

#### Think Pink (or Blue or...)

Jennifer Campbell and Miko Schechter found naming inspiration for their Toronto store when they were scouting potential locations. "There was this incredible purple house that was for rent as a commercial space," Campbell explains. "It was way beyond our budget at the time, but we started playing a game: What would we name the shop if it were housed in that building?" They came up with The Purple Purl. "We liked the alliteration," says Campbell of the name choice. "It was catchy, it explained what we were selling and, maybe most importantly, the .com and the .ca for the name were available." The name also

had a personal connection. "Miko has always been obsessed with the color purple," Campbell explains. It was a good choice. "Purl" clearly identified it as a yarn shop, while "purple" added the sense of fun the two wanted to create. "It conveyed what we are right away," Campbell says. "Even when our windows were papered over during the initial setup, knitters walking by all knew that a yarn shop was coming to the neighborhood." Putting a hue in the name was also a "no-brainer" for branding—the color was a simple and effective starting point for logos and everything else. "Just make sure you really love the color," Campbell laughs. "It's going to come up a lot."

#### Growing Places

Sometimes names need to evolve with changing owners and changing visions for the store. When Melissa Kelenske purchased her Cedar, Michigan. shop, it was already called Inish Knits, a nod to the Irish wools and Aran patterns that the previous owner favored. As she and sister/partner Liz Neddo began rebranding the business [see more about them on page 32], they chose a new moniker: Wool & Honey. "It's a play on 'the land of milk and honey," says Kelenske. Leelanau County, where the shop is located, is also called the "land of delights," and the name references both the landscape and the things that delight knitters. The store carries both yarn and gift items: local chocolate, soy candles and, yes, at one point, honey. Wool clearly identifies yarn as the main commodity and the honey offered a natural jumpingoff point for logo imagery (a beehive); the shop often plays on words like "buzz," "hive" and "work" to evoke the sense of community and creativity that exists among knitters.

#### Getting Personal

Naming a shop for yourself, a mentor, your favorite aunt or even yourself is a lovely gesture, and done right it can be evocative. But simply slapping your name in front of "yarns" or "knits" doesn't have quite the same elegance or impact as, say, using a name on its own (think Nina, a popular Chicago shop) or choosing one that highlights a relationship, rather than a particular person—Two Sisters Yarn Company or Three Irish Girls, for example. As Debbi McCarty can tell you, a good name will intrigue, inspire and draw in business. But perhaps most important of all, the words lettered on your door guide customers to an expectation of what

will be waiting on the other side. Make sure you and your customers are sharing that vision.

#### **Name Games**

Run your name through these checks before you get that sign made.

- Say it out loud. When you share the name of your shop, do people ask you to repeat it? A name that's hard to pronounce is one that's hard to remember.
- Spell check. Don't omit, swap out or add letters to cutesy up a name. Customers should be able to find your site easily when they search online.
- Search for duplicates. Enter your name options into a search engine and see what comes up. You'll want to use the shop name in your web address, which is unlikely if multiple shops are already using the same name. (To instantly check domain availability, type your name into Shopify's Business Name Generator, www.shopify.com/tools/business-name-generator).
- Does it make sense? Does the shop name instantly indicate what you are selling? Incorporating words like purl, stitch, wool or fiber gets the point across. If you've fallen in love with a name that doesn't spell things out, consider adding a tagline. Nina, for example, follows up with the line "a well-knit shop."
- Consider nicknames. Think about ways the shop's name might be shortened. Jennifer Campbell was slightly distressed when customers began referring to The Purple Purl as "PP." They quickly intervened by using "the Purl" when describing the shop online, in newsletters or in conversation.
- Don't limit your options. Being too specific with a name can cause trouble if you end up expanding or downsizing your options. Tea and Stitches, Skeins and Scones and Clicks and Coffee are all awesome if you plan to always offer a two-forone business, but they are not so great if you end up dropping one of the categories down the line.

**Daryl Brower**, a New Jersey-based freelance writer, is a regular contributor to this magazine.



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# Getting to Know You

Personalized marketing and the Know, Like, Trust Funnel.

BY MARI CHIBA LUKE

ews flash: Your yarn/fiber/tool shop is not unique. Sure, some aspects set you apart from your competitors, but let's not kid ourselves: There are a thousand shades of that perfect red, countless varieties of hand-dyed superwash merino, and more options for amazing drop spindles than we can count on our fingers and toes. So why should a customer choose to buy a skein from your shop instead of from an independent indie dyer, the yarn shop 15 minutes to the west or on Amazon? Why? Because you can provide a better one-on-one customer experience.

If you've studied marketing theory, you're probably familiar with the Rule of 7, which posits that a consumer has to "hear" your marketing message seven times before he or she decides to buy. But in this age of mega competition. blasting your message aimlessly in the hope that you'll hit your target consumer isn't going to cut it. Consumers want to purchase from their "friends"—people they know, like and trust not from a faceless conglomerate. So even if the prices are cheaper at certain online shopping sites, you, as a small business, have a leg up. We call this journey of stranger to buyer—that is to say, how customers come to purchase from a particular store or brand—the Know, Like, Trust Funnel.

#### The Road to Trust

Making a great first impression is important as consumers get to know you. So how do people get to know your company? Print and digital advertising, earned media (print and digital articles/blogs/social media posts about your company), social media, referral from friends or family: all of these areas lay the foundation for converting potential customers into returning customers.

Next is getting a potential customer to like you. This is your time to show her who you are, what you believe in and why she should buy from you. Where do people begin to like your brand online? Your website (don't forget to include an "about us" page), blog and newsletter. At this stage, it's important that you convey how your product/service can make her life better, easier, more beautiful and more creative.

Finally, you reach a level of trust. How do you build trust with people you meet outside the business sphere? By being genuine, likable

and generous. The same rules apply to business, so your store's message should be all about the consumer. Connect with her on a personal level, provide value to her and show her that you understand her. How can you build trust with potential customers? Through tutorials, testimonials (on your website, in social media posting, in the form of reviews) and newsletters. It's important to remember that good friendships go both ways: You get to know your friend and she gets to know you. For a personalized marketing experience, work on providing the same experience for your customers. Tell them about you and your brand's values, but also communicate that you understand her concerns and her passions, and provide her with solutions—your product/service.

When planning your marketing strategy, consider people at each stage of the Know, Like, Trust chain. How does your content engage and bring people further into the funnel? What are you doing to increase brand awareness to invite more people along this path?

#### Implementing a Personalized Marketing Strategy

Knowing your target audience and tailoring your marketing strategy to their needs can make a positive impact on your business. In the yarn industry, it's safe to assume that your customer is a knitter, weaver, spinner or crocheter, but within these categories, there are plenty more niches to explore.

All the things you know about your friends are the same things you should know about your ideal customer. Give her a name, then create marketing materials that will appeal to her. Photographs, tutorials, newsletters and social media postings should be geared toward her likes.

You'll have more than one ideal customer, of course. How can you market to all of them effectively? The short answer is, you can't. Although there may be overlaps in what baby boomers and Millennials find beautiful, people in different stages of their lives, with different life experiences, won't feel connected to language or imagery in the same way. Baby boomers are likely to be knitting projects for their grandchildren. Gen-Xers may be knitting for high school or college-age kids. Older Millennials may be knitting baby items. The lesson? Know your audience, and segment your marketing.

Base your Facebook ads, postings and newsletters on what you've learned about your customers. If Consumer A has previously purchased a washable nylon/merino blend and a baby sweater pattern, put her in the baby pattern category. If Consumer B tends to buy 2,000+ yards of worsted-weight yarn, send her pattern inspiration for afghans, sweaters and other larger projects. If Consumer C views and purchases cotton, linen, bamboo and other non-animal-fiber yarns, she's probably not interested in sales of wool, hand-dyed or otherwise.

Back when people would routinely and primarily shop in person or order by phone, they were used to a more personal shopping experience: You'd talk to a real person who would ask you what you were looking for and provide answers to your specific questions or concerns. The rise of the Internet radically changed the marketplace, but customers still crave a personalized shopping experience. If a small business wants to succeed, not only does it need to be where its customers are; it needs to give them exactly what they're looking for. With 10,000 options for yarn available online at any given time, from anywhere in the world, how will you set yourself apart?

#### You've Got a Friend

A great exercise for determining your target customer is to create a customer avatar. Give her a name, then ask yourself the following questions:

- How would you describe her in terms of appearance, age and personality?
- Where does she live?
- What are her passions?
- What inspires her?
- What is her annual income?
- Where does she go on vacation?
- What does her house look like?
- Where else does she shop?
- If she were to say to you, "You will gain my trust and loyalty by giving me \_\_\_\_\_," how would you fill in the blank? Keep this virtual customer in mind with every business decision you make.

**Mari Chiba Luke** is a knitwear designer who markets crafty businesses at Stitchcraft Marketing.

# 2018 KNITTING TOURS

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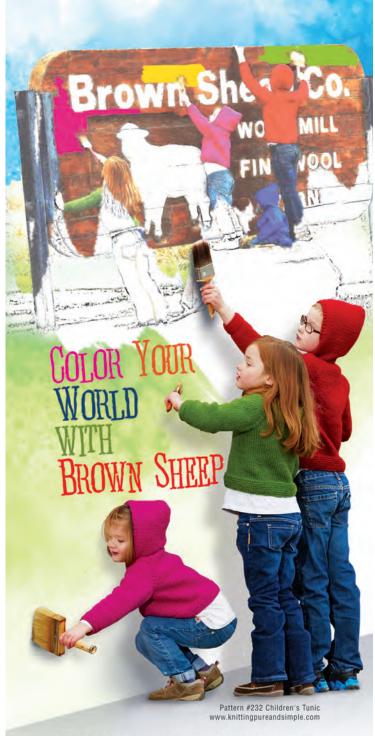
- Edinburgh Yarn Festival, the U.K.'s premier urban handknitting show, with a visit to the marketplace
- Visit to **Rowan** in West Yorkshire, which includes a yarn tasting and a presentation by their design team
- Walking tour of **York**, including the famous Minster
- Panoramic tour of **London**, as well as a presentation by designer **Debbie Bliss** and lots of free time to explore the city

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- Toronto **Knitters Frolic**, Toronto's premier fiber event, at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre
- Guided tour of the Toronto Textile Museum
- Visit to **Romni Wools**, with meet-and-greets with local designers
- A day with Koigu Wool Designs. Meet the Landra family, the team behind this booming business. Visit their studio and witness their unique dyeing process, which creates some of the most coveted yarn in the world
- A visit to Bergère de France
- Special visit to **La Maison Tricotée** and a meeting with a local dyer
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## Reach Out and Touch Someone

How Facebook is changing its own concept of "organic reach."

BY MARY MCGURN

he king is dead, long live the king!" In this case we're not referring to the passing of one king and the ascension of a new one, but the passing of Facebook Page Administrators' free ride on Facebook and the rise of "pay to play" on the social media platform.

When pages, as we know them today, arrived on Facebook in 2009, 100 percent organic reach was expected. (Facebook defines organic reach as "the number of people you can reach for free on Facebook by posting to your page.") But that started to change in 2012. Today, a page can expect to reach between 2 to 6 percent of its fans. Social media forecasters predict that Facebook Zero is on the horizon—the time when organic reach will be 0 percent for pages. Facebook's growth in on-platform advertising grew 50 percent from 2015 to 2016. In that same year. 75 percent of businesses on Facebook were paying to promote their posts. Looking at the first guarter of 2017, Facebook reported four million active advertisers and called attention to the fact that they were running out of ad space.

#### Reaching Out

Brian Boland, Facebook's vice president of advertising technology, had this to say in 2014, when Facebook's organic reach took its deepest decline: "I've read articles and answered questions from many people who are concerned about declines in organic reach for their Facebook pages. My colleagues and I at Facebook understand that this has been a pain point for many businesses, and we're committed to helping you understand what's driving this change."

Boland offered two main reasons for the change. First, there's too much content being published. It used to be that content creation was fairly laborintensive. But with smartphones, people and businesses can share important moments and experiences, articles, photos and videos with a few taps of a finger; the more people become adept with the technology, the more they use it. Facebook calculates that on average, 1,500 updates could appear in a user's news feed each time he or she logs in. If you're a user with lots of friends and page Likes, that number could rise to as many as 15,000 updates. To avoid this overload, while still assuring that what's seen is relevant and important to each user, Facebook's news-feed algorithm kicks in to reduce the number to about 300.

And that's the second major reason for the decline in organic reach—the news-feed algorithm.

#### Working the Feed

Understand how Facebook's news-feed algorithm works and you could exceed your maximum reach of 6 percent. When you post as a Page Administrator, nothing happens until the users who follow your page log on to Facebook. It is then that the algorithm looks at your post, plus everything else that could possibly be shown based on a user's individual preferences and actions, not the content itself. For example, if you publish a post and no other competing posts comes up in the time between your posting and a user's login, then there's a good chance your post will be served to them. Keep in mind that Facebook ranks posts from family and friends and from groups a user belongs to higher than posts from Liked pages. How tough is it to weigh in against groups and other Liked pages? Very: There's lots of competition. In 2016, one billion FB users belonged to groups, and the number of Facebook pages rose to more than 65 million. With this rise in the number of pages, Facebook saw a 50 percent growth in Liked pages among users.

What else does the news-feed algorithm factor in for a post to be shown? It is reported that the algorithm looks at roughly 100,000 personalized factors when making this determination. But if you keep in mind the following when posting, you'll be giving the algorithm a high-five:

- Who posted. If the user engages with the page's content, the algorithm recognizes this affinity.
- Type of post. If the user more often engages with a particular type of page post (video, photo, link or text), the algorithm will serve this type over the others.
- Post interactions. If the user reacts, comments and/or shares a post, this tells the algorithm there's a certain level of importance and relevance associated with it.
- When posted. Recency or time decay goes to the algorithm's purpose to keep users up to date on the latest news.

So as a Page Administrator, do you retreat from Facebook, or do you learn how to work with the algorithm to improve your organic reach? Will you pay to promote your posts? Bear this in mind: According to *Time* magazine, Facebook "has evolved into the most valuable billboard on Earth."

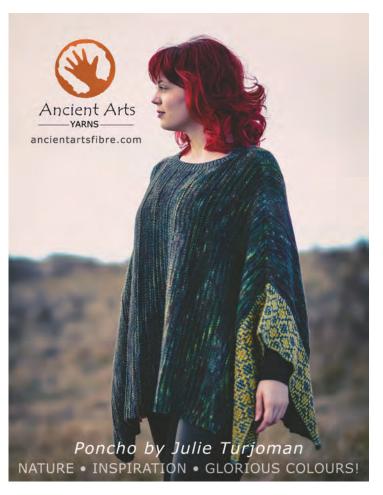
## Tips for Improving Your Organic Reach

- Post at lower activity times, when competition is less but there's still a large enough Facebook audience to see your post. Buzz Sumo, a leader in researching and monitoring online content, suggests posting between 10 P.M. and midnight in your fans' local time zone and on Sundays.
- Publish native and live videos. According to Social Media Examiner, video "triples the engagement and yields 1,200 percent more shares than text and image posts combined." Native video has 10 times the reach of a shared YouTube video.
- Follow the 80/20 rule as to content posted —80 percent of content should add value, educate and entertain, while only 20 percent should be promotional.
- Publish linked content that will encourage your fans to read more. Facebook's algorithm recently began ranking the time spent reading content within links. If you have a valuable long-form blog post or article, link to it.
- Post images directly to Facebook and not through Instagram. Though it's tempting to save time by publishing the same image to both platforms from Instagram, resist. Keep in mind too that if you do persist in sharing from Instagram to Facebook, hashtags are not welcomed.
- Instruct your page's fans to tell Facebook that they want to see your posts first in their news feeds and to be notified of your posts, events and live broadcasts by changing their "Following" settings on your page.
- Encourage your fans to go to your page directly to catch your posts.
- Finally, when you're ready to pay to play, promote those posts that have achieved above-average organic reach.

Mary McGurn of McGurn Media creates, manages and strategizes social media accounts for small businesses and nonprofits and, as a photographer/videographer, creates visual stories for digital platforms.







# RETAIL PROFILE

BY DARYL BROWER

# Wool & Honey

Cedar, Michigan



For Wool & Honey owner Melissa Kelenske, location is everything. She and her sister Liz Neddo run their gem of a yarn shop in Cedar, Michigan, which sits at the heart of picturesque (not to mention tourist-friendly) Leelanu County.

"We wanted our store to [reflect] the beauty of the area," Kelenske says. "People get emotionally attached to this part of Michigan—there's so much inspiration in the landscape." The shop serves as a creative link been the knitters who patronize the store and the natural wonders that surround it. The fibers are natural, many of them locally sourced and spun; the colors are a reflection of the waters and woods that are the major draw of the area.

"We focus on companies that add their stories to our own and brands that mirror the beauty of what's around us," adds Neddo. "It's a paradise up here, and we want the shop to reflect that."

Like the county it calls home, Wool & Honey has always been a little bit of paradise, but it took some time for the shop to find its niche. Kelenske purchased the business 2006. Back then it was called Inish Knits and focused mostly on the Irish patterns and tweedy wools that were the previous owner's passion. Kelenske gradually transitioned the inventory toward what Neddo dubs "the traditional '00s yarn shop," with quick-knit scarves and novelty yarns that were so popular at the time. But things still didn't feel quite right. Yarn shops are plentiful in this part of the country, and the store needed something to set it apart. "You have to define who you are," says Neddo. "You can't please everyone. You have to do what you do best." And what Kelenske discovered she did best was tell a story.

"People want to know where their tools and materials come from," Kelenske says. She had been gradually adding yarns from local dyers, so she made

U.S.-made artisan wools, cottons and linens the focus. Michigan-made walnut, cherry and maple needles and locally crafted stone stitch markers joined the mix, as did soy candles and chocolates. "All local, luscious things that support area artists," says Neddo.

In 2010, on Inish Knits' tenth anniversary, Kelenske decided to rebrand the shop to fit its new, natural slant. She renamed it Wool & Honey, a play on the "land of milk and honey," making a connection between the shop and Leelanu County's nickname, the "land of delights." In her blog and newsletter, she began telling the stories behind the fibers and tools that filled the shop. She started an Instagram feed that blends posts of the shop's latest offerings with pictures of northern Michigan's gorgeous lakes and woodlands. And in 2012, she brought Neddo on board, something she'd been urging for more than four years. "I'm about the process," Neddo says. "Melissa is the creative pulse. We are complementary halves, and I think that makes for a great working relationship." Kelenske agrees. "I'm a thinker," she says. "Liz makes sure things get done."

One of the things they've managed to get done is the Sleeping Bear Yarn Club, a service that keeps customers-even those from out of townconnected to the natural beauty surrounding the shop. Those who sign up receive a monthly package that includes an exclusive hand-dyed yarn in a colorway based on a Leelanu County landmark; a coordinating stone stitch marker; and a pattern for a shawlette, socks or a baby sweater. Customers who commit to a full year of service also get a tote bag, logo stich marker and a discount code or coupon for 3 percent off all purchases at the shop. "It's like getting a care package from Leelanau County delivered to your door," Neddo says. The shop also runs 12 Knits of Christmas, a pattern program that's now in its tenth year. It features kits for small-scale patterns—a new one each month—that are geared to gift giving. Customers who purchase a single kit are entered into

a drawing for a \$100 gift certificate; those who purchase all twelve kits are entered into a raffle for a shawl kit valued at \$225. "It's a way to keep customers excited and involved," says Neddo.

Wool & Honey hosts plenty of events knit-alongs, ice cream socials, and "yarnto-table" weekends that bring together local fiber artists, designers and farmers. Partici-



pants are treated to coffee (or, depending on the hour, wine) and locally produced food while enjoying a trunk show and lectures about local farming and fiber operations; workshops in dyeing and other creative fiber processes round out the rest of the weekend. Classes, however, are something they haven't had much success with. "We've found that one-onone lessons work best for our customers," says Neddo. "So we charge an hourly rate for those."

And while customers certainly love convening at the shop for a dose of beauty and inspiration, Kelenske and Neddo find that most of their volume stems from online sales. That's not surprising considering the two put just as much effort into creating the virtual atmosphere of their website as they do with the physical store. Clean and easy to navigate, the site is packed with magazine-worthy photos and engaging text to draw in customers. And while it originally served as a way for visiting knitters to keep in contact with the shop after their vacations came to a close, it's now doing the oppositedrawing new customers to the store to see it live and in person. "We're finding that the more we put online, the more people find us here in Michigan," says Neddo. "They tell us that they follow us on Instagram and just had to visit when they were here." After all, it's a great location.

### Wool & Honey

9031 S. Kasson Street, Cedar, MI 49621; (231) 228-2800; www.woolandhoney.com

Years in business: 17 years (11 under Kelenske)

Staff: 3 part-time Square footage: 1,000

Hours: Monday-Friday: 10-5, Saturday: 9-4





# On Newsstands October 17









## COMPANY PROFILE

BY MARYAM SIDDIQI

Lang Yarns



Ravelry, its yarns are available only through specialist retailers. "We believe in the retailers," Lang says. "They give service to the consumers and must be

Known for its high-quality fibers, the vast

sustained."

majority of which are sourced in northern Italy, Lang specializes in precious and natural fibers—an area of innovation for the company. Lang's range includes six different qualities of cashmere, a camel blend and a yak blend, which launched five years ago. Innovation can also be found in the way the yarn is packaged, dyed and processed. The Mille Colori 200gram ball is designed so that knitters can create a hat, scarf and pair of mittens from a single ball of the virgin wool/acrylic blend. Puno, an extra-fine virgin merino, baby alpaca and silk blend, is, as Lang describes, "a nearly perfect dégradé." To achieve the blend of colors, in which one melts into the next almost like a gradient, the yarn is hand-painted on a swatch and then reopened and spun back on a ball again. Lang reports that Puno was the most talked

And then there's the new Merino 130 Compact, which the company bills as a world first. Available in 24 hues, "it is a pure extra-fine merino wool but seems to have the texture of cotton yarn," says Lang. A compact spinning machine spins the wool using "targeted aerodynamic forces," producing a yarn unlike other merinos on the market.

about wool at the summer 2017 TNNA show.

To celebrate 150 years in business, and using some of the company's most popular yarns, model Jennifer Koch, who has appeared in a number of



and sometimes to push things a bit."

Keeping up with market trends and pursuing innovation are two significant motivating factors that have propelled Lang Yarns, creator and purveyor of premium and luxury yarns, throughout its history.

And it is a rich history: This year, Lang celebrates 150 years in business.

"We started as a cotton spinning mill, and in the past we did industrial spinning, twisting, weaving, knitting and hand knitting," says Lang, who is the sixth generation of the family to sit at the helm of the company. Since 2000, the company has focused exclusively on developing yarns and patterns. "I think it is important for our industry to always combine yarn and design," he explains. "A team of freelance designers develop our patterns for us. They get a briefing from our product manager and then come back with proposals. Then we develop the prototypes, knit the prototypes, take pictures, write instructions and do the translations. We publish our patterns in six languages."

The company's headquarters are located in the small town of Reiden, Switzerland, where logistics, product development, design development and marketing are centered. A team in a second office in Korschenbroich, Germany, near Dusseldorf, takes care of sales and distribution. Lang Yarns' customer base is primarily European; North America, South Korea, China and Russia are the most significant markets outside the company's home base. And while pattern books and designs can be bought directly through the company's website or through



Employees: 70

Fun fact: In the 1860s, Theodor Lang acquired a water mill in the Swiss town of Reiden, where Lang Yarns is headquartered today. The mechanical cotton-spinning mill that he built there was the region's first factory.

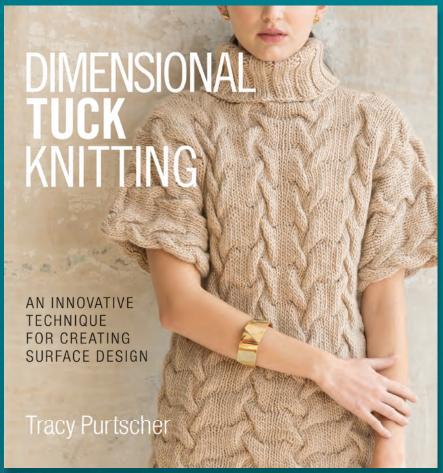
the company's campaigns, created a capsule collection. "We worked with Jennifer for about three years as a model before we realized that she's a knitter," Lang explains. "She went to the Royal College of Art in London and got her master's degree in knitwear design. Based on our past collaborations, we asked Jennifer to create for us a collection using a few of our yarns. We're very satisfied with the results. She's an up-and-coming talent." Koch's collection, called Carte Blanche, consists of six original designs: short- and long-sleeve pullovers, a vest and a cardigan.

Also for its 150th, the company published a commemorative booklet in which Lang writes that for a business to survive this long, luck is required, as is the ability to positively adapt to changes—in technology, the market, local and world culture and politics. A recent, and significant, change undertaken by the company is the launch of its Trace Your Yarn program, which allows knitters to learn about the origins of Lang yarn through every step of the manufacturing process. After scanning a QR code on the ball band or entering a ball's product name, number and/or dye lot on the company's website, knitters receive information about the farm and sheep where the fibers originated, the carding, spinning and twisting processes (including what's involved with each step and where it happened) and about quality control.

"We believe that our customers are becoming more and more interested in where their products are coming from," says Lang. "The textile industry sometimes is so complicated; we just want to make this [information] open and official."



## DISCOVER A WHOLE NEW DIMENSION OF TEXTURE

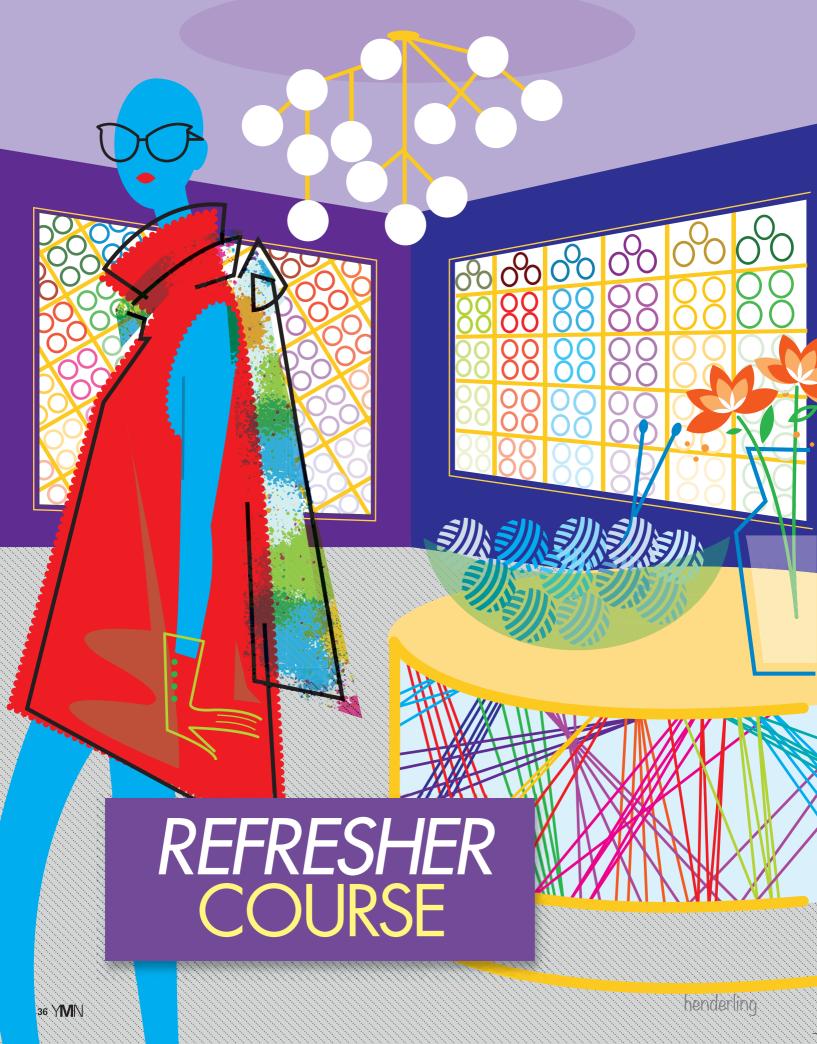


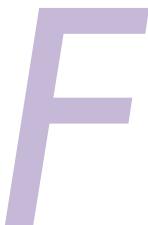
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#### By Daryl Brower

irst impressions matter, especially in retail. Every shop has its own aesthetic—country cozy, city chic, modern minimalist, you name it. But when customers walk into your shop, what do they see? A well-organized space filled with luscious textures, colors and ideas for creating that has them eager to dive in? Or a cluttered collection of fibers and patterns that

will take too much time and effort to sort through? (Guess which one will build bigger sales.) Does your store provide something fresh and exciting to inspire both new and regular customers each time they walk in, or do they see the same thing every time they visit? The latter may

make regulars feel comfortable, but the former will inspire more knitting—and buying—by regulars and new visitors alike. Below are a few steps you can take to ensure your sales floor is working hard for you.

#### Start With a Warm Welcome

Ideally, customers should be introduced to something new with each visit. Seasonal displays, samples for new patterns and pull-outs of a particular brand should all be show-cased near your entry and should change often—every two weeks at a minimum. That doesn't mean you have to purchase new product each week; a change as simple as moving a display rack from one side of the store to the other or switching up the samples on the mannequins can focus customers' attention on something that's been sitting in the shop all along. Be sure to mix and match merchandise as well. Accessorize your dis-

play with project bags, pins and other little items that will send customers on a search through the store for other, similar items. Fresh looks keep customers interested.

Regularly reworking and reconfiguring displays can help solve practical problems as well, especially if space in your store is tight. Shifting furniture and fixtures can help you find a home for new merchandise that may not fit in the existing layout. At Cream City Yarn in Brookfield, Wisconsin, owners Kris Porrit and Lisa Ruesch make changes as often as twice a week. "Our shop is very small, and to make room for new and restocked yarns we have to change things up quite often," Porrit says.

Front-of-store displays should be engaging, but don't let them tower over everything else. Keep them on a level that's eye-catching but not so tall that they block the view of what's waiting beyond. U shapes behind a display—retail merchandising experts call this a "hug"—will encourage customers to stop and really look at what's there. Accomplish this with stacks of crates or baskets that flank the main display, by placing chairs on either side, or by suspending a circular sign from the ceiling above the display.

Put the most compelling display to the right: Marketing studies show that consumers prefer to move counterclockwise around a space, so a bright splash of color or interesting texture will lead them into a full-circle tour of the shop. Put the display to the left and they may just look and leave. There's one exception to this rule: If the location of your door

or space constraints make it impractical to lead customers to the right, make it obvious to them that the path leads left. Put your main display to the left and angle it toward the interior so that it puts them on the path to the center of the store.

Don't forget about the exterior space—when the weather cooperates, set a basket of colorful yarns or a sweater-wearing mannequin outside to entice passersby into the shop. A nicely lettered chalkboard sign that announces new yarns, classes or upcoming events or something as simple as "come knit with us!" is also a way to welcome newcomers. Change it often so those walking or driving by can see what's new.

#### Work the Space

Don't focus so much attention on the entryway that you forget about

the rest of the shop. Display shouldn't stop at the entrance; place something at the ends of aisles (or the back wall if you don't have aisles) as well—a wall of samples, an attractive collection of books and patterns, even a place to sit. If you have the space, angle aisles so that they lead to a selection of merchandise at the back of the shop. The idea is to get customers exploring.

For maximum appeal and ease of shopping, shelves and slatwalls should be well stocked but not overstuffed. It's tempting to display your entire inventory, especially if storage space is tight, but overflowing bins and slots look messy and make it difficult for customers to find what they need, resulting in skeins tumbling to the floor. Instead, fill baskets and cubbies to a level that looks pleasing and offers at least enough of a single color to complete a large sweater. Leave the rest in storage and restock the shelves as necessary. Things will look neater, access will be easier and you'll get a better sense of what's selling

by seeing which bins need topping off and which aren't moving at all.

As you put items out on the sales floor, make sure they are being shown to their best advantage. Hang hand-dyed hanks and luxury fibers on pegs or dowels to make them look even more special—for security, set them close to the register so you can keep an eye on them—and sort skeins and balls on shelving by color or type. [For more on yarn sorting, see page 38.] Clustering like items together helps your selection look cohesive and attractive. Take all products out of their shipping packaging—10 skeins in a plastic bag is easy for you to shelve but not especially appealing for a shopper.

Ideally, your floor setup will lead customers to explore. Test out how well your layout works by enlisting a few friends who don't visit often to stop by and see where your aisles lead them. Ask for their impressions. Were they able to find all the merchandise? Did any areas encourage them to linger? Did any seem off-putting? Take note of their observations and make adjustments as needed. It could be that you'll need to move the worktable you use for stitching sessions to the back of the shop so it doesn't block traffic or reconfigure a few display fixtures to create a more pleasing flow.

#### Spotlight the Special, but Organize the Rest

Set aside an area for new arrivals, "hot" projects or old favorites that you want to highlight. At Cream City, those items find a home on a



center display table, and they are constantly rotating. "We also run a slideshow on our TV to highlight shop events and new yarns," Ruesch says. Don't limit highlights to just yarns and samples. You can create similar areas in your notions section by stocking a table or shelf topper with must-have tools or knitting bags. Sample garments should receive similar treatment. If you host an in-house trunk show, create a display area with pieces from the collection and signage that talks up any event that will run with the show.

Displays that mix tools, patterns, samples and yarns are inspiring, but make sure the

rest of your shop is organized so that customers can easily see what you have to offer. Think of your shop as a mini department store, and create a definitive home for the categories of items you carry: needles, tools and notions, books and patterns, bags and cases, gift items and apparel.

#### Check It Out

Merchandising wisdom says the cash wrap should be located to the left of the shop entrance. Again, this placement is based on shoppers' natural tendency to head to the right when they enter a store. Psychologically, a register placed immediately inside the entrance and to the right feels "pushy." When the register is to the left, chances are your customers will move completely through the space, seeing all you have to offer and increasing the chances that they'll pick up something extra on the way.

Speaking of extras, don't overlook the cash wrap as space to encourage sales. Display small impulse items like stitch markers, key chains,

Once you have things in order, make sure regular housekeeping is part of your schedule.

novelty tape measures and shawl pins near the register to encourage add-on buys. The register is also a great space to display gift cards and brochures advertising classes or special events.

#### Work Behind the Scenes

Organization doesn't stop at the sales floor. If your storage space is a jumble of unopened boxes, bags of yarn and paperwork, you'll never be able to find what you need when you need it. Nor will you have an easy time figuring out what's moving and what isn't. Resist the temptation to store boxes behind the register unless you are exceptionally short on space.

If you are, stick to storing smaller items like needles and notions, and make sure there are dedicated areas for them, preferably labeled.

If you are lucky enough to have dedicated office space, don't load it up with merchandise that's waiting for its turn on the sales floor or items that need shipping—put those items in the stockroom where they belong. If your storage space has to do double duty as an office, carve out a corner for a desk, computer and any other items you need to run the business. Reserve the rest for inventory and a place to sort yarns and tools (you may want to follow the sorting system you use on the sales floor).

Once you have things in order, make sure regular housekeeping is part of your schedule. Assign a staffer to dust, straighten and refill displays and ensure that everything is in order. Make a habit of doing a midday walk-through to make sure everything is in its proper place. Your store will look the better for it, and more browsers will find their way to the register.

## WHERE THE YARN IS

Great yarns result in great sales, but they'll be even greater if there's some order to where your hanks and skeins find a home. Sorting your selection in a way that makes it easy for both customers and staff to easily find what they are looking for (and make new discoveries in the process) will pay off in better service, bigger sales and a more manageable inventory. There are multiple ways to get all that fiber into focus. Here are a few of the most popular.

- PUT FIBER FIRST. Piling all the cottons in one spot, the wool in another, and synthetics in a third is an easy way to organize: wools go on this wall, cottons over there. Things can get tricky with blends, though—which fiber determines the category? Suddenly your seemingly simple process isn't so simple after all. And while customers may like having a clear starting point for their project ("I want wool"), this organizational method may discourage them from branching out into new fibers or make it difficult to find exactly the weight or type of yarn necessary for a particular project. It can also look messy when unlike items are tossed together. To mitigate those drawbacks, further subdivide by color or weight (or maybe both) and step back to make sure the overall visual effect is pleasing.
- FOLLOW THE RAINBOW. Displaying yarns by color looks luscious, grabs attention and is, on the surface, a simple way to

organize. You will need to follow a few rules to make it work, however. First, make sure you have enough inventory in a good range of colors to make an effective statement. A few hanks of yellow here and a smattering of purple there won't make much of an impact. For the most compelling look, arrange hues from dark to light or section the colors into categories: brights, pastels, neutrals and variegateds, for example. (You can use the manufacturer's color cards as a guide for sorting.) From there, subcategorize by shade, weight and texture to help customers find exactly what they need.

- BUILD BRAND RECOGNITION. Sorting your skeins by yarn company is another way to bring order to your yarn wall. Since most companies work hard to craft a yarn story, it's relatively easy to create a cohesive look for each brand. Posters, patterns and a free-standing display unit make it even easier to organize, plus brand-loyal customers will know exactly where to find what they are looking for. But before you sort skeins in this fashion, carefully consider how deep you've bought into the line. If you have a full range of colors and yarn types, by all means move on. If your collection consists of just a few favorites from each manufacturer, you likely won't have enough product to make a strong visual impact.
- WEIGHT FOR IT. Arranging your yarns by weight or gauge (worsteds, fingering, chunky) is the one of the most straightforward approaches to display. Customers may easily find what they need for a particular project in a variety of price points, but the display likely won't be the most visually appealing option possible. Subsorting by brand, fiber or color can help create a cleaner, more visually appealing look.



# THE MASTERS

## **MAGGIE JACKSON**

AT A MAGGIE.



This year marks forty years since Maggie Jackson created the MaggiKnits brand. YMN's Erin Slonaker sat down to talk about the company origins, Jackson's own approach to knitting and more.

#### YMN: How did you learn to knit?

**MJ:** My mother, who was a brilliant knitter, taught me to knit on our small dairy farm in Northern Ireland when I was 6. There wasn't really anything else to do on the farm in the evenings, especially on long winter nights. She always knit for my two brothers and me. Of course there wasn't the beautiful choice of yarns there is today, and mum often would rip out sweaters, wash the yarn and reuse it.

#### YMN: What led you to design your first knits?

**MJ:** I started designing at 12. I loved the process of going from ball of yarn to end result, and I loved having something different from everyone else. I drew out shapes on newspaper and just knit to that shape. I had an old Singer treadle sewing machine, so I made fabric trousers and skirts to match, little knowing then that I was starting my lifetime career.

I think like a born musician—ideas just flow naturally in my head. When I was a teenager, at the local disco every Wednesday, people would tell me that they couldn't wait to see what I would be wearing, since it always was different. My career choice didn't surprise them.

#### YMN: Forty years ago, you started your company. What was it like, creating your own brand?

MJ: I studied fashion at Belfast College of Art, at small the height of "the Troubles." Being the eldest plus to child, I was expected to do something secure, like teaching. [Choosing a career in] fashion was scary, but as my mother says, I always THEY'RE LOOKING

had an inner determination. I

also think I was naive; I really hadn't a clue what I was starting in the back room of our house. [She initially sold one-off designs directly to the public.] Designing came so easy to me, but business did not. I was the first fashion designer to set up in Northern Ireland, so I had no one else to show with or compare business notes with. Building a brand image came later, after learning about marketing, merchandising, accounts, selling techniques and, of course, how to use a computer. There were no fashion mags or fashion programs then. I just wanted to design and make people look and feel like a million dollars.

#### YMN: Where do you get your inspiration?

**MJ:** I was trained to read the trends and then put my own signature on them. I still follow the fashion shows and the international color authority, looking not just at knitwear but at fabric designs too. I think being Irish has a little to do with it, too—being creative is in our blood.

#### YMN: You've always had a unique approach to the yarns you use. What do you look for in a yarn?

**MJ:** Lightness, drape, texture, color; yarns that keep their shape when knit in a garment and feel like a second skin when worn. You are creating a knitted fabric that has to complement all sizes and heights. Ready-to-wear is sold from a hanger: If it doesn't appeal to a customer, it stays on the hanger. It has to fit, drape well and feel good and make the wearer look good.

#### YMN: What made you return to the handknitting world after decades of creating awardwinning ready-to-wear?

MJ: Hand knitting was a small percentage of MaggiKnits. Fine machine-knit cashmere or lamb's-wool suits were mixed with Irish linen fabric pants, skirts, shirts or coats. The fashion industry is extremely difficult and competitive. The knitting industry is too, but in a much pleasanter way. It really came down to a business decision—ready-to-wear was 80 percent of my business and knitting 20 percent. That reversed, and I couldn't cope with both, so one had to go.

## YMN: How does living in the U.S. compare with where you grew up?

**MJ:** Like chalk and cheese. Growing up on a small farm, bringing up three children by myself, plus trying to run a business—it was very tough.

My kids are now adults, giving me the freedom to travel. I live partly in the U.S. and partly in Ireland. I still work when I'm in Ireland; the Internet is a wonderful tool no matter where you are. I love the United States and how loyal my customers are. People have been so kind

to me over the past 18 years. Maggie's House in Savannah, Georgia, is now set up with a show-room, classroom and bedrooms for mini retreats for six people at a time. I want to pass on what I've learned as I head toward retirement in Ireland—though not for a while yet! These last few years of my career are about fun and learning.

## YMN: How has the industry changed since you started your business?

**MJ:** People are more yarn-savvy and knowledgeable, allowing them to order online. Our online business has grown hugely. I have been amazed at what Americans want to knit from my collection—bigger projects that a few years ago they wouldn't have tackled. Still, business is business. You have to show new and exciting projects and give great customer service if you want to sell.

#### YMN: Predict the future of the industry for us.

MJ: The industry is cyclical; right now, machine knitting is making a comeback. I believe there are too many similar shows and yarns, but if you have the right product, people will want it. We have to find a way to excite customers again. It's all about giving them a new experience. This is why I am doing knitting murder mystery retreats that include a bus tour, a wee boat cruise, plus an exciting knitting project and fashion show. We're not in a normal classroom as we are on the Maggie's Ireland Knitting Retreat.

#### YMN: What do you like to do in your free time?

**MJ:** I have seven grandchildren who don't want to hear about Granny Maggie's knitting. It's about making them laugh, telling made-up stories and, just as my father did, doing silly, mischievous things, feeding them sweets and sending them home hyper! And I get to enjoy time with my fabulous mum.

#### YMN: English or Continental?

MJ: English and two straight needles, always.

#### YMN: What's on your needles right now?

MJ: An interiors collection of pillows and throws.



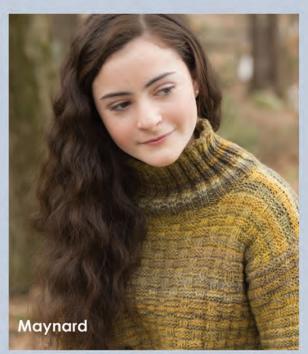
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