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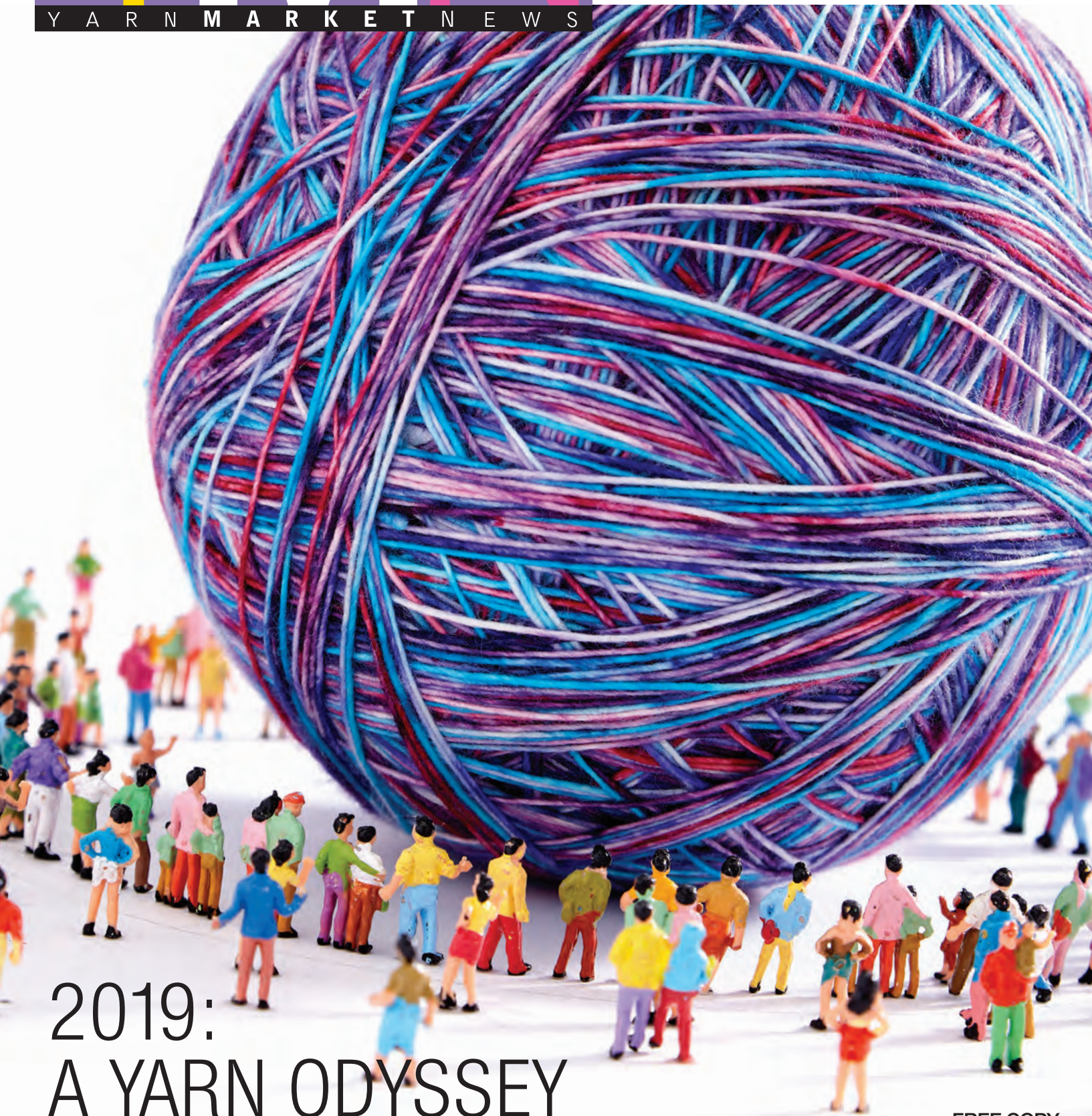
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# 2019: A YARN ODYSSEY

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# Looking Back, Looking Forward



ROSE CALLAHAN

## *Where were you five years ago?*

It was the fall of 2013. Some of you may not have even owned your business in the yarn industry yet, while others of you had been at it for well over 20 years. Some of you had not yet become parents; others were close to becoming empty nesters. A lot can change in five years, but of course, a lot can stay the same.

Five years ago, *Yarn Market News* made a change. Because of dwindling advertising dollars, we announced that we would be publishing three issues a year instead of five. And this issue marks our first all-digital issue, born out of both a desire to go green and to help the magazine's struggling bottom line.

But while we've seen some yarn companies shutter in the past five years, we also know that thousands of new knitters and crocheters were made in that time, whether they learned at a shop, from a friend or at a festival or event. The industry has shifted as necessary to respond to these changes, becoming more innovative, more committed to the ever-present dominance of social media, more savvy overall.

Now we're looking forward. Where will we be in five years' time? Leslie Petrovski explored this question for her article "Futurecast: Is There Such a Thing as a Crystal Yarn Ball?" (page 31). Read what others in the industry predict for the year 2023.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Erin".

**Erin Slonaker, Editor in Chief**

## on the cover

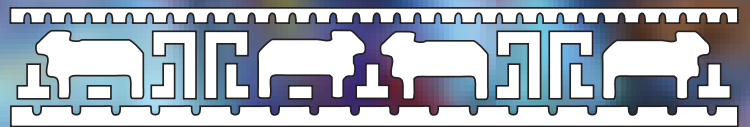
Koigu's Laceweight, available in a dizzying array of colors, covers a "monolith" that has drawn us to it. In *2001: A Space Odyssey*, the monolith portends technological advancements. What could this mean?

Photograph by Marcus Tullis

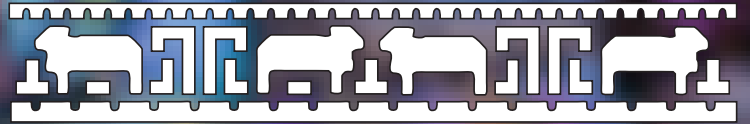


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Secret Garden Cowl By Unjung Yun  
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OCTOBER 2018

## features

### 31 FUTURECAST

YMN ponders the future of the yarn industry.  
By Leslie Petrovski



30

Cestari Sheep and Wool Company produces yarn and other wool products sourced solely in the USA.



29

The Rochester-area yarn shop Yarn Culture gets a boost from its strong online and festival presence.



8

Namaste bags has a new owner; hats not hate; Craftsy rebrands; must-see craft TV; training 10,000 new knitters and more.



18

Silk and silk-blend yarns add a welcome touch of luxury to fall wardrobes.



34

Yonca Ozbelli says "doing the right thing for our customers" is a guiding principle for Universal Yarn.

## in every issue

- 2 EDITOR'S LETTER
- 8 MARKET REPORT
- 16 BOOK REVIEWS
- 18 YARN FORWARD
- 22 YARN GROUP
- 24 CRAFT YARN COUNCIL
- 25 ASSOCIATION FOR CREATIVE INDUSTRIES
- 26 SMART LEGAL
- 27 SMART MARKETING
- 28 SMART ONLINE
- 29 RETAIL PROFILE  
Yarn Culture,  
Fairport, New York
- 30 COMPANY PROFILE  
Cestari Sheep and Wool Co.,  
Churchville, Virginia
- 34 CELEBRITY INTERVIEW  
Yonca Ozbelli, Universal Yarn





Balsam Mitts



Red Cypress Socks

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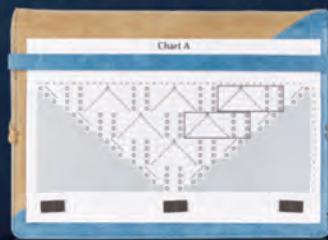
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## OMMMMM MY!

▼ Remember **Namaste** bags, those thoughtfully constructed vegan knitting bags in Starburst colors? They're back.

Last April, **Jimmy Beans Wool** purchased the brand and has been working to refresh the brand's look and feel, bring back staple favorites and create new handbags. The re-incarnated Namaste line debuted in September at Vogue Knitting LIVE! San Francisco. "It's super-exciting," says Laura Zander, co-founder and CEO of Jimmy Beans Wool, "and something new to tackle."

Fans of the buttery-soft "pleather" purses will appreciate the fact that Namaste will continue to offer multi-functional bags suitable for stitching and street. Each bag has classic features such as pockets designed for notions and yarn, along with fresh elements: a tassel with removable lotus-logo stitch marker, a key leash that doubles as an emergency ruler, a Namaste needle gauge, a darning needle, a small bullet journal and a patent-pending yarn feeder that allows the bag to function as a yarn bowl. Bags also come packaged in a dust bag

that doubles as an extra project tote.

"We have been very intentional [in our desire] to create ways to knit out of these bags," Zander explains, "and have included extra features that are knitter-specific."

Crocheters and knitters can choose from five handbag styles—a fold-over bag, a backpack, a shoulder bag, a tote bag and a cross-body in teal, gray, petal, plum and black. Other Namaste products to expect are Oh Snap mesh pouches and various-sized Buddy Cases—including a stylish train case, which fits under a standard plane seat—now with stronger magnetic surfaces and tougher frames.

"The Namaste message was kindness," Zander says about the brand refresh. "We have taken that and incorporated mindfulness. The idea is to help you get to mindfulness faster wherever you are, so you can take a few minutes to breathe, slow down, do a few stitches and ground yourself."

The bags will be available retail only for a time to allow for customer feedback. For more information, visit [www.knitnamaste.com](http://www.knitnamaste.com).

## NEW NAME FOR CRAFTSY

▼ The online learning platform formerly known as Craftsy is now **Blueprint**. The rebrand was announced in July and reflects the site's expanded role as a subscription service providing broader lifestyle content in addition to arts and crafts.

"We're still very focused on the traditional part of the business," explains Blueprint's General Manager Catherine Balsam-Schwaber, "which includes fabric, fiber, art and photography, as well as growing into wellness and performing arts categories such as dance. We had heard from the existing Craftsy audience and other research we had conducted that members who were focused on areas like knitting and quilting wanted classes in other areas they were passionate about."

Owned by NBCUniversal Cable Entertainment, Blueprint is not only leveraging a library packed with 3,000 hours of existing classes by crafting gurus including master knitter Ann Budd, cake designer Joshua John Russell and Suzy Williams of Suzy's Quilts; it's also adding additional craft-oriented classes while introducing new categories such as dance, music, writing, yoga, fitness, home décor, entertaining and family. Also fresh "Inspo-tainment" programs are coming online to support Blueprint's content areas, including YouTuber Kristy Glass's just-released Jump into Knitting series, which she teaches with her daughter

Olive, and The Stitch Dimension, her fiber primer program.

The NBCUniversal connection means that Blueprint has access to stars that include TV's *Making It* judge Simon Doonan (pictured opposite), who's featured in the Blueprint series Spark, about transforming inspiration into art (a show that also showcases crochet artist Olek), and Al Roker of *Today*, who dishes up grilling expertise.

"We want to meet people where they are on their journey," Balsam-Schwaber says. "Sometimes you want something to watch and sometimes you want to learn and sometimes you want to get into the doing of your projects. This is the place where our members' passion turns to action."

Subscribers can access Blueprint's content at [myblueprint.com](http://myblueprint.com), via the Blueprint app and on Roku.





# BEANIES AGAINST BULLIES

▼ When **Shira Blumenthal**, Brand Ambassador for Lion Brand Yarn, was in fourth grade, she was bullied by another girl in class. The classmate tormented Blumenthal about her weight, her name, her face, her brother's name—anything she could think of. "[After school] my mom would be there and hold me so tight," Blumenthal says, "because I would just cry in her arms."

Government estimates indicate that about one in four kids in the United States is bullied and that regular bullying can lead to depression, anxiety and suicidal behavior. Remembering the trauma of her own experience, Blumenthal wondered whether Lion Brand could make a difference. She contacted Stomp Out Bullying, the country's leading anti-bullying nonprofit, asking, "Is there a way for us to work together? I know where to get some yarn."

Add a slogan—#hatnothate—the anti-bullying color blue and the World Day of Bullying Prevention (October 1), and a craftivist movement was born.

Partnering with Stomp Out Bullying, Lion Brand urged crocheters and knitters to stitch up, wear and post their blue hats to increase awareness about the issue throughout October, which is Anti-Bullying Month. Offering 23 free knit and crochet hat patterns along with a

commitment to donate 2 percent of proceeds from recommended yarns to Stomp Out Bullying, the company also solicited makers to contribute 1,500 toppers to outfit students in a New York school to wear on October 1.

"Everyone is affected by bullying, whether you were bullied yourself or know someone who has been," Blumenthal says. "Our goal is to bring awareness to this situation."

The #hatnothate campaign has inspired numerous active stitchers to pick up sticks. Throughout the summer, Louis Boria of Brooklyn Boy Knits posted hat-knitting shots (featuring a special yarn, Louis's No Bully Blues, dyed by Knitting Wolf Luxury Yarns). He donated 5 percent of blue Fisherman Cap sales to Stomp Out Bullying. Two of Wands' Alexandra Tavel hosted a knit-along for her Peace Hat and pledged \$1 from all hat patterns purchased in September. Jennifer Pionk of A Crocheted Simplicity designed two free patterns for the cause, as did Caitlyn Milward of Tundraknits, who created a simple beanie with the message "Be kind."

Haven't knit your own blue hat yet? Blumenthal plans to continue #hatnothate next year. "Our community is so tightly knit together," Blumenthal says. "We can help kids understand there's blue light at the end of the



tunnel." To learn more, visit [lionbrand.com/blog/end-bullying-hat-not-hate](http://lionbrand.com/blog/end-bullying-hat-not-hate).

## MUST-CRAFT TV

▼ *Making It*, the feel-good competition series that pits talented makers against each other, has been renewed by NBC for a second season. Starring *Parks and Recreation* alumni **Amy Poehler** and **Nick Offerman**, the six-episode craft show debuted this summer as a ratings winner. According to Aaron Bastian, senior press manager for NBC Entertainment Publicity, *Making It* was the most-watched series premiere of the season, tying as the top summer-series debut among 18-to-49-year-old viewers. Margaret Lyons of *The New York Times* called *Making It* a hot-weather tonic, writing, "A weekly dose of glitter and whimsy.... The words of inspiration from Ms. Poehler and Mr. Offerman are completely and totally refreshing."

No spoilers here in case you've yet to watch the series' eight multicraftual contestants hot-glue their way into America's hearts,

making things like snack stadiums, terrariums, forts, toys and wedding accessories. Judges Simon Doonan, creative ambassador for Barneys New York, and Dayna Isom Johnson, Etsy trend expert, presided, genially awarding merit badges to winners in each episode's Faster Crafter and Master Crafter categories.

In an appearance on *Late Night with Seth Meyers*, Poehler, who co-produced *Making It* with Offerman and others, explained the good-natured feel of the series. "We wanted to celebrate the creation of things and show people making things," she said. "We wanted to make a show everybody could watch and that didn't make you feel stressed out and humiliated."



Of the renewal, Poehler and Offerman punned, "We're sew excited to be 'making it' again. We promise season two will have you glued to your seat."



## FOUND IN TRANSLATION

▼ For those looking to reach new customers in Siberia or Copenhagen, there's **FYBA**. FYBA (a play on the word "fiber") is an online knitting and crochet pattern translation service that allows you to copy and paste articles and knitting patterns into an editing window, format them and receive translation links via email. The service also provides a handy place to stash patterns for safekeeping and search for them using keywords. When ready, you can download patterns as Microsoft Word documents, print them or upload them to your platform of choice for sale.

Recognizing that knitting and crochet designers can reach potential customers all over the world through Ravelry and other forms of social media, Leanne Prouse, the designer behind the yarn brand Ella Rae, spent two years creating the automatic translation service. "Costs prohibit a lot of designers from sharing patterns in other languages, as the average pattern translation is expensive—and rightly so, given the time involved," Prouse says. "The idea of FYBA came about because I could see the need for a faster, more cost-effective solution to translating."

Currently offering translations to and from seven different languages—English, German, Italian, Spanish, Danish, French and Russian—FYBA is subscription-based, with packages ranging in price from \$9.99 per month for five translations to \$199.99 for 150. As of mid-October, FYBA users will also be able to access proofreaders and tech editors, who can vet patterns and translations for accuracy.

"We see FYBA as a big step forward for the global knitting community," Prouse says. "Our aim is to add other languages and features, so that ultimately language won't be a barrier, and everyone can enjoy a world of patterns that have previously been hard to access."



## DUDE STRING

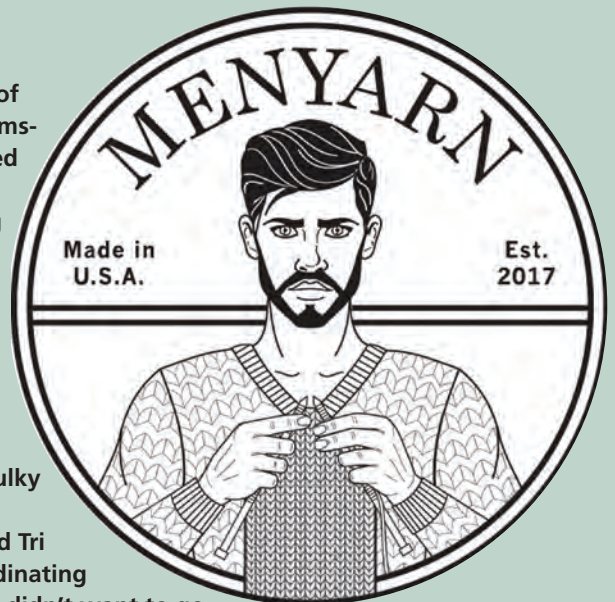
▼ It started with an aha! moment in front of the computer. In a search of project yarn, David Powers, owner of Stone Cottage Yarnworks in Bloomsbury, New Jersey, wondered whether anyone was offering yarn targeted specifically to male knitters and crocheters.

"I realized no one was selling to men and women who were knitting for men," he says. "This was an opportunity. I immediately looked for website addresses that might be available and looked up 'menyarn,' and two minutes later it was mine."

After a year of website building and yarn development, Menyarn.com made its debut in August with seven main types of yarn (plus a range of hand-dyes and natural whites), all developed with an eye toward men's projects and color preferences. Fashioned primarily from domestic wools and alpaca, the plied yarns run the gamut from bulky to DK and offer a guy-friendly palette of neutrals, along with plenty of blues, reds, greens and other classic colors. There's even the beyond-dad Tri Colore collection, which offers four 3-ply marled yarns along with coordinating solids, including the unexpected combo of mustard, purple and olive. "I didn't want to go too far," he says of his color choices. "I wanted to see what kind of a response I would get."

Currently, Menyarns.com sells yarn, needles and basic tools, but eventually the site will showcase Powers's own sweater designs. (Powers is a graduate of the Fashion Institute of Technology.)

"I decided to go after a different market, one that no one has approached," he says. "Since I had a yarn business and connections, I thought it was a good thing to do." Check it out at Menyarn.com.





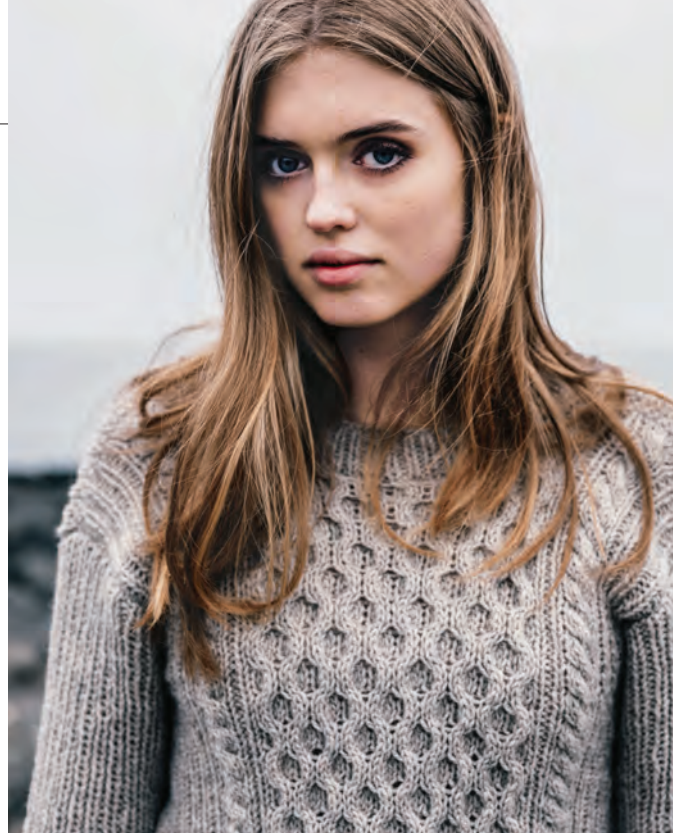
## FAROESE FIRST

▼ This fall marks the first time that yarn spun from Faroese wool will be widely available in North America. **Kelbourne Woolens**, which currently distributes its own brand of yarns (including a new domestic worsted-weight wool called Germantown) along with the Danish line BC Garn, is introducing Navia, a range of yarns from the Faroese company of the same name.

Intrigued by the historic knitting tradition of this remote archipelago located halfway between Iceland and Norway, Kelbourne owners Courtney Kelley and Kate Gagnon Osborn visited the Faroe Islands last spring and decided to introduce Navia's Faroese wool, Faroese wool-blend and alpaca yarns to an American audience.

Kelbourne introduced Navia and its founder Óli Kristian á Torkilshegggi and his wife Paula at the TNNA show in June. "It was so wonderful to have them at the show," says Osborn. "For shops to hear the story from them was really important and adds another element and connection to the product."

To learn more about Navia and Faroese wool, visit [www.kelbourne-woolens.com/navia-yarn](http://www.kelbourne-woolens.com/navia-yarn).



## CLASSIC ELITE YARNS CLOSES

▼ Classic Elite Yarns, home of Legend, Liberty Wool and La Gran Mohair, closed its doors last summer. In a public message, CEY owner Betsy Perry wrote, "It was a difficult decision; one made with a lot of careful thought. Times change; tastes change; business changes. As much as those of us in the company love working with yarn, creating beautiful products, fostering a nurturing work environment, in the end it's a business."

The company was started as an offshoot of a Massachusetts textile mill in the 1940s.

In a blog post about the closure, designer Kristin Nicholas, who worked for the company as a vice president and creative director from 1984 until 2000, wrote about current challenges facing the yarn industry. There is no one reason CEY closed, she observed. "It is the result of a changing marketplace."

## NEVER ENOUGH KNITTERS



▼ On November 10, **Skacel Collection** is challenging the hand-knitting industry to teach 10,000 newbies to knit in a single day at yarn shops around the country. "We want to get knitters into yarn shops," explains owner Karin Skacel, "and bring new knitters into the fold."

To launch the event, the yarn distributor gathered up must-haves for 10,000 free New Knit Kits, consisting of a pattern for fingerless mitts, a ball of undyed HiKoo Sueño and U.S. size 8 Addilino straight needles. Then they promoted the event at TNNA and through their newsletter and social media channels.

Shops jumped at the chance to spread knitting love: 267 yarn shops across the U.S. are participating, with each yarn shop putting a different spin on the promotion. Some yarn shops are hosting group classes,

Skacel explains. Others are encouraging regulars to bring in friends to teach or are renting spaces to accommodate larger crowds. Teachers will also be available at Vogue Knitting LIVE! in Minneapolis on November 10 to help neophytes wield sticks and string.

"If we teach 10,000, maybe 1,000 will continue to do it consistently," Skacel speculates. "Every little bit helps."

Though all the free kits are spoken for—shops did not have to be Skacel customers to participate—others are strongly encouraged to jump on the #10000newknitters bandwagon to help evangelize the craft.

"If it goes well, next year maybe we'll work with a few other yarn companies," Skacel says. "And maybe we'll double the ante." To learn more, visit [www.10000newknitters.com](http://www.10000newknitters.com).



## CROCHET AGAINST TRAFFICKING



▼ After visiting former Cambodian torture camps and helping in the anti-trafficking rescue of a 3-year-old child during a humanitarian trip to southeast Asia, Dominique Calvillo returned to Los Angeles crushed. “That trip wrecked me emotionally,” Calvillo says. “I had crazy anxiety and depression, and I had never dealt with that before.” Instead of taking the antidepressants her doctor recommended, Calvillo, a hair and makeup artist, turned to art therapy and crochet for healing, spending hours every day learning new stitches, mesmerized by the beauty of the work instead of the darkness in her mind.

It took about a year, but eventually she completed a crocheted gown. Encouraged by the response to the dress, she kept crocheting, linking motifs and lace stitches into runway-worthy frocks. Thousands of yards of Lily Sugar ‘n Cream cotton later, Calvillo has a burgeoning apparel business, **Namaste and Crochet**, through which she sells bespoke and one-of-a-kind dresses, skirts, jackets and tops. She has garnered a healthy dose of bridal and local media attention and has a vibrant Instagram following. Ultimately, Calvillo hopes to grow her nascent design enterprise by partnering with a Fair Trade co-op and to expand her support for organizations that are fighting human trafficking.

“The ultimate goal,” she says, “is to bring awareness to human trafficking and conscious consuming. I hope that people can see in this work the peace and oneness that art therapy brought to me at a hard time.” To view more examples of Calvillo’s work, visit [namasteandcrochet.com](http://namasteandcrochet.com).

## YARN GOODNESS

▼ Looking for a charity stitching project for your shop? Sustainable yarns? Fair Trade products? Start your search with **Carpe Yarn**.

Launched by **Trish Richman**, a graphic artist and product designer in Pacifica, California, [Carpeyarn.com](http://Carpeyarn.com) is the result of a health crisis-induced knitting obsession. The more Richman delved into the craft, the more she learned about socially and environmentally conscious yarn companies, craftivism, knitting charities and small, independent businesses run by women and underrepresented individuals in the industry. Having stepped away from her design work, Richman wondered whether she could combine her passions—design, fiber and activism—into an online portal that would contain as much of the Fair Trade, organic, inclusive craftivism goodness she could find.

Part one-stop shop for socially conscious crafting—and shopping—and part cheerleader for businesses and organizations that may be more under the radar, [Carpeyarn.com](http://Carpeyarn.com) is an encyclopedia of progressive yarn companies, shops and craftivists; a “store” that doesn’t

sell but rather links to products elsewhere; and a craftivist information resource featuring profiles of organizations such as Knitted Knockers, Project Knitwell and Yarnementary.

“If we’re devoted to this lifestyle and are going to shop,” she says, “why not focus our consumerism where it can make a difference? These are people in love with this craft as much as I am. Most are women, who are making an effort, who are making a difference being environmentally careful, or they are committed to social justice. There are a lot of them out there. Maybe there needs to be a resting place for this information?”

Richman is continuing to collect recommendations of companies and people to feature on Carpe Yarn under the big tent of her craftivism definition, which encompasses everything from prayer shawls to politics. At this writing Carpe Yarn has no business model and exists as a passion project, but eventually Richman hopes it will support itself and serve as a comprehensive reference of conscious yarn companies and organizations. “I wanted to create a resource for like-minded people who are trying to spend their dollars in a way they can feel great about,” she says. To find a fiber charity, Fair Trade, diverse or environmentally conscious company or to suggest one for Richman’s website, visit [carpeyarn.com](http://carpeyarn.com).



Immigrant Yarn Project submissions (left); Carpe Yarn’s Trish Richman

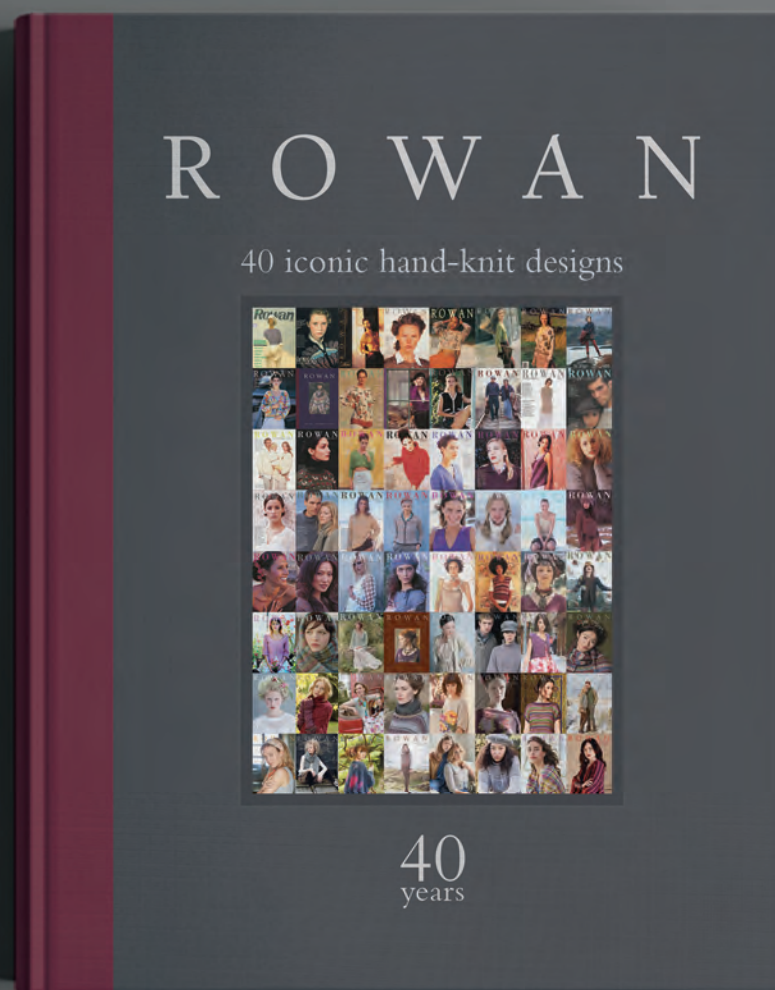


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— Martin Storey  
Rowan Designer

[sixthandspring.com](http://sixthandspring.com)



## MOHAIR IN THE NEWS

▼ Last spring the fur began to fly after the animal-rights organization People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals released video of workers mishandling goats at twelve South African farms. Footage showed shearers dragging and tossing young goats across the shearing floor and inhumanely slaughtering animals deemed unprofitable.

In response to the dramatic video, some 80 retailers, including H&M, Gap (which includes brands Athleta, Banana Republic and Old Navy) and UNIQLO, banned the fiber.

**Mohair South Africa**, the industry trade association, immediately launched an investigation, during which the association disallowed the sale of fiber from implicated farms. They also brought in SAMIC, an independent quality assurance company, to audit the farms in question. A month later, Mohair South Africa published the results of these investigations, indicating that PETA's video originated from two farms, both of which had used the same independent shearing contractor.

"Mohair South Africa has demanded a full report and explanation from the contractor in question as to the breaches of its guidelines

apparent from the footage," read a statement by the association. "The shearing contractor has also been requested to report on its disciplinary process in respect of the persons implicated in the video footage and the measures it has undertaken to ensure the prevention of any future breaches of Mohair South Africa's guidelines and policies."

The association is also working closely with South Africa's National Council of the Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, which is conducting its own investigation. The farms appearing in PETA's footage have been suspended from mohair auctions and are required to submit to monitoring by Mohair South Africa and a third-party investigator during their next shearings.

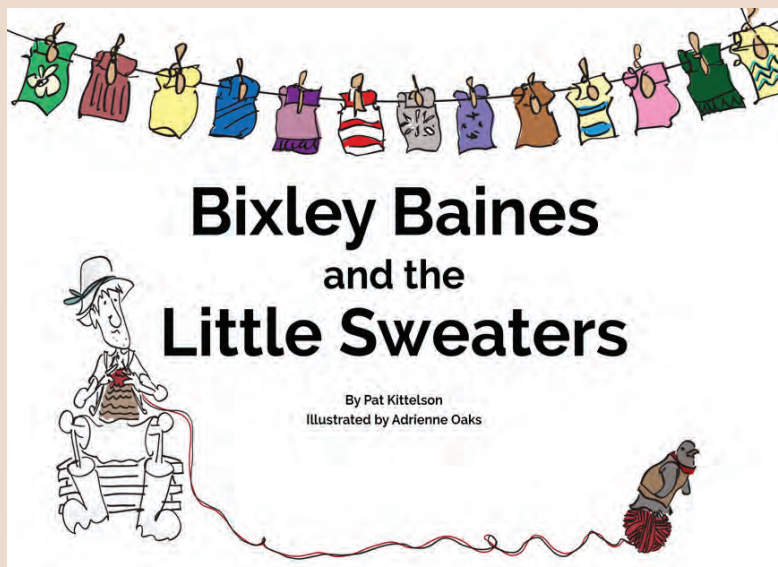
According to Mohair South Africa, the country is the world's largest producer of the fiber. About 30,000 people work in South Africa's mohair industry. Since the controversy emerged, says Lindsay Humphreys of Mohair South Africa, the organization "has been in regular contact with retailers, designers and brands and the requests for industry information and farming practices in South Africa has been well received and encouraging to the mohair industry."

## CUTENESS WATCH

▼ Looking for something for your holiday displays?

Written by former children's librarian Pat Kittelson and illustrated by Adrienne Oaks, *Bixley Baines and the Little Sweaters* is a fictionalized account of the oil spill off the coast of Tasmania in 2000, which covered native little blue

penguins in oil and inspired thousands of knitters worldwide to knit wee sweaters to warm the birds after cleaning. The children's book includes true science and a knitting pattern and stars a warm-hearted gentleman knitter. For information, visit [bixleybooks.com](http://bixleybooks.com).



## UNTWIST

▼ Ten years after Kate Gilbert hit "publish" on the premiere edition of the online knitting magazine *Twist Collective*, the publication is shuttering. The September issue, which went live early in the month, was its last.

Steve and Kathy Elkins, owners of the Massachusetts yarn shop Webs, acquired the magazine a year ago. The hope was that Webs could help take *Twist Collective* to the next level and that the magazine would drive yarn sales through its inspirational content and patterns.

In addition to myriad technical challenges involved in migrating

the magazine to a new platform, Webs didn't realize the hoped-for yarn sales. "It ended up being a business decision," Steve Elkins explains. "We thought there would be more revenue than there was."

Past issues of *Twist Collective* will be available at [twistcollective.com](http://twistcollective.com) until the end of the year, after which pattern designers will receive full rights to their patterns.

"It makes me sad," Kathy Elkins says, "that we weren't able to make a better go of it."



## October 13–November 25

**World of Threads Festival:  
International Festival of  
Contemporary Fibre Art**  
Queen Elizabeth Park Community  
and Cultural Centre  
Oakville, Ontario, Canada  
[worldofthreadsfestival.com](http://worldofthreadsfestival.com)

## October 19

**5th Annual Indie Untangled  
Rhinebeck Trunk Show**  
Saugerties Performing Arts Factory  
Saugerties, New York  
[indieuntangled.com](http://indieuntangled.com)

## October 20–21

**Fiber Fusion Northwest**  
Evergreen State Fairgrounds  
Monroe, Washington  
[fiberfusion.net](http://fiberfusion.net)

## October 20–21

**New York Sheep & Wool  
Festival**  
Dutchess County Fairgrounds  
Rhinebeck, North Carolina  
[sheepandwool.com](http://sheepandwool.com)

## October 25–28

**Southeast Men's Knitting  
Retreat**  
Asbury Hills  
Cleveland, South Carolina  
[mensknittingretreat.com](http://mensknittingretreat.com)

## October 26–28

**Southeastern Animal Fiber Fair**  
Western NC Agricultural Center  
Fletcher, North Carolina  
[saffsite.org](http://saffsite.org)

## October 26–28

**Knot Another Knitting Festival**  
Fort Dalles Readiness Center  
The Dalles, Oregon  
[columbiagorgefiberfestival.com](http://columbiagorgefiberfestival.com)

## October 27

**Penns Valley Fiber Festival**  
Old Gregg School and  
Community Center  
Spring Mills, Pennsylvania  
[mulberryhillfarm.com/pvff.html](http://mulberryhillfarm.com/pvff.html)

## October 27

**Sagebrush Folk Art and Fiber  
Festival**  
Uinta County Library  
Evanston, Wyoming  
[uintalibrary.org/fiberartsfestival2018.html](http://uintalibrary.org/fiberartsfestival2018.html)

## October 27

**Sheep Parade:  
Cedar City Livestock and  
Heritage Festival**  
Main Street  
Cedar City, Utah  
[cedarlivestockfest.com/sheep-parade](http://cedarlivestockfest.com/sheep-parade)

## October 27

**Cowichan Valley Fleece and  
Fibre Festival**  
Cobble Hill Hall and Fairgrounds  
Cobble Hill, British Columbia, Canada  
[cowichanfleeceandfibrefestival.com](http://cowichanfleeceandfibrefestival.com)

## October 27–28

**FiberMania**  
Josephine County Fairgrounds  
Grants Pass, Oregon  
[sojaa.net/page/4109/fibermania](http://sojaa.net/page/4109/fibermania)

## October 27–28

**Fiber Expo**  
Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds  
Ann Arbor, Michigan  
[fiberexpo.com](http://fiberexpo.com)

## November 1–4

**Vogue Knitting Destination:  
Yarn in Portland, Oregon**  
Kimpton Hotel Monaco  
Portland, Oregon  
[vogueknittinglive.com/yarnoregon](http://vogueknittinglive.com/yarnoregon)

## November 1–4

**Stitches SoCal**  
Pasadena Convention Center  
Pasadena, California  
[knittinguniverse.com/SoCal2018](http://knittinguniverse.com/SoCal2018)

## November 2–3

**Ozark Fiber Fling**  
Meramec Baptist Retreat Center  
Steelville, Missouri  
[ozarkfiberfling.com](http://ozarkfiberfling.com)

## November 2–4

**Carolina Fiber Frolic**  
Community Center  
Sapphire, North Carolina  
[carolinafiberfrolic.wordpress.com](http://carolinafiberfrolic.wordpress.com)

## November 2–4

**Northeast Handspinners  
The Gathering**  
The Radisson of Nashua  
Nashua, New Hampshire  
[nehandspinners.org/the-gathering](http://nehandspinners.org/the-gathering)

## November 3

**Fall Fiber Festival**  
Eisenhower Community Center  
Hopkins, Minnesota  
[fallfiberfestival.com](http://fallfiberfestival.com)

## November 3

**Fiber in the Boro**  
Lane Agricultural Park  
Murfreesboro, Tennessee  
[fiberintheboro.com](http://fiberintheboro.com)

## November 3–4

**Fiber Festival of New England**  
Mallory Complex at Eastern  
States Exposition  
West Springfield, Massachusetts  
[easternstatesexposition.com/p/fiberfestival](http://easternstatesexposition.com/p/fiberfestival)

## November 3–4

**Calgary Fibre Arts Fair**  
Big 4 Building, Calgary  
Stampede Grounds  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada  
[facebook.com/CalgaryFibreArtsFair](http://facebook.com/CalgaryFibreArtsFair)

## November 8–11

**Knitting and Stitching Show**  
Simmons Court Pavilion  
Ballsbridge  
Dublin, Ireland  
[theknittingandstitchingshow.com/dublin](http://theknittingandstitchingshow.com/dublin)

## November 9–10

**Thumb Fiber Festival**  
Camp Cavell Conservancy  
Lexington, Michigan, vicinity  
[thumbfiberfest.wixsite.com/thumbfiberfest](http://thumbfiberfest.wixsite.com/thumbfiberfest)

## November 9–10

**East Texas Fiber Festival**  
Picker's Pavilion at  
Blackberry Square  
Lindale, Texas  
[easttexasfiberfestival.weebly.com](http://easttexasfiberfestival.weebly.com)

## November 9–11

**Vogue Knitting LIVE!  
Minneapolis**  
Minneapolis Convention Center  
Minneapolis, Minnesota  
[vogueknittinglive.com/minneapolis18](http://vogueknittinglive.com/minneapolis18)

## November 9–11

**Kid 'n Ewe and Llamas  
Too Festival**  
Hill Country Youth Events Center  
Kerrville, Texas  
[kidnewe.com](http://kidnewe.com)

## November 10

**Spinner's Flock Fall Fleece Fair**  
Beach Middle School  
Chelsea, Michigan  
[sites.google.com/site/a2spinnersflock](http://sites.google.com/site/a2spinnersflock)

## November 10

**Yarn Revolution:  
NW Indie Dyer Pop-Up**  
EM Event Center  
Shoreline, Washington  
[nanostitchlab.com/home/yarn-revolution](http://nanostitchlab.com/home/yarn-revolution)

## November 10–11

**Maryland Alpaca and Fleece  
Festival**  
Howard County Fairgrounds  
West Friendship, Maryland  
[marylandalpacas.org/page/5822/maryland-alpaca-and-fleece-festival](http://marylandalpacas.org/page/5822/maryland-alpaca-and-fleece-festival)

## November 10–11

**Nottingham Yarn Expo**  
Nottingham Conference Centre  
Nottingham, England  
[nottinghamyarnexpo.com](http://nottinghamyarnexpo.com)

## November 11

**Indie Knit & Spin**  
The Ace Hotel  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania  
[indieknitandspin.com](http://indieknitandspin.com)

## November 16–17

**Creative Hand Show & Sale**  
Old Shawnee Town Hall  
Shawnee, Kansas  
[creativehandkc.org](http://creativehandkc.org)

## November 17–18

**Barcelona Knits Festival**  
Barcelona, Spain  
[barcelonaknits.com](http://barcelonaknits.com)

## November 22–25

**Knitting and Stitching Show**  
Harrogate Convention Centre  
Yorkshire, England  
[theknittingandstitchingshow.com/harrogate](http://theknittingandstitchingshow.com/harrogate)

## November 30–December 9

**Countryside Artisans  
Studio Tours**  
Sugarloaf Mountain, Maryland  
[countrysideartisans.com](http://countrysideartisans.com)

## January 17–21, 2019

**Creativation**  
Phoenix Convention Center  
Phoenix, Arizona  
[afci.global](http://afci.global)

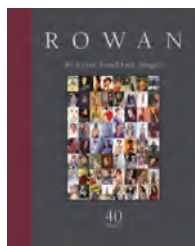
## January 25–27, 2019

**Vogue Knitting LIVE! New York**  
New York Marriott Marquis  
New York, New York  
[vogueknittinglive.com](http://vogueknittinglive.com)



▼ **Rowan: 40 Years, 40 Iconic Hand-Knit Designs**  
**Sixth&Spring Books; \$27.95**  
**ISBN: 978-1640210288**

Rowan, today and back in the day, has always cultivated the knitter's knitter. Whether it's the yarn (Kid Silk Haze! Felted Tweed!), designs (Kaffe Fassett! Louisa Harding! Kim Hargreaves! Martin Storey!) or the beautifully styled magazines that make you want to buy all that yarn,

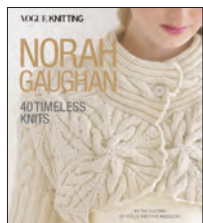


this iconic company has done its part to inspire stitchers to do more, learn more and, yes, stash more.

To create this Top 40 anthology, editors have made impossible choices from the company's archives, presenting 20 designs as they were initially knitted and photographed, plus 20 that have been reknit in contemporary colors. Longtime fans of the brand will be interested to see which designs made the cut; newer knitters will see why generations of stitchers have been motivated to push the limits of their skills just for a chance to knit from Rowan's pages.

▼ **Norah Gaughan: 40 Timeless Knits**  
**Sixth&Spring Books; \$24.95**  
**ISBN: 978-1640210271**

In this greatest hits volume, Norah Gaughan and *Vogue Knitting* editors have chosen 40 of the 120 pieces Gaughan has designed for the magazine over



the years, starting with an elongated cabled vest published in the summer of 1987

and culminating with a Persian-carpet-inspired yoke pullover splashed across the cover of the Winter 2017/18 issue. Each piece is depicted in its original form, with substitute yarn suggestions offered in cases where older yarns are no longer available. Whether it's the A-line Clockwork pullover from 1989 or the intricately

cabled cardigan from 2017, there's a must-have knit for fierce knitters everywhere in these pages.

▼ **Faerie Knitting: 14 Tales of Love and Magic**  
**By Alice Hoffman and Lisa Hoffman**  
**Adams Media; \$26.99**  
**ISBN: 978-1507206553**

It's a truly magical mashup: renowned author Alice Hoffman (*Practical Magic*, *The Rules of Magic*) and her knitwear-designer cousin-in-law Lisa Hoffman have collaborated on a book that combines two things with special powers, fairy tales and



clever knits. Read through the 14 stories in this beautiful volume—each illustrated with a fanciful knitted design—and you'll sense the alchemy that can happen when creative spirits and ideas converge. To wit: The touching story "Blue Heron" tells of a kind, obedient girl who learns the true nature of love and beauty from a wise, mothering heron. That knowledge—and a feathered knitted shawl—empowers her to become a more fully realized version of herself. Give this to the dreamy knitter, young or not so,

who understands what can happen when you use charmed tools like words and wool.

▼ **Martin Storey's Afghan Knits: 18 Contemporary Designs for Throws, Runners and Pillows**  
**By Martin Storey**  
**Trafalgar Square Books; \$21.95**  
**ISBN: 978-1570768620**



A longtime designer for Rowan and author of *Easy Fair Isle Knitting*, among many others, Storey applies his,

well, storied brand of knit magic to home décor. Some projects are mitered squares or long strips of garter stitch, while others are a mix

of cables and colorwork and lace patterns, but they all work up into contemporary designs to complement both modern and retro furnishings. Bonus: Despite the unwieldy image that the word *afghan* might conjure, all of Storey's projects make great travel or everyday take-it-with-you knitting—and that applies to the larger blanket projects, too—because they consist of small, individually stitched squares or strips that are joined in finishing.

▼ **Design Your Own Crochet Projects**

**By Sara Delaney**  
**Storey Publishing; \$18.95**  
**ISBN: 978-1612126586**

If you've crocheted for a while with others' patterns and are ready to create your own, Delaney's design templates make the process easy. Smaller projects like scarves/cowls, socks and hats comprise the 18 design formulas, which are arranged in order of increasing difficulty. The math-averse can trust that the design templates require only the skill



of filling in the blanks with stitch and row values and executing the formula already provided. And there's a hidden benefit to all

this how-to information: The glossary of basic crochet stitches, the basic structure of a pattern, the tips for yarn and hook pairings and calculating yardage also act as an easy-to-follow primer for beginning crocheters.

▼ **Inspired Shawls: 15 Creative Patterns for Year-Round Knitting**  
**By Laura Zukaite**  
**Dover; \$19.95**  
**ISBN: 978-0486818511**

Last year Laura Zukaite threw on a backpack for a trek through South America—and returned home with all the inspiration to cast on these 15 new shawl designs. Drawing from the local art, colors and natural surroundings encountered in her travels, Zukaite created patterns that range from simple triangular shapes in garter stitch and a diaphanous



beaded mohair half-shell to a geo-Aztec colorwork rectangle trimmed with 20

dramatic 5-inch tassels. Zukaite also borrowed from the stitching traditions of the countries she visited, incorporating straight-stitch hand embroidery into two of her solid-color designs.

▼ **Shawls: Knit in Style**  
**By Melanie Berg**  
**Topp; \$29.95**  
**ISBN: 978-3772481406**

German designer Melanie Berg, a.k.a. Mairlynd, presents 12 previously self-published designs, including her popular Solaris, Quicksilver, and the Joker and the Thief shawls. Joining them here are three new designs for a varied collection of colorwork, mosaic, lace and cabled patterns, as well as textures like garter stitch worked



in super-bulky yarn. There's a style to suit whatever knitting mood you find yourself in.

Admittedly, not many design books warrant this warning, but if you happen to be bilingual in English and German, you might find the dual-language format of the instructions a bit distracting. For the rest of us, it's simply time to cast on.

▼ **Easy Lace Knits: All You Need to Know to Start Lace Knitting**  
**By Anniken Allis**  
**Stackpole Books; \$24.95**  
**ISBN: 978-0811719018**

Love the look of lace but fear casting it on? Allis's 20 designs for shawls, tops, mitts and scarves may be just the antidote, as she starts at the very beginning—by defining lace as a simple series of increases and corresponding decreases. A stitch glossary of the various increase and decrease techniques is illustrated with photos so knitters can clearly see



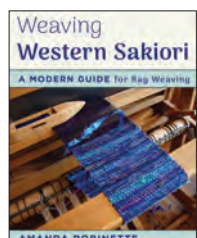


how each type contributes to the look of finished lace. Another novice-friendly feature of this

book recognizes that knitters have different ways of understanding stitch patterns, and so Allis provides both written and charted versions for the lace stitches used. And because even experienced lace knitters can find it challenging to detect where their stitch count has gone awry, you'll find tips for ways to read your knitting and get your stitches back on track.

▼ **Weaving Western Sakiori: A Modern Guide for Rag Weaving**  
By Amanda Robinette  
Stackpole Books; \$27.95  
ISBN: 978-0811716093

Traditional Japanese sakiori rag weaving originated as a way to deal with a scarcity of new textiles to be made into clothing. And while many of Robinette's 21 weaving projects adhere to that tradition by repurposing



old materials, a variety of the projects incorporate new textiles, tools and techniques, including rigid heddle and

floor looms. There is a sett chart for rag weaving with common warp yarns, a wet-finishing chart, and instructions for preparing your chosen material. One of Robinette's inspirations offers a creative way to preserve a wedding dress as a keepsake bed runner. If only the book could supply the courage needed to make those one-of-a-kind cuts!

▼ **Arne & Carlos Favorite Designs: Greatest Hits and New Inspirations**

By Arne Nerjordet and Carlos Zachrisson  
Trafalgar Square Books; \$29.95  
ISBN: 978-1570768811

Striking colorwork and innovative designs put Scandinavian duo Arne



& Carlos on the road to knitting fame 15 years ago, and this book showcases many of their greatest

hits, along with new creations—85 patterns in all. From the wearable (socks, slippers, sweaters) to the whimsical (birds, dolls, a garden mouse), each project offers a new experience, whether it's felting, intricate shaping or carrying floats. Skill-builder bonus: a coaster project that provides a mini photo-illustrated introduction to double knitting. Just-for-fun bonus: Charts for the colorwork designs are eye candy even if you never knit from them.

▼ **Woods**  
By Verena Cohrs and Hanna Lisa Haferkamp  
Making Stories; €34  
ISBN 978-3962740009

First in Making Stories' European Nature Book series, *Woods* is equal parts magazine, reference guide and coffee-table page-turner. The photography is both beautifully



aspirational and instructional. Never made socks before? The Abisko pattern includes step-by-step

photos for working three types of heels—short-row, gusset and afterthought. Looking to learn more about sweater construction? Karen Templer of Fringe Association writes about her favorite styles and techniques. The authors' shared interest in minimalist design and local sustainable yarns led them to organize the first Berlin Yarn Crawl in 2016, which expanded their circle of like-minded knitters. And now, with the 11 patterns for sweaters, mittens, hats and socks in *Woods*, they introduce a few favorite makers, yarn producers and knitwear designers they've met along the way.

▼ **Coastal Crochet**  
By Karen Whooley  
Occhi Blu Press; \$24.95  
ISBN: 978-0972323246

Summer may be over, but a flip through the pages of *Coastal Crochet* will have you longing for long walks on the beach or a wintertime trip to a tropical island. Worked in cool shades of fingering and lace-weight



yarns, the 12 garments within (ponchos, wraps, pullovers and more) will entice crocheters of all skill levels (note:

no stitch glossary is included)—and knitters too: If the word *crochet* weren't in the title, even an experienced maker's eye might confuse the cover sweater for having been knitted. And once inside, a quick glance at the visual index of Whooley's designs reveals more looks-like-knitting patterns that sport a less linear fabric than commonly thought of for crocheted garments.

▼ **Crochet Animal Rugs**  
By Ira Rott  
SewandSo; \$22.99  
ISBN 978-1446307007

Panda is the cover star, but inside you'll find dinosaur, cat and elephant characters, among other animal motifs, to stitch up as floor mats and



matching accessories. Each pattern is skill-rated: Easier ones include a monkey mat and toy bag, which begin

with a simple oval and half-circle as the base of further appliqué; crocheters looking for more challenging shapes will like the giraffe-face rug and pillow patterns, which also introduce two-color stitching. In addition to instructions for techniques specific to each project, there's an illustrated glossary of crochet stitches to get beginners going and detailed finishing instructions for applying nonslip backings to the rugs, as well as a cornstarch stiffening recipe for projects destined to hang on the wall.

## ■ TREND WATCH

### Here's what was selling the last week of September 2018:

#### Amazon Knitting List (print publications)

- *Vogue Knitting: The Ultimate Knitting Book (revised edition)*, by the editors of *Vogue Knitting* (Sixth&Spring Books)
- *Faerie Knitting*, by Alice Hoffman and Lisa Hoffman (Adams Media)
- *Knit Mitts: Your Handy Guide to Knitting Mittens and Gloves*, by Kate Atherley (Interweave/F+W)
- *Noro Kureyon: The 30th Anniversary Collection* (Sixth&Spring Books)
- *Easy Lace Knits*, by Anniken Allis (Stackpole Books)
- *Amy Herzog's Ultimate Sweater Book* (Abrams)
- *Knitting Fresh Brioche*, by Nancy Marchant (Sixth&Spring Books)

#### Amazon Crochet List (print publications)

- *Creepy Cute Crochet*, by Christen Haden (Quirk Books)
- *A to Z Crochet* (Martingale & Co.)
- *Crochet One-Skein Wonders* (Storey)
- *The Complete Book of Crochet Stitch Designs*, by Linda P. Schapper (Lark Crafts)

#### Barnes & Noble Knitting List (print publications)

- *Vogue Knitting: The Ultimate Knitting Book* (Sixth&Spring Books)
- *Japanese Knitting Stitch Bible*, by Hitomi Shida (Tuttle Publishing)
- *Slow Knitting*, by Hannah Thiessen (Abrams)



# SMOOTH AS SILK

Pure silk and silk-blend yarns add a welcome touch of luxury to fall wardrobes.

By Renee Lorian

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARCUS TULLIS



## Blue Sky Fibers Alpaca Silk

**Specs:** 27 colors; 50% alpaca/50% silk; 146yds/50g

**Gauge:** 20–24 sts = 4" on U.S. 3–5 needles

**Distinctions:** When is a yarn more than the sum of its parts? When it marries alpaca and silk in a single dreamy, drapey skein. Classified as fine and lovely when worked up into lace patterns, this elegant number can also punch above its weight in looser fabrics on larger needles.

**Projects:** Choose the neutrals of this luxurious blend to create dazzling wardrobe-staple accessories.



## Mrs. Crosby Loves to Play Carpet Bag

**Specs:** One nearly solid and 24 multi-colors; 80% superwash merino wool/20% silk; 240yds/100g

**Gauge:** 20–22 sts = 4" on U.S. 6 needles

**Distinctions:** Silk gives this wool blend not only its lovely sheen but extra strength as well. A single-ply, it creates a plush stockinette fabric and makes textured patterns pop. Mrs. Crosby's unique range of colors provides endless design possibilities.

**Projects:** This yarn creates lovely hats and shawls. Try combining nearly solid colors in The Rain Outside, an openwork striped shawl from Sylvia McFadden.





#### Manos del Uruguay Silk Blend

**Specs:** 47 colors; 70% superfine merino wool/30% silk; 150yds/50g

**Gauge:** 22–24 sts = 4" on U.S. 4–6 needles

**Distinctions:** A longtime favorite, this single-ply DK-weight yarn has a slight sheen and is hand-dyed in a range of gorgeous colors, including variegated shades and saturated solid jewel tones.

**Projects:** While this versatile yarn can be used for a wide range of projects, try combining sets of the stunning colors in striped or colorblocked shawls.



#### Knit One Crochet Too Niya

**Specs:** 7 colors; 100% silk; 262yds/100g

**Gauge:** 17–18 sts = 4" on U.S. 7–8 needles

**Distinctions:** This worsted-weight pure-silk yarn has a surprisingly soft hand, and it gets even softer with wear. Flecks of color and a matte finish give the finished fabric a rustic look. For garments, be sure to wash and block your swatch to account for the bloom.

**Projects:** The heavier weight makes Niya a great wool substitute for warmer climates. Try it for a short-sleeved cardigan or shrug featuring simple cables or seed-stitch texture.



#### Jade Sapphire Silk Cashmere

**Specs:** Semisolid and multi colors; 55% silk/45% cashmere; 400yds/55g

**Gauge:** 24–32 sts = 4" on U.S. 1–3 needles

**Distinctions:** Given its fiber pedigree, it's no surprise that this 2-ply blend is pure heaven to touch. It works up into a delicate fabric, showing off lace as well as textured stitch patterns. This is opulent knitting.

**Projects:** It's hard to resist using Silk Cashmere for lace shawls, but it's also a dream in simple tees or lightweight cardigans.



# SMOOTH AS SILK



One of life's most luxurious pleasures on its own, silk is even more of a dream when combined with a supersoft animal fiber.

## Zitron/Skacel Collection Traum Seide

**Specs:** 41 colors; 100% mulberry silk; 875yds/100g

**Gauge:** 33–40 sts = 4" on U.S. 2–4 needles

**Distinctions:** If you are looking for a single glorious strand of silk for your lace masterpiece, search no more. A pure silk in a lace weight, Traum Seide comes in a generous put-up and feels as sumptuous as it looks.

**Projects:** This yarn is quietly waiting to be conjured into a magical shawl. The only difficulty will be choosing a color from the expansive, vibrant palette.

## Koigu Wool Designs Karmen (top right)

**Specs:** 17 colors; 100% silk; 147yds/50g

**Gauge:** 22 sts = 4" on U.S. 6–7 needles

**Distinctions:** Karmen's unique chainette construction gives it loft and durability without losing the sheen and drape we expect from silk. Koigu's signature hand-dyed multis sing in this new yarn, resulting in rich veins of saturated color.

**Projects:** Cowls and shawls are a natural choice, or treat yourself to a slinky top.

## Fibra Natura/Universal Yarn Whisper Lace (bottom right)

**Specs:** 23 colors; 70% superwash wool/30% silk; 440yds/50g

**Gauge:** 28 sts = 4" on U.S. 2 needles

**Distinctions:** Silk and superwash wool give this 2-ply fingering-weight yarn a lovely halo. Choose from a palette of classic solid colors for an heirloom lace project or make a unique wrap with one of the self-patterning prints.

**Projects:** The Augustine Scarf from Universal uses the print colorway Stonework in a simple openwork pattern to create a plaid effect.





**Plymouth Yarn Cuzco Cashmere  
(top left)**

**Specs:** 11 colors; 40% super baby alpaca/40% mulberry merino silk/20% cashmere; 163yds/50g

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

**Distinctions:** This sport-weight yarn combines a trio of luxury fibers into one lush 3-ply strand. The finished fabric is silky and decadent. Knit it up and watch the fabric drape and shimmer.

**Projects:** This super-soft yarn would shine in an openwork shawl or a cowl with a simple lace repeat.

**BC Garn/Kelbourne Woolens  
Tussah Tweed (bottom left)**

**Specs:** 18 colors; 100% tussah silk; 273yds/50g

**Gauge:** 24 sts = 4" on U.S. 1–3 needles

**Distinctions:** Nubby, richly marled Tussah Tweed is made from humanely harvested silk and is versatile enough to work lace on smaller needles or airy stockinette on larger ones.

**Projects:** The sophisticated palette is inviting for lightweight garments including simple tops and tanks. Try the refined Ranunculus top from Midori Hirose, with its lace-patterned yoke, to showcase Tussah Tweed's subtle texture.

**Artyarns Silk Dream**

**Specs:** Solid and multi colors; 100% silk with Lurex; 400yds/90g

**Gauge:** 20 sts = 4" on U.S. 6 needles

**Distinctions:** Shot through with a shimmering thread of silver metallic Lurex, this 2-ply silk is pure indulgence. Choose from an ever-expanding selection of hand-dyed shades including highlights, multis and tonal solids.

**Projects:** Three gorgeous shawl patterns designed by Iris Schreier are available with the purchase of Silk Dream. Each uses elegant lace to show off the yarn. Silk Twists takes only one skein and can be worn as a poncho or shawl.





## In Praise of the Local Yarn Shop

**T**hank you for making the inaugural Local Yarn Store Day such a resounding success. More than 400 retailers, 45 wholesalers and thousands of consumers across the country joined together to celebrate the bricks-and-mortar yarn store. Wholesalers and designers offered exclusive kits, products and colorways; retailers hosted special events; and yarnists came out in droves—needles, hooks and wallets in hand—to show their support.

The success of Local Yarn Shop Day reminds us that our industry is capable of accomplishing amazing things when we come together in collaboration. We are passionate, creative and driven people. Let's put our heads together and make next year's LYS Day even bigger and better.

Interested in participating in next year's event, April 27, 2019? Check out the website, [locallyarnstoreday.com](http://locallyarnstoreday.com), for ways to get involved. To continue the yarn love throughout the year, consider a store event based on one

(or more) of these yarn/business-world milestones:

- I Love Yarn Day—October 13, 2018.
- NaKnSweMo—National Knit a Sweater Month, the entire month of November.
- Small Business Saturday—always the day after Black Friday, this year on November 24.
- Worldwide Knit in Public Day—June 8, 2019.
- Christmas in July—celebrate any time during the month.
- Barbara Walker's birthday—July 2.
- Elizabeth Zimmermann's birthday—August 9.
- First Friday—many towns host special events celebrating small businesses on the first Friday of every month.
- Your store's anniversary—throw a big party for your customers to mark the day.

Making connections with industry partners is easy and fun when you attend a TNNA trade show. Meet and make lasting friendships with wholesalers, manufacturers and designers at the summer or winter markets. The summer market in Cleveland was rocking, with 685

attendees and 1,176 total registrants. From the post-show survey, we learned that members loved meeting with industry leaders and newbies alike, networking with peers, discovering new products and trends, and taking classes. They also enjoyed the new city, the convention center and the show-floor layout. Sample It! and the fashion show continue to be the most popular events and were mentioned as can't-miss activities. We are looking forward to returning to Cleveland next summer.

TNNA will be traveling to Portland, Oregon, for the winter trade show, scheduled for January 31–February 3, 2019, at the Embassy Suites by Hilton Portland Washington Square. This will be a mixed-format hotel show similar to the winter market in Las Vegas last January, meaning that most of the vendors will be showcasing their products in hotel suites. However, ballrooms will also be set up with traditional trade-show booths. Check the site for more information: [tnna.org/page/Winter](http://tnna.org/page/Winter). Hope to see you there!

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.



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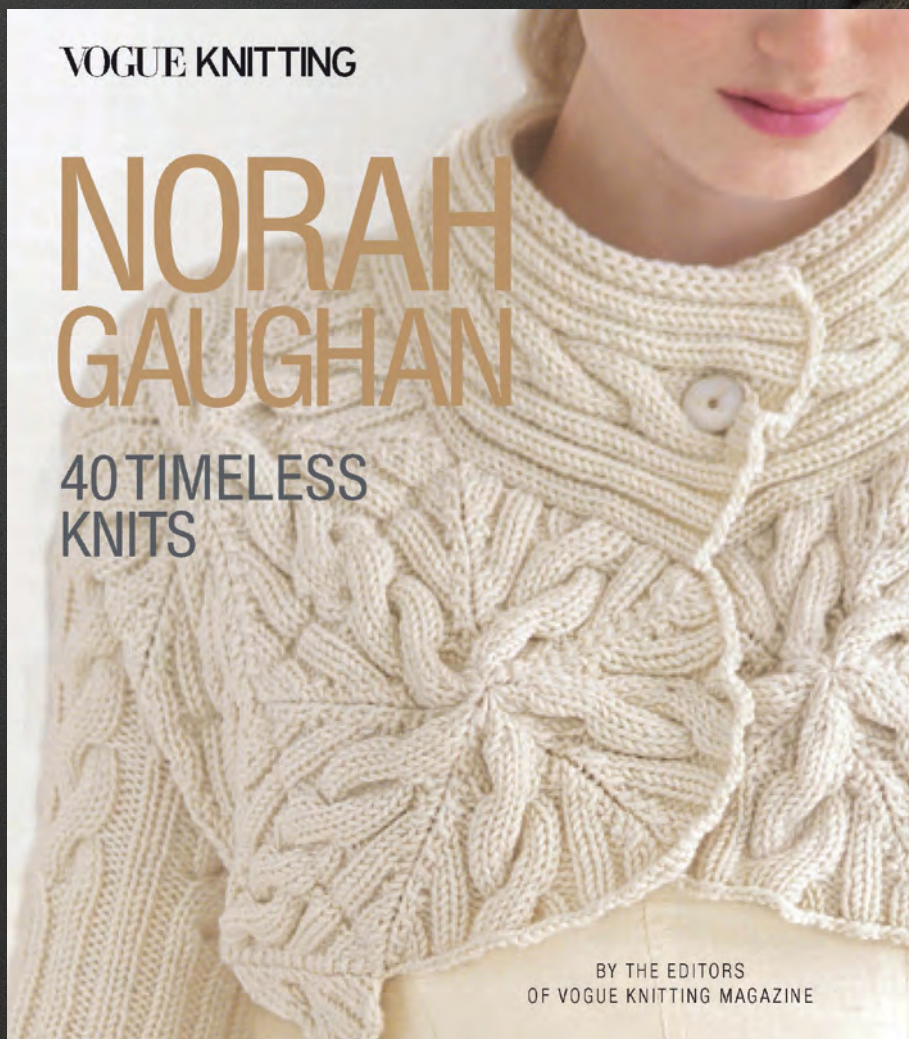


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## Celebrating the Yarnist

**Y**arn encompasses a wide range of crafts, not just knitting and crochet but weaving, macramé and so many more. But more than that, yarn encompasses a wide range of people. Rather than focus on one specific type of yarn project, the Craft Yarn Council's fall 2018 campaign will focus on the people behind the yarn.

Humans That Yarn is an inclusive campaign that showcases crafts that can be made with yarn and the different types of people who identify as yarnists. The campaign has several goals aimed at making the fiber world more inclusive. One of those goals is to break down the barriers to entry for people who may see yarn crafting as too difficult or uncool. Another is to encourage people who already work with yarn to take up a new yarn craft.

CYC research has shown that the most common reasons people have for not participating in yarn crafts are a lack of knowledge on how to get started (32 percent) and the perception that knitting/crocheting and other yarn crafts are

difficult to learn (28 percent). Recent studies have also shown that 48 percent of non-knitters and -crocheters use yarn in other ways, whether that means wrapping yarn around a dowel for a wall hanging or around cardboard to make pompoms.

Through social media interviews, videos, photographs and blog posts, the campaign will aim to increase interest and start conversations about yarn crafts. The term *yarnist*—makers who work with yarn—will be introduced alongside the campaign to demonstrate that no matter how you use yarn, you can be a yarn artist.

Retailers can promote the campaign and drive traffic into stores in a number of ways. CYC is providing assets for bloggers and retailers to use on social media. (For photographs, blog post samples, a press release with sample copy and more, email [info@craftyarncouncil.com](mailto:info@craftyarncouncil.com).)

You can also get involved by sharing Humans That Yarn videos from CYC's YouTube channel, social media posts relating to the campaign (either your own original posts or CYC's posts)

or repinning or posting on CYC's Humans That Yarn Pinterest board. Visit the Craft Yarn Council on Facebook and Instagram for more details. Use #humansthatyarn in all your posts.

Consider creating your own content as well. Post articles and blog entries about Humans That Yarn, or make your own videos related to the campaign. Take and share street and studio photographs and include pictures and information related to the campaign in email newsletters. Since Humans That Yarn is designed to reach a wide audience, appeal to different target markets, including children, Gen Z, Millennials and men.

For inspiration, ideas and content, make sure to check out our social media pages, including Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest, and watch our Humans That Yarn videos on CYC's YouTube channel. All details can be found on [humansthatyarn.com](http://humansthatyarn.com). Tag your posts with #humansthatyarn and #yarnist. The campaign launched on September 4 and will run through the end of December.

The Craft Yarn Council was formed in 1981 to raise awareness about fibers. Visit [craftyarncouncil.com](http://craftyarncouncil.com) or [knitandcrochet.com](http://knitandcrochet.com) for more information.

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## Learn Yarn Arts at Creativation

Registration for the 78th annual Creativation trade event, where creative business professionals go to learn, connect and discover, is now open at [CreativationShow.org](http://CreativationShow.org). January's conference, organized by the Association for Creative Industries, features hands-on product workshops in popular consumer craft categories including, but not limited to, yarn arts, needle arts, home décor, paper crafting, scrapbooking and mixed media. Also on offer are interactive seminars on topics that are critical to today's retail and creative professionals, including social media, content and digital marketing, business operations, legal issues, point of sales and technology. The show—January 19–21 at the Phoenix (Arizona) Convention Center—kicks off on the 17th and 18th with two full days of education.

"We're excited to host an event that provides universally interesting content that will benefit all creative businesses. Our in-person peer education model enables attendees to

learn directly from the manufacturers they buy products from," says Andria Gibbon, AFCI's vice president of education and events. Among the many scheduled events, Clover Needlecraft is offering an "Embellish with PomPoms" workshop at which buyer attendees can learn more about this trending accessory.

In response to the growing popularity of yarn among crafters of all stripes, Creativation is introducing a Yarn Pavilion on the trade show floor—home base for buyers and sellers of fiber and an opportunity for retailers to learn about new products from yarn manufacturers. "AFCI, with its focus on attracting buyers from around the world, is the future of the yarn industry.... This show puts you in front of the innovators and affords you opportunities not found elsewhere in North America," says Roxanne Yeun, creative director of Zen Yarn Garden.

AFCI has partnered with Hotels for Hope as the official hotel booking partner of Creativation. Hotels for Hope's database of more than

600,000 hotel partners expands the number of discounted hotel rooms available for the event, which gives attendees more affordable options in and around Phoenix. For every hotel room night booked through the Creativation Hotels for Hope platform, \$2 will be donated to the Kids in Need Foundation. AFCI's goal is to raise \$12,000 for the foundation, which supplies students across the United States with school supplies. These supplies have a huge impact on students' class preparedness, class participation, self-esteem and interest in learning. For more information about booking a hotel through Hotels for Hope, visit [www.CreativationShow.org](http://www.CreativationShow.org).

Creativation is also accepting exhibitor applications. Manufacturers are encouraged to view the floor plan and complete an exhibit-space contract at [www.CreativationShow.org](http://www.CreativationShow.org). Contact Nadine Schwartz, director of sales and sponsorships, at (201) 835-1203 or [nschwartz@afci.global](mailto:nschwartz@afci.global). For more information and to register, visit the Creativation website.

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](http://afci.global).



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# Can You Keep a Secret?

The 4-1-1 on nondisclosure agreements.

BY CAROL J. SULCOSKI

**C**ollaborating with industry insiders can yield big payoffs: expanding your customer base, generating publicity and creating innovative products, to name a few. But working with others in the same industry can mean disclosing information about your products or business to a competitor. Once you've revealed confidential information, what's to stop said competitor from using it to create products that compete with yours or give him or her an advantage in the marketplace? Before you divulge hard-earned information to a third party, consider whether a nondisclosure agreement makes sense.

## Risky Business

A nondisclosure agreement, sometimes called an "NDA" or "confidentiality agreement," is a contract between two parties agreeing that shared information will remain secret and not be used to the other party's detriment. In some circumstances, both parties are disclosing private information, so the duty to keep information secret and not misuse it applies to both. More frequently, one party is disclosing information to the other, so the duty to keep the information secret and not misuse it binds only the recipient of the information.

Imagine a situation in which Sophie, a seller of needlecraft notions, invents a knitting gadget. One day Sophie gets a call from an online seller who wants to collaborate on a modified version of Sophie's gadget. She and Company X begin negotiating, discussing supply-chain capacity, modifications to the gadget and the like. Shortly thereafter, Company X breaks off negotiations; six months later, it begins selling a gadget nearly identical to Sophie's, using the same factory and incorporating the discussed modifications. If Sophie had a strong NDA signed by Company X, she could more easily prove that Company X stole her trade secrets, and she may be entitled to a court order barring Company X from selling its gadget. Assuming Company X had bad motives from the get-go, asking for an NDA could have deterred Company X from trying to access Sophie's trade secrets in the first place.

## The ABCs of an NDA

Like any other contract, an NDA should be in writing and signed by both parties. It should address the following issues:

- Who will be a party to the NDA? In the hypothetical above, Sophie would make Company X a party to the agreement, but if Company X is a subsidiary

of a larger company, that company could also be made a party to the agreement.

- Exactly what information is confidential? You'll want the description to be as broad as possible, for maximum protection of your trade secrets, but also detailed enough to give a clear idea of what information is covered. Include a provision stating that information shared verbally is also protected.
- How long will the contract be in effect? Changes in technology or the market may make the information outdated in a few years' time. Two- to five-year terms are common. It's also advisable to include a statement that you retain all intellectual property rights even after the NDA expires.
- What duties does each party have under the NDA? The two primary goals—keeping your valuable information secret and preventing the other party from using that information to your detriment—should be addressed.
- What isn't covered by the NDA? Frequently NDAs will exclude information in the public domain or information that the recipient receives from

agreement can protect you and your business. Have you developed extensive contacts with various suppliers over the years? Have you created a unique marketing strategy that must be kept under wraps until you roll it out? If you are a hand-dyer, perhaps your method of dyeing yarn, the formulas for specific colorways and the sources for your yarns help you keep a competitive edge. Consider whether an NDA is necessary for employees who have access to this information.

For example, an NDA with your store manager before she learns the ins and outs of your business may deter her from leaving to start her own competing business, using your marketing and customer information. Getting an NDA signed in advance not only preserves the secrecy of your information but also sets out clear expectations with your employees. Next, think about non-employee access to proprietary information. Perhaps you use outside contractors. An IT firm that builds a customer database with unique features, a marketing agency creating a long-term plan, or a business consultant

## Securing Proprietary Information

**If proprietary information is important enough to protect with an NDA, it's important enough to protect in other ways too. Determine exactly what information you want to protect, segregate that information and remember to mark it "CONFIDENTIAL" so that everyone who works for you knows that it's protected. Don't leave confidential information lying around; instead, restrict access using password protection, locked drawers or locked offices. Think about computer security: Robust passwords, virus and malware protection and restricting access to certain files are all important. Make sure laptops and cell phones with proprietary information are secured; for example, no lending of computers or phone to others and using security screens when in public areas.**

someone who is not a party to the NDA.

Other common provisions include a choice-of-law provision specifying where any lawsuits involving the NDA can be filed and which state's laws govern any disputes. You would prefer legal action be brought in your home court with a lawyer familiar with your state's laws. Include remedies for enforcing the NDA, like a provision that any breach entitles you to seek an injunction (an immediate court order to stop the other party from breaching the NDA). Your attorney will have other suggestions; if attorney's fees will break your budget, consult various templates for possibilities.

## The Big Picture

There are other contexts in which a confidentiality

with access to all your financial records may warrant NDA protection. If you create your own products by using outside factories or manufacturers, an NDA can help ensure that the outside company doesn't use the information to make a competing product.

*Note: This article is not to be construed as legal advice, and no client-attorney relationship has been created. Seek advice from a qualified attorney in the appropriate jurisdiction. The views expressed herein are those of the author and are not attributable to her employer.*

Carol J. Sulcoski, a Philadelphia-based attorney, is also a knitting author, teacher, dyer and designer.



# The Power of Podcasting

Get into customers' heads by leveraging this audio medium.

BY KARA GOTT WARNER

With all the noise in the online universe, getting yourself featured on a podcast is a powerful way to get your shop, online products and services noticed by your ideal customer. An ever-increasing number of people are listening to these downloadable digital audio and/or video files—the episodes easily consumed on the go—as a source for entertainment, education and general information. You can't get much closer to your audience than when you're in their earbuds.

If you've got a powerful story to tell, leveraging a podcast is like having an enormous megaphone, one you get to use on a global scale. Through the influence of the spoken word, you can position yourself in a way that has never been available before. All you need is a microphone and a message.

## The Roots of Podcasting

Podcasts began emerging as early as 2005, but back then they were expensive to make. As technology evolved and costs dropped, new podcasts continued to debut. In fact, listenership has been growing 21 to 24 percent each year, according to Edison Research. In 2017, out of all media listening options, podcasts led the way, at 30 percent, with AM/FM radio right behind at 25 percent. We are at an exciting turning point in audio-consumption history: Everyone can leverage this "new" media, which allows small and large businesses to rub elbows on a lateral playing field.

## Research Podcasts in Your Niche

Before you start your own podcast or pitch yourself as a featured guest on an existing one, it's a good idea to research and identify shows that align with your brand vision and your ideal customer. The best way to begin is by doing research in iTunes or another podcast app. Ask yourself: Which podcasts does your ideal customer listen to? Who's consistently showing up in Top Podcasts in your niche? How many are regularly publishing episodes? What are their ratings and reviews? What are they doing on social media and on their websites? Sign up for newsletters to see what these popular shows are up to.

## Pitch Like a Pro

Research completed, it's time to reach out to potential podcast hosts to explain why you would

appeal to their audiences. This first step is making a personal connection and showing real interest in the show. Explain the value you have to offer beyond exposure for your book, class or product. Mention a takeaway from a recent episode to make an amazing first impression. Consider setting up interviews on several different podcasts, asking the hosts to release episodes during a specified timeframe (usually one to two weeks) to help generate traffic and exposure for a special event, course or sale in your shop. This strategy increases exposure even more. Provide the hosts with access to your bio and head shot so that they can easily promote you.

## You're On the Air

It's important to know your goal before you begin an interview. Remember why you've chosen to be on the podcast and keep that firmly in mind as you consider your answers. Ask the podcast host to share interview questions so you can prepare your answers in advance, but don't memorize the answers or write a script. Be natural. Keep things conversational and pause to allow the host to lead. When taping, use an external microphone, not the one in your computer, for better sound. Test your computer settings and microphone in advance of the interview.

As you craft your answers, put yourself in the listeners' shoes. Would you want to hear your story? As you speak, try not to sound like a salesperson: Nothing turns off a listener more than the feeling she's being sold a bill of goods. Consider offering something for free to begin the "know-like-trust" relationship with listeners. End with a call to action that clarifies what you want the listener to do next. Maybe it's to opt in on your website for a resource or free pattern, learn more about a special knit- or crochet-along or contest, or just think of you the next time she casts on.

## Repurpose & Remix

Most downloads per episode ("DPE" in pod speak) happen 24 to 48 hours after an episode goes live, so strike when the iron is hot and don't leave all the promoting up to the podcast host. Beyond that time period, there are also many more ways to make your episodes "evergreen" so they can be shared weeks, even months, later. Whether you're posting right away or later, consider the following tactics to get the word out:

Hold a contest or giveaway; embed episode players on a special "podcast spotlight" page on your website; create an Instagram Story (see page 27) when your episode goes live; write a blog post about your episode and add the episode to the footer of all other blog posts; do a live video demonstrating a technique or something you discuss in the episode. Always tag the podcast host in every post, which drives traffic to them as well as to you.

Podcasting is a plug-and-play medium that is only getting easier to access. Consumers listen on the go, and vehicles now come with podcast-ready features. This is a golden opportunity to take advantage of this modern form of talk radio to create your media platform and relay your authentic branding message to the yarn-crafting world.

## Hot Pods

**Check out this list of some of the top yarn and business podcasts to help you find your niche audience and educate yourself as a digital marketer.**

### Yarn-Crafting Podcasts

- **Yarn Thing with Marly Bird**, [marlybird.com](http://marlybird.com)
- **Knitting Pipeline**, [knittingpipeline.com](http://knittingpipeline.com)
- **The Knitmore Girls**, [knitmoregirls.com](http://knitmoregirls.com)
- **Very Pink with Staci Perry**, [verypink.com](http://verypink.com)
- **Business of Craft with Leanne Pressly**, [stitchcraftmarketing.com](http://stitchcraftmarketing.com)
- **Explore Your Enthusiasm with Tara Swiger**, [taraswiger.com](http://taraswiger.com)

### Business and Entrepreneurship Podcasts

- **Online Marketing Made Easy with Amy Porterfield**, [amyporfield.com](http://amyporfield.com)
- **Ask Pat with Pat Flynn**, [askpat.com](http://askpat.com)
- **Smart Passive Income with Pat Flynn**, [smartpassiveincome.com](http://smartpassiveincome.com)

Kara Gott Warner ([KaraGottWarner.com](http://KaraGottWarner.com)), a teacher and business coach and the former executive editor of *Creative Knitting* magazine, is the host of Power Purls podcast. She teaches in-person and online classes about podcasting and digital marketing.



# Say Cheese!

BY MARY MCGURN

Take advantage of Instagram's growing popularity to better market your business.

**D**o you post to Instagram? I suspect that most of you do—personally, at least, though perhaps not for your business. I'd also wager that not all of you Instagrammers use Instagram Stories. If you've been slow to jump on the Instagram bandwagon, take a look at the numbers: The photo- and video-sharing service is *the* go-to information source for Millennials and Gen Z'ers.

## Why Instagram for Business

Consider this: Instagram has *one billion* monthly active users worldwide. The number of Instagram users in the United States alone is expected to surpass 111 million in 2019. Of this number, 55-plus million users fall in the coveted 18-to-29 age group.

## Insightful

Instagram's Insights can tell you if having an Instagram account is paying off. Look primarily to these analytics to get your answer.

- **On your profile, look for the following:** Reach (the number of unique users to view your post); Website Clicks (the number of clicks to the links included in your business profile); Profile Visits (the number of times a user clicks on your username to learn more about you); taps on your call-to-action buttons. Growth registered in this data is the first proof of time not wasted; a decline might mean posting more frequently or with different content.
- **On Audience, get a fix on the demographics of your followers by gender, age and top locations.** The data will tell you if your content is attracting the right audience located where they are the most help to you.
- **On Posts (photos & videos), Reach will give you the unique number of users who see your posts.** Since user engagement is key to besting Instagram's algorithm, the data on the number of unique users who like, save or comment on your posts matters. The Discovery Insights tells you the percentage of accounts that saw your post but who are not following you. Infer from this that your branded hashtag is getting traction.
- **On Instagram Stories, look at Reach for unique viewer numbers.** The People Insights gives you a list of users who have seen a particular photo or video in your story. This is helpful because, by clicking on their usernames, you can check out their accounts and choose to follow them—and, of course, they might reciprocate.

Going forward, look for the menu drop-down in the upper-right corner of your profile (three horizontal lines). Tap that, then select Insights.

Your competition is using Instagram. An estimated 71 percent of businesses in the U.S. are already using the app. This number is almost double the number of businesses who used it in 2016. What's fueling this growth? According to Sprout Social, in 2018 "80 percent of Instagram users follow a business on the platform; 60

percent hear about a product or service through the platform; more than 120 million users have visited a website, gotten directions, called a business, emailed or direct messaged a business; and 30 percent have purchased a product they first discovered on Instagram."

## Opening a Business Account

All accounts on Instagram can be modified into "business" accounts. Doing so links your Instagram account to your Facebook page—if you don't have one, it creates one for you—and provides you with the following benefits:

- **A more robust profile page.** Business profiles get contact buttons, so users can get in touch with you easily. You can also establish your business category, providing more information to po-

you've created. To learn more about specific analytics and how to gain access to your Insights, refer to the "Insightful" box at left.

• **Ads.** Only business accounts can advertise. The statistics cited above show the app's users as willing to see and engage with your promotions. Ads can serve business goals from awareness to consideration to conversion. Ad creative includes individual photos, videos and carousels as well as ads within Stories. Instagram's ad platform is self-serve and easy to learn.

So how do you switch to a Business Profile? Go to your Instagram profile and tap on the gear icon. Tap Switch to Business Profile. On the Connect Your Facebook screen, you'll see the Facebook pages for which you are an Admin. Select the Page you want to associate with your Instagram Business Profile. On the Set Up Your Business Profile page, you can review your contact information, make any edits and then tap Done.

## Make Use of Instagram Stories

Stories are where you're free to tell your business story in an immediate and off-the-cuff way. Unlike the feed, where visually polished and specific content is posted, Stories are appreciated for their spontaneous, unfiltered, behind-the-scenes visuals that anyone with a smartphone can capture. Stories can record everyday moments or even non-moments. And they are proving effective at building community.

When you post to your Story, your profile image appears in a circle at the top of your followers' feeds, where they'll easily see it upon logging in. Post to your feed and the post may or may not be seen by all of your followers given Instagram's algorithm. If a user doesn't tap on any Story and begins to scroll down their feed, the app will remind them to check the Stories waiting for them. Your followers can even set up notifications for when you post a Story.

Engagement beyond the feed's likes and comments is enabled in Stories. You can engage followers with sticker polls. Write a question, customize the poll choices and see real-time voting results. Instagram has added a question sticker that will let you post an open-ended question and receive answers—valuable information and feedback from customers old and new.

Mary McGurn of McGurn Media creates, manages and strategizes social media accounts for small businesses and nonprofits.



## RETAIL PROFILE

BY DARYL BROWER

# Yarn Culture

## Fairport, New York



What happens when you blend a yarn shop with a distribution business? Good stuff, if you take the example of Patti Odinak. Along with her husband, Mitch, Odinak runs both Yarn Culture, a specialty shop that features yarns and designers from “around the corner and around the world,” and Remarkable Yarns, the American distributor for Rosy Green Wool and other yarns. With both, she’s created a sustainable business that’s providing beautiful fibers for knitters and crocheters across the United States.

**O**dinak’s entry into the yarn world echoes that of many a yarn-shop owner. She was a serious hobby knitter who loved finding great yarn; joining Ravelry in 2007 connected her with more yarns and a global network of designers.

“I regularly scoured the site looking for designers and yarns that were unique and not widely available,” Odinak says. “I was really attracted to U.K. and European designers and yarns, especially hand-dyed fibers and interesting bases.” She suspects that that preference for yarns from across the pond was colored by the four years her family spent living in Germany. When they returned to the States in 2011, Odinak decided she was ready to turn her hobby into a

business. “My kids were in high school and college,” she says. “I had spent my career in marketing, and I was ready to do something completely new.”

That something new, she decided, would be a yarn store. But she and her husband didn’t just dive in blind. “We knew that loving yarn and knitting wasn’t enough to sustain a business,” she says. To deepen their understanding of the industry, they attended the Yarn Market News Smart Business Conference in Baltimore in 2013. “What we learned there, coupled with our prior experience in the business world, convinced us we should make a go of it.” The couple also made a return trek to Europe shortly after the conference to attend H&H, Germany’s major wholesale yarn show, meeting with the designers, dyers and small manufacturers Odinak had discovered on Ravelry.

Yarn Culture opened its doors in November 2013, and in the five years since has built a loyal following, boosted by a strong online and festival presence. And along the way something interesting began to happen. “We really love the yarns we sell and the people behind the brands,” Odinak explains. “So those first meetings in Europe, along with our subsequent business growth, helped our retail relationships evolve beyond traditional retailer/vendor roles.”

In 2015 the couple established Remarkable Yarns, distributing one of the first yarns sold at Yarn Culture: Rosy Green Wool. “We’ve sold a lot of it over the years, and we have an excellent relationship with Rosy and [her husband and business partner] Patrick,” says Odinak. “So when they decided they wanted a small North American distributor, it made sense that we would do it.” Distribution of German designer Melanie Berg’s patterns (and now her new book, *Shawls*), as well as U.S.-based Crave Yarn, happened in the same organic way. “Our shared interests, along with a genuine regard and appreciation for each party, established the groundwork to evolve our shared business to another level,” says Odinak.

Managing both a retail and wholesale business is working well. Odinak says everyday experience as a retailer helps her to understand what wholesale customers want and need. Yarn Culture takes a booth at eight to ten yarn festivals and events across the country every

year to drive advertising and product awareness. “We also make recommendations about best-selling colors, combinations, patterns, etc. for our yarns based on what we know knitters purchase across the country, not just what other retail customers are buying.”

In retail or wholesale, customers are the focal point. “We want knitters to find unique yarns that they may have only read about or may have never heard of. We want our customers to be inspired by our samples and motivated to knit something they’ll love.” The choice of yarns—including WalkCollection, The Uncommon Thread, The Fibre Company, Life in the Long Grass, Spun Right Round, Woolfolk and Shibui—are no doubt also part of the draw, as are the events the shop hosts each week. The shop offers two lively Sit ‘n’ Knit groups on Friday and Saturday afternoons as well as regular KALs. But one thing the shop doesn’t do in a big way is classes. “They’re hit-or-miss for us, so we offer them infrequently,” Odinak explains. “But we love having events, and our customers love them too. In past years we’ve hosted dyers and designers, which are the biggest hits.” On the show circuit, Odinak makes a point to provide at least two new things for every show. “A number of our customers meet up with us at multiple shows each year, so I want to have something new to show them, whether it’s a new yarn or a new sample.”

Odinak has never regretted the decision to go from hobby knitter to yarn professional. “I know it sounds cliché, but people are really the best part of this business,” she says. “We have lovely customers in the Rochester area [where the shop is located] and across the United States. We work with customers, dyers, designers and manufacturers around the world. So many of these people have become our friends. They’re people we look forward to seeing and connecting with whenever we can. It’s truly a ton of fun.”

### Yarn Culture

1387 Fairport Rd #885, Fairport,  
New York 14450; (585) 678-4894;  
[www.yarnculture.com](http://www.yarnculture.com)

**Years in business:** 5

**Staff:** 3 full-time

**Square footage:** 2,700

**Hours:** Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m.–5 p.m.  
Tuesday through Thursday, by appointment.

QUICK  
GLANCE



# COMPANY PROFILE

BY MARYAM SIDDIQI

## Cestari Sheep and Wool Company

"The USDA is telling sheep people that no one wants wool anymore, which is outrageous," says Francis Chester-Cestari, founder and CEO of Cestari Sheep and Wool Company. "This is totally contrary to what the market is looking for: natural fibers."



Chester-Cestari has headed the eponymous family-owned operation since 1946, "at age 10," he jokes, when the property was a sheep farm. The yarn manufacturing division was launched in 1969. Work is done on farm property in Augusta County, Virginia, where the family raises sheep for the wool in their yarn (they also source wool from other reputable ranchers in the United States).

Cestari's specialty is natural processes. It uses a scouring technique, rather than a carbonizing process, to wash its wool, to keep natural lanolin in the yarn so that it retains its natural texture. It means that on occasion pieces of hay or straw might be rolled up in a skein of yarn; the family considers this proof of the yarn's provenance. Cestari yarns are sold to shops across the U.S. and Canada, and abroad to Spain and Japan. Its best-selling yarns are its Mount Vernon 2-ply worsted-weight 100 percent fine merino and the Monticello collection, a blend of 75 percent naturally grown Virginia cotton and 25 percent French or Belgian soft linen.

Noticing an increase in sales of its cotton offerings, the company is working to expand that part of the business. "Cotton combined with linen and

silk and, of course, wool is in great demand. We recently purchased 20 late-model cotton-producing machines and have updated our woolen system machines, [which will allow us to] increase by 400 percent our capability to produce quality U.S.-grown products," says Chester-Cestari. "I see a great future for natural fibers, as the demand for them is growing very rapidly. The public seems to be tiring of synthetic fibers."

Next year, the company will celebrate 50 years in yarn production and 73 years as a sheep-based operation. And it will also be celebrating the next stage in the company's most recent initiative, "Let's Grow Sheep Together," in which Cestari sells breeding ewes and rams and then offers to shear the sheep and buy back the fleece. The company currently pays \$3 per pound.

"The Let's Grow Sheep Together program was launched last summer. It is something that I felt needed to be done, since the sheep population in the U.S. has decreased from 54 million in the early 1950s to 5.2 million now, with numbers decreasing for the past 12 years," Chester-Cestari says.

"It's interesting to note that the sheep bought so far were sold to non-sheep people," he adds.

"There is a lot of interest in the program, as it guarantees sheep producers \$3 per pound for raw wool and a backup market for their lambs, with solid and continuing educational assistance. In essence, it is franchising." To complement the program, the company is building a new textile mill at its sheep farm.

Not afraid to innovate, the company will also soon launch a foundation called the Cestari Textile Museum, and programming in the space will include educational symposiums and other events. "We have taken possession of many weaving looms, spinning wheels, etc. from the [now permanently closed] American Textile History Museum in Lowell, Massachusetts," Chester-Cestari says. Completion was scheduled for late September 2018.

The company has also gotten involved in charitable events like the American Sheep Industry's Make



It With Wool Contest, which encourages young people to design and make something using American-grown wool. Last year, the company donated prizes at both the state and national levels.

Chester-Cestari believes that the personal connections he makes through these educational initiatives have the most impact when it comes to business relationships and promoting the benefits of natural fibers.

"We had always been very active at TNNA, but recently we've been relying instead on my visits and talks throughout our marketing [sectors]. We've found these personal contacts and our shepherd days [at the farm] to be much more effective," he says. "People love stories, and I have lots of them."

**Address:** 3581 Churchville Ave.,  
Churchville, VA 24221; (540) 337-7270;  
[www.cestarisheep.com](http://www.cestarisheep.com)

**Employees:** 10 (expected to grow to 16 this year)

**Fun fact:** Chester-Cestari has a second business called Cestari Fresh Lamb ([cestarifreshlamb.com](http://cestarifreshlamb.com)) through which he sells fresh frozen grain-fed lamb and ships it across the U.S. Packages for purchase include loin chops, stew meat, racks of lamb and more. "This is a new approach," he says. "This is a Columbus adventure."



# FUTURECAST

Is there  
such a thing as a

## CRYSTAL YARN BALL?

YMN PEERS INTO THE FUTURE  
OF THE YARN INDUSTRY.

By Leslie Petrovski

Nationwide, yarn shops are closing. Longstanding companies including Classic Elite Yarns and Tahki•Stacy Charles are shuttering or being sold. Industry publications are ceasing production or looking for ways to cut costs. It's as if the entire fiber industry has been tossed in the wash and shrunk like the sweater that took years to complete. What's up with the yarniverse? And what does it mean for the future?

According to sales reps, distributors, dyers, yarn shop owners and yarn crafters, lots of things are up with the yarniverse, but much of it can be distilled into a single word: *competition*.



**T**oday, at the frazzled end of 2018, yarn professionals are competing with every shiny thing vying for consumers' attention, whether it's a demanding job, kids' soccer games, social media, everyday inconveniences like traffic and waiting in line, or the general state of the world. Add to that the competition among the places where we shop—the neighborhood LYS, regional fiber fests and the borg that is Amazon.com among them, where yarn customers can choose from an increasingly vast array of products ranging rustic wools and gemlike hand-dyes to yarns made from tea leaves—and needleworkers have endless ways in which to spend their money and time.

Customers are increasingly spending their yarn budgets shopping Instagram feeds, snapping up products at large consumer shows and at the yarn truck parked at their local farmers' market. All this choice, and the almost instant gratification people receive from free two-day shipping and one-click shopping, have spoiled consumers. Badly. "The retail industry is being disrupted; it's raising customer expectations," says Barbara Kahn, author of *The Shopping Revolution: How Successful Retailers Win Customers in an Era of Endless Disruption*. "Retailers who don't understand that won't make it."

Nicole Reyhle, founder of Retail Minded, a retailer education service, agrees: "There is a lot of competition nowadays. People are constantly being bombarded digitally by friends, social media, newsfeeds and email marketing, and those influences become distractions. Retailers must become *part* of the influence and the distraction. You have to be where the customers are, and [inside a store] isn't where they are. You have to welcome technology."

Technology is the behind-the-scenes wizard making all these changes possible, and it has emerged in the yarn world as part tool, part enabler and part distractor. Not only has it opened world markets to yarn crafters—toothy breed-specific British wools, low-micron-count cashmere from the High Himalayas, brushed wool from the Faroe Islands—it's also made it possible for

individuals with a spinning wheel or dye pot to earn a living or supplement one by following her bliss.

Author and master knitter Ann Budd, who travels the world teaching and hosting Knit for Fun retreats, observes that when she started actively knitting in the early 1970s, the yarn scene was not as complex or competitive. "When I was a kid, there weren't many choices. There was Red Heart and Bernat," she says. "You could get wool and mohair, but now there are all these blends and breed-specific yarns and wonderful dyers, whose colors are so rich and deep and interesting. You can get anything."

The same is true for patterns. When Ravelry burst on the scene more than a decade ago, it created this giant repository of free and for-sale patterns, which did two things: It allowed knitters to find patterns to match

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their stashes, and it gave designers and aspiring designers a global stage. Suddenly traditional publishers, nascent online publications and even yarn companies that offered pattern support had to confront the tough reality that knitters and crocheters could easily purchase, or get for free, one-off patterns rather than buy entire magazines, books or pattern leaflets.

Laura Zander, co-founder of the online

and bricks-and-mortar store Jimmy Beans Wool, agrees that increased competition and fragmentation are changing the yarnscape. "Indie designers now have the opportunity to have their own businesses," she says. "The Etsy effect is not going to go away."

## Yarn Futures

Nobody thinks the yarn arts will disappear, because human beings are makers by nature. "This industry has been around since people first began making knitted fabric," observes Yonca Ozbelli of Universal Yarn. "I don't believe it will go away. Not only can you produce something you can use, but [the yarn arts] calm you down, make you focused and happy, and improve your math skills. And now a younger generation is getting interested."

That's not to say the climate isn't challenging. According to Google Trends, which reports search traffic, searches for both *knitting* and *crochet* have been trending downward for the past four years. The number of yarn shops in the United States has also dropped. According to research sponsored by TNNA, in 2007 there were 2,230 yarn shops in the U.S.; in 2016 that number had slipped to 1,925.

Complicating these flagging numbers is the rising price of fine wool. Decades of poor wool markets, combined with recent droughts in Australia, have constricted global sheep populations to near historic lows. This reduced supply, coupled with increased demand from the athleisure industry, which is incorporating merino into everything from tennis shoes to underwear, has caused the price of fine wool to skyrocket, pushing the price of everything from yummy socks to sock yarn. The trick is finding new revenue streams. "Retailers need a lot of different strategies," says Barbara Kahn.

While there is no such thing as a crystal ball of yarn, there are innovators in the yarn world who are DIYing their way toward new horizons that provide clues to the future. Online companies such as We Are Knitters and Wool and the Gang have kitted out young, hip stitchers—and removed the





## FUTURECAST

hunting-and-gathering inconvenience of shopping in the wild—by bundling quick-to-knit, too-cool-for-school designs with needles and branded yarn. With a click or two, Instagram followers of We Are Knitters (a whopping 355,000 at this writing) can jump to the main website, where they can score everything from a cropped crochet pullover kit (complete with embroidered label and branded packaging) or tap a pretty flat-lay photo for access to the company's 100 percent Peruvian super-bulky wool. To keep up customer engagement, We Are Knitters has a special loyalty program for referrals, encourages customers to post project pics on social media, and delivers plenty of inspiration and ways to connect on the company blog, Facebook, Pinterest and YouTube sites.

Other retailers such as Webs, which recently acquired the New York-based yarn company Tahki•Stacy Charles and the Manhattan yarn shop String, and Jimmy Beans Wool, which purchased the Namaste bags brand (see page 8), are acquiring other companies and labels to grow their businesses and create additional income streams. "It's not lost on us that the marketplace is shifting dramatically and that it's also accelerating," says Webs's Kathy Elkins. "I don't think in five years it will look like it does today."

"You're going to see more consolidation at the wholesale level," Steve Elkins adds.

Confronted with yarn shop closures, yarn companies and distributors are reinventing themselves and finding alternative revenue sources outside the yarn shops. Bonnie Burton, eleven-year owner of Colorful Stitches in Lenox, Massachusetts, worked in corporate retail for decades before her LYS career. In addition to the changes technology has brought to the selling and purchasing of goods on a retail level, it's blurred previously established boundaries between wholesaler and retailer. "We're seeing wholesalers who are now retailers, who are online or have physical stores," she says. "Wholesalers were never retailers. That's a change in our industry and in all of retailing: the blending of roles in a way that wasn't previously the case."

In addition to selling directly to the consumer, yarn companies are employing other

creative strategies to boost business. Last spring, Cascade Yarns made its first vending foray at the big European trade show H+H Cologne, to connect with existing European customers and develop international contacts. Skacel Collection is working to make new knitters through its 10,000 New Knitters initiative (see page 11). And the venerable Brown Sheep Company opened the Brown Sheep Fiber Arts Schoolhouse in a 1930s-era school building across the road from the company mill in Mitchell, Nebraska, offering classes in knitting, crochet, spinning and weaving, with plans in the works to offer loom, wheel and sewing machine rentals.

Last year, SweetGeorgia augmented its yarn and fiber offerings with the School of SweetGeorgia, an ambitious platform of online fiber arts classes in dyeing, knitting, spinning and weaving. Initially launched as a place where fiber enthusiasts can purchase one-off

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CASE. ”

classes online, the school has now morphed into a subscription service by which users can consume educational content and participate in community forums where they can connect and help each other. In addition to the School of SweetGeorgia, owner Felicia Lo posts a weekly knitting vlog called "Taking Back Friday," a podcast called "The Sweet Georgia Show" and a blogazine called "Make and Hue."

"My commitment to creating media content for the changing media landscape—moving from written blogs to audio podcasts

to videos for both communication and education—is my commitment to staying relevant in the midst of all these technological changes," Lo explains. "Hopefully the media content we make helps people think of us as at the forefront of this craft world, trying to push forward and create products and resources for a tech-savvy and changing audience."

Yarn shops, too, are making increasingly entrepreneurial moves to extend the reach of their physical shops not only into the online world but also into markets like Vogue Knitting LIVE, New York Sheep and Wool and even Amazon. And in the same way wholesalers have taken to direct sales, yarn shops are developing their own yarns and products to differentiate themselves and make strong brand statements.

Shops like A Verb for Keeping Warm, Fancy Tiger and Purl Soho and have all created their own proprietary yarns that range from locally sourced wools to luxury fibers. Apple Yarns in Bellingham, Washington, now wholesales its own line of hand-dyed yarns in various weights to more than thirty yarn shops nationwide. "One of the ways we've diversified is having three avenues for selling: the physical store, [apple yarns.com](http://apple yarns.com) and Apple Fiber Studio," explains Andrea Evans, who owns Apple Yarns with her husband, Andrew. "We've taken everything we've learned by having a yarn shop. We share things like really awesome samples, and if we miss a delivery, we pay for shipping. We treat LYSes with respect."

Shops are also creating new paradigms for events. In addition to regular trunk show rotations and Knit 101 classes, they are getting creative with Sip and Stitch evenings, classes that combine mindfulness or yoga with needlework, and those that expose stitchers to new needlearts such as rug hooking, weaving, macramé and needle felting.

At Cream City Yarns in Brookfield, Wisconsin, the shop partnered with a local coffee shop to host a "Knit and Lit" event with best-selling author and avid knitter Chloe Benjamin. They paired the sold-out event with the sale of a \$70 colorwork cowl kit inspired by the cover of Benjamin's novel *The Immortalists*.

"Bricks-and-mortar stores need to dig deep," according to Laura Zander. "What will draw people into your shop? It is rocket science and it is a simple question. We need to get more innovative or work harder than we did five years ago. Maybe it's arrogant to think I have the power to make our business better, but I believe in being aware and getting creative."



# YONCA OZBELLI



As the sales director at Universal Yarn, Yonca Ozbelli works closely with her husband, Hal, the company's president. She's done much to shape the direction of the company in recent years. YMN's Erin Slonaker sat down to find out more.

**ES: How did you come to work in the yarn industry? What career path led you here?**

**YO:** I have always been involved with textiles. I am a chemical engineer by training but have worked in sales since graduation. It started in technical sales, then transitioned into retail sales, then home textiles and finally ready-to-wear. I was working as a sales director for a Danish company making labels for ready-to-wear garments when Hal convinced me to join him. I resigned my position and we started working together. It has been a blast ever since.

**ES: How did you meet Hal? Was he in the yarn industry at the time?**

**YO:** We met at a party right after we both graduated from college in Istanbul. He was living in New York and I was living in Turkey, so meeting at the party was karma! He was in the textiles industry then, selling polyester fiber to mills in the United States.

**ES: What was it like to be married to the head of a yarn company before you worked for the company yourself?**

**YO:** It was really cool—it was like being a child in

a candy store: all the yarns, all the colors and all the possibilities. Hal is an innovator and loves to get different opinions, so he would ask for my thoughts on the yarns he was developing. Ours is a great partnership. We ask for each other's opinions on specific subjects, but neither of us ever gets upset if our ideas are overruled.

**ES: What made you take on more responsibility at Universal Yarn?**

**YO:** Hal started the company in 2005. I have been a silent contributor since the beginning. By 2013 the company had grown exponentially, and he needed help. That's when I decided to join full-time.

**ES: How large is your team at Universal Yarn, and what is it like working on a team of that size?**

**YO:** We are still a small team; altogether we are 10 people. I like that we are not a big team, because everyone does everything—we all use our strengths in the jobs we do, and it feels like a family operation, rather than a big company atmosphere. Traditional values, such as "family first," "the customer is always right" and "always do the right thing for your customers," are priorities for all of us. Most importantly, we love what we do because of the people we do it with.

**ES: What resources do you use to keep up with trends? Do you travel for inspiration?**

**YO:** Coming from ready-to-wear, I look to the fashion industry for inspiration, for sure. Our team also travels to shows both domestically and internationally to get ideas and inspiration. But we also get inspired from our surroundings, nature, sometimes even graffiti on a train car.

**ES: You've been instrumental in doing consumer outreach by attending knitting shows yourself. What have you learned from speaking directly with customers?**

**YO:** That they love this craft, and there is not enough yarn in the world for them! Our community is rich, full of ideas and not afraid to try new things or explore new adventures in knitting and crochet. Every [yarn crafter] is an artist, as you start with string and end up with a beautiful project. They are compassionate—most of them knit for charity—and are always willing to share their knowledge but are hungry to learn more.

**ES: Where do you see the yarn industry going in the coming years?**

“OUR COMMUNITY IS RICH, FULL OF IDEAS AND NOT AFRAID TO TRY NEW THINGS OR EXPLORE NEW ADVENTURES IN KNITTING AND CROCHET.”

**YO:** I believe our knitters and crocheters will continue to grow, but their buying habits will change. We are already seeing that change. More sales will be done online—we are all, after all, influenced by Amazon—but I strongly believe the

local yarn stores who are smart and adapt to changes and make their stores special will continue to thrive. They are an essential part of this industry. We wholesalers need to continue to bring new and fresh ideas to the marketplace but also learn to adapt ourselves to the [inevitable] changes.

**ES: Do you knit English or Continental? Who taught you to knit, and**

**how long ago?**

**YO:** I knit English—I am a thrower—as I learned knitting in Turkey when I was 13. I am from the south of Turkey, where the summers are very hot and humid. As a result, people in my hometown go up to the mountains during the summer months. My parents own a house in the mountains, and our next-door neighbor, who is an avid knitter, taught me and my sister how to knit. I did not enjoy it in the beginning. We did not have a big yarn selection at the local yarn store on the mountain. It wasn't until Hal started Universal Yarn that I rediscovered my passion for yarn.

**ES: Do you think Universal Yarn will become a family company with the next generation?**

**YO:** Although they both know how to knit, our kids, both currently in college, do not knit for themselves but instead ask mom to knit for them! Whether they decide to join the business or not, only time will tell. Hal and I want them to do what they are passionate about. I love what I'm doing, and I strongly believe that you become successful in things that you love to do. So if yarn is their passion, there is definitely a future for them at Universal Yarn.

**ES: What's on your needles right now?**

**YO:** I just finished projects in Universe; we released the collection just recently. Right now I am making a top in Papyrus, which is a cotton/silk blend. It's a fabulous yarn to knit with—so soft and luxurious.

**ES: What do you like to do in your spare time when you're not knitting?**

**YO:** I love to read and to travel. I just finished *Seabiscuit* by Laura Hillenbrand; I love her style and how her nonfiction reads like fiction. I also enjoy spending time with my family—Hal and I became empty-nesters last year.



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