

ALL AFLUTTER

What to do
should you
spot a moth
in your
stockroom

WARP & WEFT

The (recent)
history of
weaving in the
USA—and
what we should
look for next

POP-UP SHOP

Is the future
of retail one-
off shopping
events?

OCTOBER 2019

BRIGHT IDEAS!



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Making



ROSE CALLAHAN

Recently, while reading an article online,

it occurred to me that the term “maker” is suddenly being capitalized everywhere. When did those of us who like to create with our hands become so vaunted in pop culture? It’s relatively new—and it can only spell good things for our industry. I’m definitely excited to live in a time that views Makers as important parts of the fabric of society.

As millennials and the next generation shift their priorities—toward home, toward sustainability, toward authenticity, toward inclusion—the yarn industry needs to be ready. In many ways, we’re already poised for this change: We have been quietly making our own garments, home goods and more for years. But in other ways it’s time to stay light on our toes, keep an eye on the shifting culture and be ready to respond.

Yarn Market News continues to strive to give you the best information to make the changing world of retail easier to navigate. In this issue, we take a look at weaving, an age-old yarn craft that is enjoying a noteworthy resurgence in popularity. The fiftieth anniversary of Schacht Spindle Company also inspired us to take a fresh look at warp and weft. We discuss, as always, social media—video, video, video is still our watchword these days. We round things out with some great yarn to look into, how to think about “pop-up” events as marketing tools and much more.

As always, please keep me in mind if you see a trend that is shifting the way you do business. I’m all ears!

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

Erin Slonaker, Editor in Chief



on the cover

Plymouth Yarn’s Annie comes in 56 colors and is sure to spark lots of great ideas for garments, accessories and more.
www.plymouthyarn.com

Photograph by Marcus Tullis



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features

32 HANDWEAVING

How a resurgence in popularity of this age-old craft can benefit a yarn shop's bottom line.

By Jane Patrick, Deb Gerish and Benjamin Krudwig



32

Retailers can still reach weaving customers in the "old" ways, using the latest technology.



28

Forever Yarn is a community hub in the thriving crafts mecca of Doylestown, Pennsylvania.



30

The 131-year-old Sandnes Garn reintroduces its Norwegian yarns to the American market.

in every issue

- 2 EDITOR'S LETTER
- 8 MARKET REPORT
- 14 YARN FORWARD
- 18 BOOK REVIEWS
- 20 YARN GROUP
- 21 CRAFT YARN COUNCIL
- 22 ASSOCIATION FOR CREATIVE INDUSTRIES
- 23 SMART MERCHANDISING
- 24 SMART ONLINE
- 25 SMART SELLING
- 26 SMART SOLUTIONS
- 28 RETAIL PROFILE
Forever Yarn
- 30 COMPANY PROFILE
Sandnes Garn
- 36 CELEBRITY INTERVIEW
Karin Skacel



14

All about alpaca yarn: serious softness with a subtle haze.



9

A snapped rubber band was the catalyst for a new invention that keeps stitches on needles.

Plymouth Yarn Design Studio

presents Pattern M108
Heather Lane Pullover
featuring Worsted Merino Superwash



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IN THE WEEDS

For more than two years, **Stacie Chavez** of **Imperial Yarn** has been in the thick of it, working with the country's only hemp-fiber processor and her mill to produce a commercial yarn blended with American-grown hemp.

Like linen, which is a bast cellulose fiber, hemp has confounded entrepreneurs and mills interested in bringing hemp textiles back to the U.S. The problem with this multipurpose plant? It's a low-THC sibling of marijuana and was criminalized by the federal government along with its psychoactive, higher-THC relative.

But after states including Colorado and Kentucky passed local laws making it possible to grow hemp for fiber and other uses in 2014, farmers started growing it for seed, cannabidiol (the wellness-industry cure-all CBD oil) and industrial uses like textiles, paper and construction materials.

Getting products to market is easier said than done, particularly on the fiber side. Given the decades-long prohibition on hemp, which was lifted nationwide by the 2018 Farm Bill, there is no real infrastructure in the United States to process hemp except for a tiny Omaha-based company called

Bastcore. Plus, the availability of hemp fiber is very limited.

Last year, Chavez managed to score some of Bastcore's processed hemp, enlisting Pennsylvania-based Kraemer Yarns to spin a test blend with wool and alpaca. Soft, with unruly hemp flecks throughout, the yarn appealed to Chavez, so she immedi-



ately put in another order. Because of the dearth of U.S. hemp fiber available, however, Chavez had to postpone production until more raw material became available after another growing season.

But the wait is paying off. This summer Chavez launched what may be the first commercial hemp-blend yarn grown domestically. Called Joshua, the DK-weight yarn

(95yds/50g) is an all-domestic heathery mix of 40% wool, 40% alpaca and 20% hemp—an intriguing mix of flora and fauna with strong stitch definition, next-to-skin wearability and untamed grassy wisps for interest. It's being offered in 10 colors by Imperial Yarn as a small-batch product.

"We wanted wool for loft and memory and alpaca for the softness of hand," Chavez says. "The hemp gives it that texture and character."

"Hemp is important," she explains. "It was an original fiber in this country and was outlawed because of [its association with] marijuana. It got a bad rap. This yarn is about bringing it back."

Though Chavez has developed the first widely available hemp-blend yarn, she isn't the only hemp-curious yarn producer. Mary Pettis-Sarley of the artisanal yarn company **Twirl** has also introduced a hemp-blend yarn that combines field-retted hemp from Minnesota with wool, alpaca and mohair from her own flocks. The yarn comes in two natural colors and is put up in 50-gram cakes. Joshua retails for \$17 and is available at imperialyarn.com. Twirl hemp yarn sells on fibershedmarketplace.com for \$16.50 a skein.

DYE IS CAST

Finally, some refreshing news about the American textile supply chain. **Meridian Specialty Yarn Group, Inc.**, which serves a variety of textile-industry sectors including hosiery, home furnishings and upholstery, carpets, rugs and craft yarn, opened a new state-of-the-art yarn-dyeing plant in Valdese, North Carolina, on July 8. The move represents the first yarn and fiber-dyeing operation to be built in the U.S. in more than 20 years and offers the country's only tow-dyeing service, which eliminates the need to dye raw acrylic overseas.

"Our new technology gives us the capability to process every dyeable fiber in various forms including yarn, tow and top. This is very unusual in the dyed-yarn world," says Tim Manson, president of MSYG. "We can chemically treat or dye all fiber substrates, ranging from cellulosic and animal fibers to



polyester, nylon and dyeable aramids. Most dye houses specialize in certain products, but we are now in a position to source from all over the world, from every type of textile fiber, supporting a wide array of end uses."

The new 116,000-square-foot factory sits adjacent to the company's existing plant, which is also undergoing renovation. When

completed, the 284,600-square-foot yarn-manufacturing complex will be a shining example of up-to-the-minute textile technology and robotic support for package, top and tow dyeing. No jobs were lost; in fact, because of technology upgrades, the opening of the new facility required adding 25 new jobs to MSYG's employment rolls.

BEAN BAGS

With the purchase in May of the knitting and crochet accessories brand **della Q**, **Laura Zander**, co-owner of **Jimmy Beans Wool**, is living proof that you can never have too many knitting bags. The acquisition represents Jimmy Beans's second foray into the craft accessories market following the company's purchase of Namaste bags in 2018. Having long admired della Q for its thoughtful and attractive needle organizers and project bags, Zander bought the brand from Della Glein, who founded the company 15 years ago.

"Della was ready for a change, and we thought we might be able to have fun with it," Zander explains. "We also have an unbelievable team of experienced people on staff now who could do some really cool things with the line."

In addition to refreshing the della Q brand, Jimmy Beans will be trimming some of the bag and accessory styles while also offering limited-edition collections of select products in new fabrics, including an indigo batik hand-dyed by Black Hmong women in Northern Vietnam.

Other brand favorites will remain, including the della Q Silk Collection, the LYS Boutique Collection (available only to local yarn shops) and the Cotton Print Collections. Plus, all items going forward will come with a darning needle and special branded stitch marker.

"We're making this move to differentiate ourselves," Zander says. "For us, it's something unique that we carry, and it means we will be working our way into wholesaling, which we hope to do from an LYS perspective."

Because della Q had an existing wholesale program, Jimmy Beans Wool will be wholesaling the line to local yarn shops, but



only to stores with a bricks-and-mortar presence. Zander also will be opening certain Namaste products to the wholesale market. "We want to create cool stuff that drives people into shops," Zander says.

The new della Q collection will debut in the fall. For more information, visit www.dellaq.com.

NEEDLE WRANGLER

When the rubber bands she was using to corral her lace knitting project snapped, so did **Emily McNeil**, owner of **Fidalgo Artisan Yarn and Clothing** in Anacortes, Washington.

"The rubber bands broke the yarn," explains Justin Connelly, her romantic partner and cofounder, with McNeil and Marissa Connelly, of The Tempestry Project [see story page 10]. "She was very upset."

Armed with a 3-D printer and equipped with a background in drafting and engineering, Justin went to work on a solution. Referencing a needle size chart, he printed a prototype for a small device that's like a "jaws of life" for knitting projects. Not only does the invention prevent knitting from slipping off the needles; it also keeps needles together and project yarn tangle-free. When he showed the gadget to knitters at McNeil's shop, they all expressed an interest in trying it.

Today the Needle Wrangler is patented, offered in three sizes—Mini (U.S. 0–3), Standard (U.S. 4–11) and Jumbo (U.S. 13–19)—and sold across the country.

"I take them into yarn shops with knitting on them and spin the needles around," Justin says. "People are like, 'Oh my God, what are you doing?' It's a pretty effective demonstration."

Needle Wranglers, which are manufactured in Washington state, are being distributed by Bryson Distributing. To learn more about the product, visit www.tempestryproject.com.





As a trained ecologist and writer for the National Parks Traveler, a nonprofit media organization that covers national parks and protected places, **Erika Zambello** gets data. So after purchasing a custom knitting kit from **The Tempestry Project**, a small company in Washington that sells “Tempestry” kits with the yarn and instructions to chart the daily highs of a given year and location, Zambello wondered about creating tem-

CRAFTING CLIMATE DATA FOR THE NATIONAL PARKS

pestries that would document temperature changes in U.S. national parks.

“It’s an entirely different way to experience data,” she says.

Zambello reached out to The Tempestry Project, which evolved after three friends had joked about protecting scientific data by encoding it in tapestries or cuneiform tablets. By assigning specific yarn colors to 5-degree temperature ranges, they developed patterns and templates wherein knitters, crocheters and cross-stitchers could needle away across a spectrum of cool blues and warm reds to capture in fiber the high temps of a place from January 1 through December 31.

To get the project off the ground, the Tempestry team posted free instructions on their website for gathering data and making the simple fiber “documents,” each row representing in color the daily high. “You knit the days,” explains Justin Connelly of The Tempestry Project. “That’s it.”

The project took off, with individuals, knitting groups and guilds creating and exhibiting tempestry collections to show how temperatures have changed in one place over time.

Based on requests from stitchers uninterested in purchasing more than 30 yarn colors or spreadsheeting their own data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, The Tempestry Project began packaging custom kits that include the correct amounts of yarn colors prewound for sale. (All kits feature KnitPicks’ Wool of the Andes Worsted in colors that represent specific color ranges.)

Zambello thought the tempestries were a perfect way to reconnect crafters to their

favorite national parks while also providing a new and different way for people to visualize temperature changes in these much-loved spots. “What a great way to showcase changes in our national parks,” she says, “while also showcasing the beauty of the parks.”

Working with The Tempestry Project, which is providing the kits, Zambello envisioned an initiative that would combine two tempestries, each one depicting a year in a park’s history (say, 1916 and 2016), along with a photo of the finished pieces shot in the park. In April she posted about the national parks project on National Parks Traveler and The Tempestry Project’s Facebook page. When blogger Karen Templer mentioned it in a post, Zambello received a flood of responses.

“Many people so badly want to do something about climate change,” Zambello explains, “but it needs mass collective action. It’s hard to wrap your mind around the things you can do about it. With this kit, they can do what they love to do. We hope that it will spark conversations about climate with friends and family.”

The goal currently is to document 50 parks with two tempestries each, along with corresponding photographs in an online exhibit, traveling exhibits and, potentially, a book. Zambello also has her eyes on another 50 parks she hopes to catalog in fiber.

“What’s been reinforced by this project is the critical importance of long-term data,” she says. “It reminds us all that the effort we put into data collection is how we know things are changing.”

To learn more, visit www.facebook.com/TempestryProject.

TOLT AND YOTH

Founder of the destination yarn shop **Tolt Yarn and Wool** in Carnation, Washington, Anna Dianich has passed the spindle to new owner **Veronika Jobe**, cofounder, with her brother, of YOTH Yarns.

In an Instagram post announcing her purchase of the shop, Jobe wrote, “I am elated and honored to be the one [Anna]

has asked to take on the beautiful shop and community space she has created.”

During the early days of YOTH Yarns, Jobe worked at Tolt, teaching and selling yarn. She left to shepherd YOTH full-time. In addition to her shop responsibilities, Jobe will continue on at YOTH. Tolt is a longtime YOTH stockist.

KNIT FOR REFUGEES

Deploying emojis representing a scarf, a ball of yarn and sewing thread, the **UNHCR** (the UN refugee agency), along with **Twitter for Good** and the U.K.-based knitting-machine manufacturer **Kniterate**, launched a knitting campaign to solicit funds to help the 14 million displaced Syrians and Iraqis in the Middle East and North Africa face the coming winter.

Using #KnitForRefugees, the campaign asks Twitter users to retweet the initial post. The first 500 to comply will have their names knitted into a scarf created by one of Kniterate's compact industrial knitting machines.

The five-month campaign is targeting multiple countries and regions and launched with the UAE at the end of June. Kniterate will create commemorative scarves for each market.

Ayat El Dewary, UNHCR officer in charge in the UAE, says, "This partnership with Twitter is really significant for UNHCR. Funds raised through this campaign will support our efforts to provide the life-saving interventions to the most vulnerable refugees this winter. Every year we see firsthand the desperation faced by refugees in the region during the winter season. We hope that through this initiative, we will not only raise awareness on the plight of refugees but also raise the necessary funds to ensure that no refugee is left out in the cold."

The event ends on November 30; the results of the campaign will be shared during the Global Summit of Refugees in Geneva. Last year the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees helped 3.6 million displaced Syrians and Iraqis through its winterization efforts. For some individuals and families, this winter will mark their ninth as refugees or internally displaced persons.

To watch the UNHCR video about the campaign, visit www.twitter.com/Refugees/status/1144993482244853760.



F+W BREAK UP

F&W Media, owner of *Interweave*, which filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in March, sold key assets at auction this summer.

Penguin Random House acquired F&W's book division for \$5.6 million, including the *Interweave*, Krause Publications, North Light Books, Popular Woodworking, The Quilting Company and *Writer's Digest* imprints, along with a backlist of 2,000-plus titles.

F&W's community division, which represents the company's print magazines, e-commerce, events and digital media properties, was split up and sold in pieces. For just over \$3.5 million, Terry O'Toole, the chairman and co-managing member of F&W, purchased most of the crafts community, which includes *Interweave Knits*, *Knitscene*, *Interweave Crochet*, seven other sewing and needlework magazines, plus nine quilting publications, along with F&W's artists division (*Artists Magazine* and *Southwest Art*, among others). The buy was made under the aegis of Peak Media Properties—an operating company backed by Macanta Investments (an investor in F&W)—that's run by CEO Greg Osberg, who was CEO of F&W. The sky and telescope,

outdoors, construction, family tree, writing, woodworking, horticulture and collectibles communities went to other buyers.

"We have before us an opportunity to build Peak Media Properties into a leading publisher across the growing enthusiast market," says Osberg. "Our titles, market positioning and communities are strong, and we will build upon this strong foundation by engaging our loyal customers in new and exciting ways."

In the aftermath of the F&W auctions, Long Thread Media, made up of *Interweave* founder Linda Ligon and *Interweave* alumni John Bolton and Anne Merrow, bought *Spin Off*, *Piece-*

Work and *Handwoven* magazines and attendant products from Peak Media Properties.

"I looked at it as taking up the mantle of producing educational, delightful and meaningful work for spinners, weavers

and needleworkers and nurturing these communities," Merrow says. "From a business perspective, though—and this is something Linda and John have a lot of experience with—the numbers show that these magazines and product lines can be really healthy if we can get back to making the best products in an efficient way."



INDIGENOUS WOOL



This June marked the eighth **Wool Buy** at the Navajo Nation, an annual event arranged by the **Black Mesa Water Coalition**, an indigenous social justice organization, and the **Diné College Land Grant Office**, to help Navajo wool growers get a fair market rate for their wool.

The event brings together representatives from the yarn brand Peace Fleece and the Mid-States Wool Growers Cooperative Association and independent mohair buyer Teddy Varnell to purchase

fiber from Navajo growers at multiple locations across the Nation. Launched in 2012, the Wool Buy gives Navajo shepherds an alternative to selling their fiber to the trading posts for pennies per pound or burning their fleeces because it's not worth the gas to market them.

Since the Wool Buy started in 2012, it has not only put more domestic wool into the craft yarn and commodity wool market; it has also contributed to the Navajo economy and helped local families maintain their longstanding tradition of sheep raising.

The first year, buyers purchased a total of 12,000 pounds of wool. In 2019, 130,000 pounds were sold. Peter Hagerty, founder of Peace Fleece, purchased about 1,300 pounds of wool that first year; this year, the brand, which is now owned by Harrisville Designs, acquired nearly 4,400 pounds of wool at an average price of \$1.55 per pound.

To purchase the low-micron-count wool, Peace Fleece and the Mid-States Wool Growers Cooperative Association vie for the fine stuff, creating a competitive market during the buy. The wool purchased by Mid-States is sold into the international wool market and either exported or purchased domestically. Peace Fleece combines the Navajo wool with non-Native American wool and Texas mohair to create its DK and worsted yarns.

"Every year we're buying more, and every year the wool improves," explains Nick Colony of Peace Fleece and Harrisville Designs. "They are producing more competitive fiber, so we're buying more and paying more for it. It's encouraging to see the progress."

SHOP TALK

On June 23, **Ravelry** banned public support of President Donald Trump on its site, stating that "support of President Trump, his administration or individual policies that harm marginalized groups all constitute hate speech."

The announcement made it clear that the knitting and crochet social media platform was not "endorsing Democrats or banning Republicans," nor was it prohibiting crafters who support the president from participating. Rather, in seeking to provide a "space that is inclusive for all," Ravelry would no longer allow open support for the Trump administration. "Support of the Trump administration," the policy states, "is undeniably support for white supremacy."

Since the announcement, the yarniverse and mainstream media have exploded with reactions and coverage. Stories have run in *The New York Times*, NPR, *The Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *The Guardian* and *Time* magazine. Stephen Colbert even weighed in on *The Late Show*.

While countless Ravelers have publicly endorsed the policy, including business owners Amy Singer of Knitty.com, Karida Collins of Neighborhood Fiber Co., author Clara Parkes, designer Andrea Rangel and dozens of others, there are also legions of dissenting crafters calling out Ravelry for censoring conservative

voices and for politicizing craft. Angry users have deleted their Ravelry accounts and decamped to alternate sites.

Yarn shops, which can sell Ravelry patterns through the In-Store Pattern Sales program, have also weighed in. At Yarn Social in Kansas City, Missouri, owner Trish Fitzsimmons instituted a no-hate-speech policy, alerting email subscribers through a letter that the store supported Ravelry and that it wouldn't tolerate hate speech or white supremacy.

Unlike Ravelry, which prohibits public endorsement of the president, Yarn Social permits supporters of Donald Trump to have their say, as long as the discussion remains civil. "If someone is behaving in an overtly hateful manner," Fitzsimmons says, "that's not something I will allow or enable."

On the other hand, in Salem, Ohio, LYSO Kate Thompson of Knit Wit Knits thinks Ravelry should stick to its knitting. "To exclude a whole group of people because you don't agree with their political views seems like you're practicing exactly what you are claiming you are against," she told the *Washington Examiner*.

Though the social knitting in her shop tends to be more fiber-focused than political, if a political conversation does bubble up, Thompson steers the conversation elsewhere. "It's that thing: You don't talk about religion, politics or the family silver."

October 15–19

Nova Scotia Fibre Arts Festival

Amherst, Nova Scotia, Canada
fibreartsfestival.com

October 17–19

**Creativ Festival:
A Celebration of Creativity**

International Centre
Mississauga, Ontario, Canada
csnf.com/fall-show

October 18

**Indie Untangled Rhinebeck
Trunk Show**

Saugerties Performing Arts Factory
Saugerties, New York
indieuntangled.com/events

October 18–19

**Southern Indiana Fiber
and Arts Festival**

Harrison County Fairgrounds
Corydon, Indiana
soinfiberfestival.com

October 19

RaggZ Fiber Affair

Delmont Fire Hall
Delmont, Pennsylvania
facebook.com/Raggz-fiber-
affair-2219787381621395

October 19

Woodstock Fleece Festival

Woodstock Fairgrounds
Woodstock, Ontario, Canada
fleecefestival.com

October 19–20

Autumn Fiber Festival

Ashland County Fairgrounds
Ashland, Ohio
autumnfiberfestival.com

October 19–20

Fiber Fusion Northwest

Evergreen State Fairgrounds
Monroe, Washington
fiberfusion.net

October 19–20

New York Sheep & Wool Festival

Dutchess County Fairgrounds
Rhinebeck, New York
sheepandwool.com

October 24–26

**Seattle Weavers' Guild Annual
Show and Sale**

St. Mark's Cathedral
Seattle, Washington
seattleweaversguild.com

October 25–27

Southeastern Animal Fiber Fair

Western NC Agricultural Center
Fletcher, North Carolina
saffsite.org

October 26

**Cowichan Valley Fleece
and Fibre Festival**

Cobble Hill Hall and Fairgrounds
Cobble Hill, British Columbia,
Canada
cowichanfleeceandfibre
festival.com

October 26

**Sheep Parade: Cedar City
Livestock and Heritage Festival**

Main Street
Cedar City, Utah
cedarlivestockfest.com/
sheep-parade

October 27–28

Fiber Expo

Washtenaw Farm Council Grounds
Ann Arbor, Michigan
fiberexpo.com

November 1–2

Ozark Fiber Fling

Meramec Baptist Retreat Center
Steelville, Missouri
ozarkfiberfling.com

November 1–3

Vogue Knitting LIVE!

Greater Columbus
Convention Center
Columbus, Ohio
vogueknittinglive.com/Columbus

November 1–3

Weavers' Guild Holiday Sale

Perkins Mansion
Rochester, New York
weaversguildofrochester.org/
events/holiday-sale

November 2

Fiber in the Boro

Lane Agricultural Park
Murfreesboro, Tennessee
fiberintheboro.com

November 2

Penns Valley Fiber Festival

Old Gregg School and
Community Center
Spring Mills, Pennsylvania
mulberryhillfarm.com/pvff.html

November 2–3

Fiber Festival of New England

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

November 7–10

Vogue Knitting LIVE! Intensive

Renaissance Austin Hotel
Austin, Texas
vogueknittinglive.com/austintx

November 8–9

Thumb Fiber Festival

Camp Cavell Conservancy
Lexington, Michigan, vicinity
thumbfiberfest.wixsite.com/
thumbfiberfest

November 8–10

Carolina Fiber Frolic

Community Center
Sapphire, North Carolina
carolinafiberfrolic.wordpress.com

November 8–10

**Kid 'n Ewe and Llamas
Too Festival**

Hill Country Youth Events Center
Kerrville, Texas
kidnewe.com

November 9

Spinner's Flock Fall Fleece Fair

Beach Middle School
Chelsea, Michigan
sites.google.com/site/a2spinners-
flock

November 9–10

**Maryland Alpaca and Fleece
Festival**

Howard County Fairgrounds
West Friendship, Maryland
marylandalpaca.org/page/5822/ma-
ryland-alpaca-and-fleece-festival

November 10

**Yarn Revolution:
PNW Indie Dyer Pop-Up**

The Nile
Mountlake Terrace, Washington
nanostitchlab.com/home/
yarnrevolution

November 14–17

**Vogue Knitting Destination
Knitting Experience**

Portland, Oregon
vogueknittinglive.com

November 14–17

Stitches SoCal

Pasadena Convention Center
Pasadena, California
knittinguniverse.com/SoCal2019

November 15–16

East Texas Fiber Festival

Canton Civic Center
Canton, Texas
easttexasfiberfestival.weebly.com

November 17

Indie Knit & Spin

The Ace Hotel
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
indieknitandspin.com

November 17

Nottingham Yarn Expo

Nottingham Conference Centre
Nottingham, England
nottinghamyarnexpo.com

November 17–18

Barcelona Knits Festival

Barcelona, Spain
barcelonaknits.com

November 22–23

Creative Hand Show & Sale

Old Shawnee Town Hall
Shawnee, Kansas
creativehandkc.org

**November 28–December 1
Knitting and Stitching Show**

Harrogate Convention Centre
Yorkshire, England
theknittingandstitchingshow.com/
harrogate

December 6–8;

**December 13–15
Countryside Artisans
Studio Tours**

Maryland
countrysideartisans.com

January 17–19

**Knitting LIVE!
by Vogue Knitting
10th Anniversary event**

New York Marriott Marquis
New York, New York
vogueknittinglive.com

YARN
FORWARD

ALLURING ALPACAS

Irresistibly
silky yarns
from the cutest
camelid.

By Renee Lorian

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARCUS TULLIS

Lorna's Laces Honor

Specs: Dozens of nearly solid and multi colors; 70% baby alpaca, 30% silk; 275yds/100g

Gauge: 22 sts = 4" on U.S. 5 needles

Distinctions: A beautiful DK-weight blend of baby alpaca and silk, Honor has a slight halo and slips smoothly across the needles.

Projects: With no itch factor, this yarn can get up close and personal in neck-warming cowls and scarves.

Plymouth Yarn Baby Alpaca Worsted

Specs: 22 colors; 100% baby alpaca; 102yds/50g

Gauge: 20 sts = 4" on U.S. 8 needles

Distinctions: This luscious 2-ply yarn in deep saturated colors is pure squish. Baby alpaca and a loose twist make it supersoft and silky.

Projects: Cast on for a supersized scarf in cables or simple seed stitch.



Manos del Uruguay Serena

Specs: 42 colors; 60% baby alpaca, 40% pima cotton; 170yds/25g

Gauge: 22–26 sts = 4" on U.S. 4–6 needles

Distinctions: Baby alpaca blends with cotton for a unique 3-ply yarn that can be worn in all seasons. The kettle-dyeing process results in slightly heathered solids; several variegated shades are also available.

Projects: Serena is a go-to for warm-weather tops, but this versatile yarn can do it all, from cardigans to lace shawls.



Cascade Yarns Pure Alpaca

Specs: 18 colors; 100% baby alpaca; 220yds/100g

Gauge: 20–22 sts = 4" on U.S. 6–7 needles

Distinctions: This worsted-weight yarn is all alpaca and works up into a soft, drapey fabric. A reliable choice for comfy sweaters and shawls.

Projects: The free Dropped Stitch Scarf pattern from Cascade uses just one skein to create a breezy scarf with a looped fringe.



Blue Sky Fibers Baby Alpaca Sport Weight

Specs: 26 colors; 100% baby alpaca; 110yds/50g

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

Distinctions: Come for beautiful solids and a mélange of colors, stay for the bouncy construction and stitch definition.

Projects: For quick gifts, work fingerless mitts with simple cables or bands of color.

(yarn reviews continue on page 16)

ALLURING ALPACAS



Knit One, Crochet Too Covet (bottom left)

Specs: 13 solid and 6 hand-dyed colors; 100% super baby alpaca; 164yds/50g

Gauge: 24–26 sts = 4" on U.S. 3–5 needles

Distinctions: This sport-weight single is spun from fine alpaca, resulting in an incredibly soft hand—so soft that you'll be tempted to carry a skein around as a squeeze toy.

Projects: The Covet Bandanna from Knit One Crochet Too, a small shawl project, features a garter-stitch brick pattern and openwork edges.

Malabrigo Silkpaca (top)

Specs: 39 colors; 70% baby alpaca, 30% silk; 420yds/50g

Gauge: 20–28 sts = 4" on U.S. 3–8 needles

Distinctions: A gorgeous 2-ply lace-weight yarn with a slight sheen, Silkpaca can be worked over a range of gauges. Try intricate lace on small needles or size up for a light, loose fabric.

Projects: Showcase this yarn's color options in a shawl like Line Break from Veera Välimäki.

Navia/Kelbourne Woolens Alpakka

(bottom right)

Specs: 13 colors; 100% alpaca; 251yds/25g

Gauge: 15 sts = 4" on U.S. 10–11 needles

Distinctions: This yarn is very lightweight and has a lovely halo. Work it on the larger recommended needle sizes for a sheer, airy fabric, or try sizing down for lace projects.

Projects: Choose this ethereal yarn for a wide lace stole.



Berroco Ultra Alpaca (left)

Specs: 65 colors; 50% superfine alpaca, 50% Peruvian wool; 215yds/100g

Gauge: 20 sts = 4" on U.S. 8 needles

Distinctions: A yarn that has stood the test of time, this alpaca/wool blend sports a springy, round construction. The myriad solid and heathered shades create endless options for colorwork.

Projects: Work this yarn in a classic yoked pullover, playing with tonal colors and a geometric pattern.



Zitron/Skacel Collection Finest

Royal Alpaca (top right)

Specs: 19 colors; 100% royal alpaca; 109yds/50g

Gauge: 16–24 sts = 4" on U.S. 6–8 needles

Distinctions: This indulgent 3-ply yarn is spun from the finest grade of alpaca fiber. It takes dye beautifully and is offered in a palette of stylish, garment-friendly colors.

Projects: A classic fitted cardigan worked at a fine gauge in a simple textured pattern would be fit for a queen.



Rowan Alpaca Classic (bottom right)

Specs: 30 colors; 57% alpaca, 43% cotton; 131yds/25g

Gauge: 23 sts = 4" on U.S. 5 needles

Distinctions: A cotton mesh core provides the structure for this fluffy alpaca yarn, making it perfect for lightweight garments that won't weigh you down.

Projects: The Misty cardigan from Quail Studio is a simple, timeless wardrobe staple.

▼ **Typographic Knitting**

By Rüdiger Schlömer
Princeton Architectural Press;
\$27.50

ISBN: 978-1-61689854-0

For makers with a message, "type-knitting" aims to help you say it in stitches on sweaters, hats, scarves and blankets. The project on the cover—Selbu-style mittens with a capital A on top of the hand and mini A's on the thumb and palm—represents what the author calls "pixel" knitting, in which each letter is rendered roughly one stitch for each pixel, and is likely the method most knitters recognize. The patterns and methods get a bit more esoteric from there, including, for instance, patterned charts derived from dot-matrix fonts worked in colors and slipped stitches to interesting visual effect, similar to shadow/illusion knitting that reads only when viewed at a particular angle. In the last two chapters the author, a graphic designer and curator, presents Patches and Module techniques, in which letters are built from blocks and sections and, as a result, display more of the digital characteristics of computer fonts. Bonus: A resource section with 25 font charts.

▼ **JOMO Knits: 21 Projects to Celebrate the Joy of Missing Out**

By Christine Boggis
GMC Publications; \$22.95
ISBN: 978-1-78494-505-3



Crafting mojo a little depleted? Replace the F in the ubiquitous FOMO acronym with a J and you've got the Joy of Missing Out—Boggis's reminder to knitters to switch off whatever else may be competing for their time and relax into the process of knitting. Sprinkled throughout are inspirations to help you stay in the creative moment, embracing who you are as a "maker" and what your body is as a "wearer" of what you've made. A 35-page

techniques section—with photo how-tos for everything from tension and cast-ons to making cables and working brioche—makes most of the 21 patterns accessible to beginners. Projects include a long cardigan coat, oversized pullover, socks, hats, scarves and a men's shawl-collar cardigan. Most are chunky gauge, so they're easy on the hands and work up quickly, but it's joy, not speed, that is the focus.

▼ **Knitted Animal Friends**

By Louise Crowther
SewandSo; \$24.99
ISBN: 978-1-4463-0731-1

The author of *My Knitted Doll* offers 13 patterns for sweet-faced knitted animal toys with doll-like postures, elongated proportions and wardrobes worthy of a SoHo boutique.



A quick thumb-through of the pages may get you plotting how to size up some outfits to adult size—particularly Charlotte Fox's Linen Stitch coat and Amelia Duck's striped dress with tiny-cable cross-body bag, just a few of the 27 mix-and-match garment choices. Patterns are written in row-by-row format and include tips for handling what can be tight construction spots when assembling these toys. Detail photos are not in-progress how-tos but rather close-ups of the finished seams, colorwork stranding, button placement, etc., so you can clearly see the result you're aiming for.

▼ **Crochet Every Way Stitch Dictionary**

By Dora Ohrenstein
Abrams; \$27.50
ISBN: 978-1-4197-3291-1



With an eye toward providing a foundation for contemporary crochet design, Ohrenstein chose 125 stitch patterns and organized them according to complexity. Beginning with simple "closed"

stitches that make a solid fabric, then continuing on to mesh and easy lace, textures like puffs, bobbles and "exploding" shells, the chapters provide a hierarchical understanding of crochet difficulty. Knitters who have never picked up a hook before might be surprised by how Tiles and Granny Ripple, among others, resemble common knit stitches. Each stitch pattern has written and charted instructions and is accompanied by a color photo of the swatch. There are no projects, but with the tips for shaping, reading charts and executing repeats, and the how-tos of shaping when working that stitch, crocheters of all levels will be better equipped to evaluate patterns best suited to their skills.

▼ **Dogs on Sweaters: Knitting Patterns for 18 Different Breeds**

By Sally Muir and Joanna Osborne
Trafalgar Square Books; \$24.95
ISBN: 978-57076-934-4



A follow-up to *Knit Your Own Dog*, this book includes everything you need to stitch a favorite fur baby into your woolly wardrobe. Neither kitschy nor cutesy, the 18 breed designs are realistic renderings suitable for all generations and genders and customizable to mimic your own one-of-a-kind mixed pup. There are five garment patterns: a raglan pullover and a long-and-loose drop-shoulder style for women, a set-in sleeve pullover for men, and cardigans and pullovers for kids, as well as eight accessories, including a hat, scarf and square-patch blanket. Most of the sweaters are shown with the dog positioned across the chest, sometimes on a rectangular or oval contrasting panel, but there are tips to help you move Fido around or even just stitch him peeking out from a pocket. The dog designs are charted but in gray and white, so it's easy to plot personal colors, and there's an alphabet chart to add a name or make the Cave Canem (Beware of Dog) pullover.

▼ **Elemental Knits**

By Courtney Spainhower
Interweave; \$27.99
ISBN: 978-1-63250-653-5



With adherence to the principle of slow fashion as her guide, Spainhower has designed pieces to form a pared-down capsule wardrobe that makes it easy to get dressed every morning with intention and style. Arranged by season, the 20 patterns are modern without being trendy. Before starting one of hers or any new project, Spainhower encourages you to think about your existing clothing and finished projects, to evaluate what works and what doesn't, what you wear and what you don't. You may emerge brave enough to frog something that you have kept only because of the hours of stitching that went into it. The payoff? Re-use the yarn to stitch something that fits you and your wardrobe better. She takes a similar laid-back approach to the "rules" of knitting: Is that minor colorwork mess-up really worth ripping out 20 stranded rows? That's what duplicate stitch is for, the author says. There are no how-to-knit tips, but the streamlined schematics and written instructions make the patterns accessible to advanced beginners who have previously bound off a sweater or two.

▼ **Crochet for Girls**

By Zess
Stackpole Books; \$24.95
ISBN: 978-0-8117-3651-0



Lifestyle blogger Zess (for Jessica) has written about life as a mom and posted clever DIY projects for more than a decade, but here she combines her love for vintage décor, fashion and a self-described "slight" yarn addiction to create crochet garments for girls ages 4 to 10. Notable among the patterns for sweaters, dresses and skirts are

a charming flower petal skirt and spring dress worked in fine-weight yarn that exhibit a relaxed drape not always associated with crocheted garments. Don't miss the smaller, on-trend accessories (hats, bags and bonnets, among them), especially the adorable pink-and-gray house purse. Most of the 23 patterns are written out and also include stitch charts; they're color-coded for sizes, so no highlighting necessary. Some styles incorporate details knitters are familiar with (bobbles, chevron patterns, colorwork), which may provide an easy segue from needles to hook.

▼ The Art of Circular Yokes

Edited by Kerry Bogert
Interweave; \$26.99

ISBN: 978-1-63250-671-9

If you're a wearer of sweaters with raglan or set-in sleeves, this collection offers innovative reasons to cast on a circular-yoke style. And if you're already a fan of yoke construction, you'll find fun style twists to try: for instance, the sweater on the book's cover, *Modern Art*, a reversible two-for-one knit. Part pattern book, part encyclopedia for knitters who want to design or to alter existing round-



yoke patterns, it includes some expected colorwork designs, but also patterns that treat the yoke as a canvas

for open lace and slip-stitch patterns. Don't be misled by the title of the eleven-page techniques section, "The Math of Circular Yokes": There's nothing to calculate before you cast on. Instead, the information and illustrations clearly explain how yokes are constructed to fit the body and how you can manipulate stitch patterns and designs to your liking.

▼ Hooked on Amigurumi

By Melanie Morita

Page Street Publishing; \$21.99

ISBN: 978-1-62414-766-1

Morita, founder of the Knot Too Shabby Crochet blog, began selling amigurumi plushies on Etsy a few years ago, but now she puts the making in your hands with these 40 adorable patterns. No shortage of

cuteness here; the patterns, organized by themes, include beachy creatures, fairy tale icons and funny food, each seamless (or with minimal sewing) and skill-rated 1 to 5, with how-to photos specific



to its assembly. A 10-page illustrated Basics section covers executing actual crochet stitches as well as techniques for working in the round, shaping and changing colors.

▼ Cardboard Loom Weaving

By Harumi Kageyama

Stackpole Books; \$25.95

ISBN: 978-0-8117-3833-0



If you've been tempted by the weaving craze but are deterred by the cost of basic supplies to get

you going, this book can help you decide whether warp and weft is for you, with minimal expense. Since it all starts with a loom, that's where Kageyama starts too, with step-by-step instructions for making flat, table or three-dimensional cardboard looms for each of the 25 projects herein. Other tools include duct tape, knitting needles and purchased or make-your-own shuttles to wrap weft yarn on before weaving. With tips on how to choose yarn that both suits the functionality of the object and achieves the one-of-a-kind look desired, this book is a comprehensive primer for the novice weaver. Pick from scarves and shawls, seat cushions and pillow shams, floor mats and more. And the next time Amazon delivers, be sure to save the box.

▼ Modern Heritage Knits

By Christina Danaee

Page Street Publishing; \$21.99

ISBN: 978-1-62414-872-9

When you're eager to cast on a new project, sometimes the yarn shopping focuses only on finding the right number of skeins in the perfect

weight in your imagined perfect color. Designer Christina Danaee knows that feeling too, but one day she started thinking about the origins of yarn and how her choices linked her to the larger world of yarn producers, all the way back to the keepers of the sheep, and ultimately influenced how she perceived her



entire knitting practice. With this new insight, Danaee adopted a more intentional, sustainable approach

to knitting and designed these 15 patterns to reflect that awareness. Her sweaters, shawls and accessories were inspired by American-made yarns, and here Danaee tells the farm-to-needle story for each. The patterns are written and skill-rated and include schematics and charts for colorwork and for the stitch patterns, which also have written instructions. And even though she designed her patterns specifically for the yarns used, she provides three possible substitutions.

▼ Crochet in a Day

By Salena Baca

Stackpole Books; \$24.95

ISBN: 978-0-8117-3708-1

As knitters may know—and as



crocheters certainly do—crochet projects often work up faster than knits and purls do. And when the pat-

terns are intentionally designed to be fast, well, that may be all the encouragement non-crocheters need to pick up a hook. The patterns include wraps, hats, headbands, pillows, tablet cases and more. There is no stitch guide or how-to information, so those who have a working knowledge of crochet and its building blocks can get stitching right away. But if this is your first foray into crochet and you're willing to dive in and teach yourself the basics (the author directs readers to the American Crochet Association tutorials on YouTube), you'll be rewarded with a project that's finished in just a few hours.

■ TREND WATCH

Here's what was selling the first week of October 2019:

Amazon Knitting List (print publications)

- *Vogue Knitting: The Ultimate Knitting Book (revised edition)*, by the editors of *Vogue Knitting* (Sixth&Spring Books)
- *Vanishing Fleece*, by Clara Parkes (Abrams)
- *Seamless Knit Sweaters in 2 Weeks*, by Marie Greene (Page Street)
- *Vogue Knitting: The Ultimate Quick Reference*, by the editors of *Vogue Knitting* (Sixth&Spring Books)
- *Timeless Noro Knit Blankets* (Sixth&Spring Books)
- *Knit Vibe*, by Vickie Howell (Abrams)
- *Loopy Mango Knitting* (Abrams)

Amazon Crochet List (print publications)

- *Whimsical Stitches*, by Lauren Espy (Modern Makers)
- *Crochet Cute Critters*, by Sarah Zimmerman (Rockridge Press)
- *A to Z of Crochet* (Martingale)
- *Complete Crochet Course*, by Shannon Mullett-Bowlsby (Lark)
- *Modern Crochet*, by DeBrosse (Paige Tait & Co.)

Barnes & Noble Knitting List (print publications)

- *Knitting: Reference to Go: 25 Chic and Easy Patterns*, by Kris Percival (Chronicle Books)
- *Hello Knitting!: Simple Knits to Have You in Stitches* (Pavilion Books)
- *Seamless Knit Sweaters in 2 Weeks*, by Marie Greene (Page Street)

A TNNA of Members

The summer trade show was our second in Cleveland, and coming back to the City of Rock 'n Roll felt like coming home. The floor was buzzing with excitement and, as always, we discovered the latest trends and the newest products. This year's trends included splashes of color; comfortable, oversized silhouettes for everything from accessories to garments; crochet everything; and source mindfulness.

This last one was particularly interesting, as both retailers and end consumers are becoming more conscientious not only about where their goods are made but about who does the labor, where the materials come from, if it is a Fair Trade product. Is this perhaps a symptom of a troubled economy and tougher times? When people have less money to spend, they want to feel good about where they spend it. However, it is my personal opinion that even when they have ample spending money, consumers will continue to ask these questions because they honestly want to know the answers.

In the evening, before the big show events

began, TNNA held its first Diversity and Inclusion Town Hall, just the first step in an ongoing conversation that is perhaps long overdue. The fiber arts industry, the country and the entire world are focusing on issues of diversity and inclusion—issues successful business owners will want to address.

How do these topics impact your business? And how can you make sure you are sending the right messages? These are important subjects, and we are only beginning to get the discussion going. A committee is forming, and we will be planning more events and opportunities for education and communication. Let's keep the conversation going.

Business is changing, and TNNA is changing with it. You'll have seen some of these changes at the summer show, and more are on the horizon as we strive to bring value to our membership 365 days a year, not just two weeks a year at the trade shows. One of the biggest changes is an update to the bylaws. Over the past year the bylaws committee has been hard at work reviewing and making recommen-

dations for changes. By the time this article is published, they will have been voted on, for or against, by our membership. Some of the big takeaways from these updates are:

- A member will be anyone actively conducting business within the needlearts industry.
- All members of TNNA will be voting members.
- All members will be eligible to serve on the board of directors.

We are looking forward to better serving the membership with these new bylaws in place, and that, by enacting the changes mentioned above, we will build a membership that is more representative of our industry and that will have an important voice in our leadership. Now more than ever, our members will know that this is their, your, our organization.

Are you excited for next year's Local Yarn Shop Day (April 25, 2020)? We have something new and exciting planned: exclusive designer patterns, available for you to purchase to build into kits, work into knit-alongs and/or crochet-alongs, and to help make your 2020 LYS Day the best one yet.

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.



Save time
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Craft Yarn Council's I Love Yarn Day

What would the world be like without yarn? For thousands of years, people made their own clothes and relied on skills passed down from their ancestors for survival. Today, yarn crafts are mostly practiced as a fun pastime. In spite of this, skills like knitting and crochet are still just as important, especially with the rise of the DIY movement and a renewed desire for sustainability.

I Love Yarn Day falls on the second Saturday of October and is a time for yarn enthusiasts around the world to share what they love about the fiber arts and why they practice these ancient crafts. This year's virtual event, the ninth annual, takes place on October 12.

Starting in September and leading up to ILYD, the Craft Yarn Council shared tips on how to get involved and teach someone a new yarn craft. The council also hosted a giveaway on Instagram asking followers to post a photo of themselves buried in their yarn stash to win one of ten exciting yarn, accessory or pattern book

prizes. Retailers can get involved in a variety of ways to promote the campaign and drive traffic into stores. Ideas include:

- Utilizing Craft Yarn Council's assets and sharing posts from CYC's Instagram, Facebook and Pinterest pages and blog. Use #iloveyarnaday in all your posts. Email info@craftyarncouncil.com for photographs, graphics, a blog post sample and a press release.
- Offering free yarn classes and demos and providing free patterns using yarns sold in your shop for I Love Yarn Day.
- Organizing a "show and share" event in-store or on social media by inviting customers to show off their favorite projects.
- Hosting an I Love Yarn Day-themed giveaway on social media using products sold in your store.
- Writing and sharing articles/blog posts related to I Love Yarn Day. For example, ask one of your employees or customers to write about why yarn is important to her.

- Filming a short video of customers and employees talking about why they love yarn and sharing it on social media.

For inspiration, ideas and free patterns, check out our social media pages and our blog and website. All details can be found at www.iloveyarnaday.com and www.craftyarncouncil.com. Make sure to tag your posts with #iloveyarnaday.

Another exciting new Craft Yarn Council campaign is a collaboration with Dallas's Sweet Tooth Hotel, an experiential art and shop venue that creates aesthetically indulgent and perfectly crafted interiors that carry visitors away to another reality. In the upcoming 2020 installation, "Intangible," Sweet Tooth Hotel will present a large-scale fiber-art installation that will allow several fiber artists to manifest their inner "world" by building elaborate and intuitively designed environments. Fiber is such a tactile medium, and "Intangible" is a unique way to describe an experience that visitors will naturally want to dig their hands into.

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

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Live Events: A Business Plus

In a digitalized world, you can easily rely on your next social campaign or 30-second video spot to spread brand awareness. These tactics may serve their purpose, but to consumers, they can seem simulated and, oftentimes, impersonal. It's time to get creative and provide memorable real-life brand experiences for your customers.

Today, more brands than ever use *experiential marketing*, a tactic for selling products and services through activities that engage your customers. Listed below are a few of the most significant benefits of participating in a live event.

• **Cuts through mail clutter.** According to The Radicati Group, an estimated 269 billion emails are sent each day. Furthermore, DMR reports that approximately 50 percent of all emails can be categorized as spam. When you send important messages through email, you take the risk that customers will overlook them. Instead, create ways for customers to gather information in-store. Window signs and face-to-face conversations may be the best way to promote your upcoming sale or product launch.

• **Creates real connections.** Updating your website and social media page with your current products is the first step toward building an audience. The second? Showing your products in person by hosting an in-store event. At this event, listen to people's authentic reactions to your products. Take note of their facial expressions when they see an item. By doing so, you're giving them the opportunity to ask questions and experience a product before making a purchase. This also gives you the chance to talk with prospective customers in a pressure-free setting. Meeting customers, listening to their comments and gaining valuable product feedback can energize your brand in profound ways.

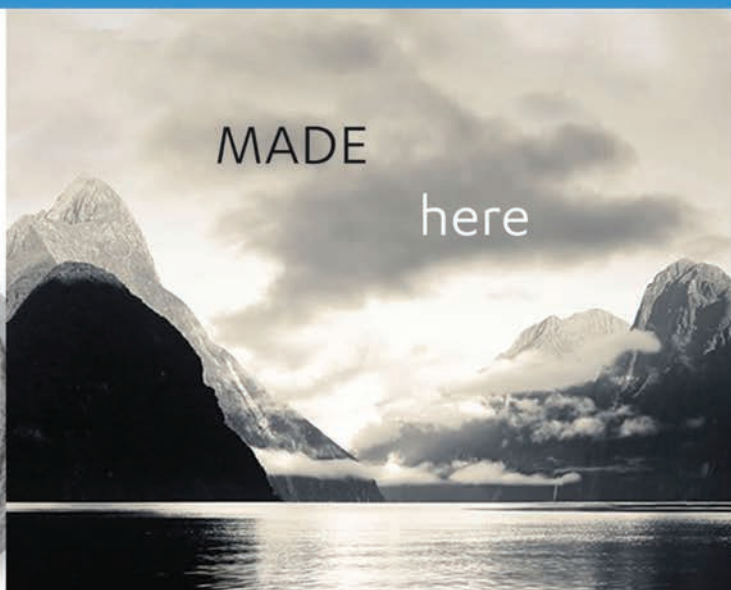
• **Inspires customer-generated content.** Events are a gold mine of easy, interesting content. At your event, provide hashtags and social media handles for customers to engage online with your brand. This helps spread word-of-mouth about your business. Best of all, it's personal, organic and free. People love to talk

about their favorite products on social media, and if they enjoyed the experience, they will tell their friends all about them. Additionally, you can grow your customer list by collecting contact information.

• **Makes it memorable.** Your customers walk away with a piece of your brand, whether that means a newly learned skill or a free sample. Giveaways, competitions and live tutorials within your event space provide excellent opportunities for brand activation—and it's possible to do on a small budget.

Live events are a great way to engage your customers, increase sales and grow your customer base. As with any marketing campaign, developing an experience at a live event takes time and preparation, but the return on investment can be worthwhile. If you get stuck in a rut along the way, remember that as your association, APCI is here to help. Contact us at membership@apci.global to learn more and for more information on Creativation, North America's largest creative industry trade event.

The APCI 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 APCI, membership or the annual Creativation trade event, visit apci.global.



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Counter Intelligence

Get smart: be thoughtful about staging your cash wrap.

BY DARYL BROWER

The cash counter is more than a space from which to ring up merchandise; it can also enhance or diminish customer satisfaction. "It's not a storage facility for junk, a break room or rest stop for employees or a catchall display fixture for things you aren't sure about," says visual retail designer Debi Ward-Kennedy. "Be vigilant about its design and use and it will serve you well."

Store Surveillance

Start by taking a look at where your cash wrap is located and how much space you've allotted to it. Ideally, your register should be set within sight of the entrance, but back and to the left. That placement is important, because people tend to turn right when they enter a retail establishment and you want to encourage them to walk through the entire store. Research shows that if the cash register is the first thing people see upon entering a store, they're likely to make a beeline for the things they need, proceed directly to checkout and then leave. You'll also want to make sure there's room to move on all sides of the counter. Aim for 3 feet behind the counter to give staffers room to work and 30 to 40 inches of clear space in front of the counter to make customers feel comfortable and to keep your floor plan ADA-compliant.

Good lighting above the cash wrap is essential. Avoid cold fluorescents. Warm bulbs create a more welcoming glow. "Hanging warm pendant lights low over the front counter, or placing a beautiful table lamp there, will make your customers feel more comfortable," says Ward-Kennedy. If there's a wall behind the cash wrap, use it to your advantage. "Stencil a logo or put some imagery there to support your brand image," she advises.

The counter should house everything you need to ring up a sale: bags, tissue, extra register tape. "Keep it simple, neat and accessible," says Ward-Kennedy. At Cast Away in Santa Rosa, California, owner Justine Malone relies on cupboard shelving to keep items organized. "We removed a door for the bags and our cash drawer so we can access both quickly," Malone says. Everything else is behind closed doors. "The only things we have on the counter are the credit card machine and the desktop computer that we use as a POS," says Malone. "The printer is set on a crate under the counter.

We can grab receipts quickly, but customers can't see the machinery."

When it comes to countertops, bigger is usually better. The counter should be roomy enough for customers to set down their intended purchases with space to spare. Ward-Kennedy suggests leaving a 2½- to 3-foot counter area. There are subtle psychological reasons to have ample space, as well: "If you make that area too small, the psychology is that they are buying something *larger* and therefore *more expensive*," Ward-Kennedy explains. "Conversely, if you provide a spacious area, they feel that perhaps they can buy more."

Acting on Impulse

Whether it's an inexpensive all-natural lip balm or a small leather luxury good, every retailer from discount to high-end knows the power of the point-of-purchase impulse buy. "Placing one or two POP displays at the register is a great idea," says Ward-Kennedy. "But overloading the area negates the purpose and overwhelms your customers. Don't crowd the space, don't offer too many things—and switch them up often.

"The impulse item that will move is the one that makes customers happy to have found it," Ward-Kennedy continues. "The items should relate to your brand and your purpose—the main reason customers come to you."

At Wool & Honey in Cedar, Michigan, owners Liz Neddo and Melissa Kelensko take all those factors into consideration. "We have small gifty items, like chocolate, directly in front of our POS," says Neddo. "Who doesn't love that?" Also on offer: a bowl of witty bee pins—a nod to the buzzing insect that factors big in the store's branding. To the far right of the counter are shelves stocked with stitch-marker sets, notions, soaps, enamel pins and candles, along with a featured book or magazine; to the left are notecards from a local artist. "It gives the customer something to look through while we are ringing them up," says Kelensko, "and because they're available at such a low price, [customers don't think twice about] adding a few to their purchase."

The display is just as important as the items on offer. "It all should be in keeping with your brand's visual identity," says Ward-Kennedy. Remember, impulse items don't have to be on the counter, just near it. "We avoid a cluttered

look," says Malone. "We also try to match colors and textures for a color story of multiple products: If we have yarn that matches project bags, we'll put it all together—the project bags get more attention if they're part of a larger, more colorful display."

Wrapping Up

"We change our register counter display often," says Malone. "Classes are advertised, and there's always a stack of project bags, tape measures, gauge rulers, stitch markers. We study it from the customer's perspective to make sure it isn't too cluttered or full."

"The biggest thing to remember about the cash wrap is that it's there for your customers," notes Ward-Kennedy. "It's an opportunity to provide service, connection and a clear image of your brand."

Three Categories of Items to Keep Close to the Cash Wrap

Impulse buys: Think small grab-and-go items. The price point should be low enough that it won't require much decision making, and the packaging should be attractive. Stitch markers, note pads, pens, point protectors and novelty tape measures are ideal here.

Up-sell merchandise: These are items that complement an existing purchase—shawl pins, beautiful buttons, project bags, wool washes, popular pattern. Price point isn't as important as relativity and usefulness. Train staff to chat up the items.

Loyalty programs and class cards: If you offer a rewards program for frequent customers, provide at-a-glance info and a stack of attractive cards that can be redeemed for a discount immediately. Frame class schedules and set them on the counter or display postcards touting classes and special events in a pretty basket.

Before she started writing about yarn and knitting, Daryl Brower spent many years behind the cash wrap at a florist, a high-end department store and a luxury home goods retailer. She always goes for the impulse items.

Storytelling

BY MARY MCGURN

Instagram and Facebook are both pushing their “Stories” features. How do the two platforms differ?

In today’s world of mobile use, the language your business should increasingly use is Stories, a feature highlighted by both Instagram and Facebook. But do Stories work the same way on both apps, even knowing that Facebook owns Instagram?

Are Stories Defined the Same?

Yes. They’re an attention-grabbing, immersive, full-screen vertical format that “brings your business to life through photos, videos, text and effects” (Facebook Blueprint), which disappear after 24 hours. They’re an alternative way to grow engagement, build brand awareness and strengthen relationships with your audience. They’re also vehicles to deliver ads between Stories using the same creative format.

Are Stories Equally Popular?

Instagram launched Stories in August 2016, and as of January 2019 it reported 500 million active daily users. Facebook Stories launched in March 2017 and, as reported by Facebook in August 2018, 300 million active users upload Stories each day. For Instagram, that’s a significant portion of its overall base; for Facebook, it is not. However, TechCrunch reports that Facebook expects that sharing updates via Stories will surpass sharing via newsfeeds on both apps within one to two years. Facebook has also reported that 53 percent of people who use Stories across Facebook’s app family (FB, Instagram, WhatsApp and Messenger) say they’re inclined to make more online purchases as a result of their exposure to Facebook Stories.

Considering the many advantages of Stories, the prediction for future dominance is realistic. As both apps’ algorithms continue to reduce organic reach and lessen the importance of feed posts, Stories are rising above the algorithms by taking a prime spot at the top of fan/followers’ feeds. Log into either app and you’re greeted with a swipeable bar with a succession of Stories from friends and pages followed.

Does the Story Experience Differ?

The user’s how-to-view is essentially the same on both apps. Differences occur in the further use of Stories by businesses, the cross-posting among Facebook’s family of

apps and Story sharing by others.

Instagram lets business accounts add Stories to their profiles as Story Highlights. Businesses can save specific Stories under categorized highlight sections and have them remain as long as wanted. Businesses can also choose a cover photo and enter a name for each highlight.

They can add to these highlights at any time. But this difference may disappear, given the rumor that Facebook is beta testing this same feature for individual accounts.

Create a Story on Instagram and you can push it to your Facebook Story. This path is one-way only. This difference leads to another: Facebook, being a mobile and desktop application, allows you to upload and add to your Stories using either device. Though you can’t push your Facebook Story to Instagram, you can push it to the top of your audience’s Messenger inbox.

Sharing differs slightly. On Facebook, businesses can turn on permission to let any user repost their Story to a user’s own. Sharing will include a page’s name and a link to what was originally shared, and it will be visible for another 24 hours. On Instagram, a user can share a feed post (but not a Story) from a public account—by default, business accounts are public—to their Story and add their own commentary and tagging. Like Facebook, this permission must be turned on.

Do Stories Ads Work the Same?

They’re the same in that they appear within a user’s Stories feed; they’re formatted to fit seamlessly; and in your ad campaign settings, you can ignore the 24 hours and set your own duration. The dissimilarities occur in the type of ad campaign.

Instagram allows for two carousel formats: Native Stories and Expandable Stories. Native plays three frames automatically without prompting viewers for the action to keep watching, and the call-to-action (CTA) displays on all frames. Expandable uses up to 10 frames, with the first frame displaying the CTA to keep watching. To view the remaining frames, the viewer clicks this CTA.

Facebook offers Instant Experience using templates it provides. Viewers can swipe through videos, see photos in a carousel, fill out

forms and explore images with tagged products. To help viewers through the experience, descriptive text, buttons and links can be used to show the path. Facebook also lets you link two or more Instant Experiences together.

Do the Analytics Differ?

Facebook and Instagram both provide live and historical data. On Facebook, you have to turn on Insights for Stories (the viewer must be a page administrator), while on Instagram the Insights are available under the charts icon (historical) or by swiping up on the Story being viewed (live). Worth noting: You can access Insights on a profile’s Story highlights by going to your Instagram profile, swiping up and tapping on the chart icon. Facebook and Instagram both report on unique opens, exits and engagement.

Differences yes, but they’re either largely minor or they balance out. So what app to choose for Stories? Both: Instagram so you don’t miss out on users’ favoritism and Facebook so you’re ahead of your competition.

Tips on Analyzing Story Data From Facebook and Instagram

Value reach over impressions. A single person can view your Story multiple times, and impressions count all. Reach counts the unique number of viewers.

Watch for taps back. They signal people have viewed more and spent more time on your Story. Forward taps may signal boredom or that you’re not giving enough information to engage.

Keep the percentage of exits low when compared to reach. Exits are not to be confused with taps in either direction. Exits occur when people tap to leave Stories for their feed, swipe to the next Story from another account or close the app.

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

Poppin' Fresh

BY CLAIRE LUI

Hosting in-store pop-ups can help you capitalize on a trend and increase sales.

If you've ever attended a Tupperware party, shopped at a seasonal Halloween store or bought a Popsicle from an ice cream truck, you're familiar with one of the most popular trends in retail: the pop-up, a limited-time retail event. Pop-ups in the fiber world can encompass a range of temporary experiences, such as a one-day "pop-up" sale of an indie dyer's line at an established shop, a short-term appearance of a yarn seller in a bricks-and-mortar storefront or even a roving yarn truck that can appear in a different location every day.

Pop-Up Events

Pop-up sales hosted by a yarn shop generally are a one-day-only event for which a yarn company representative appears with a selection of yarns to sell. Sherri Hazen, owner of Rainy Day Yarns in Gig Harbor, Washington, started by hosting

Stephanie Fregosi, the indie dyer behind Three Fates Yarn based in Salem, Oregon, who does one to two pop-ups per year, says, "I love meeting customers and seeing what they've made with my products," adding that the novelty of a pop-up "keeps everything fresh" for the visiting dyer as well as for the hosting store.

Pop-Up Stores

Instead of popping up at an established store, some business owners take it up a notch by opening an entire bricks-and-mortar pop-up storefront. Michele Wang, a noted knitwear designer, opened Gauge + Tension, a pop-up weekend yarn store in Brooklyn, New York, first from October–December 2014 and then in a different location from March 2015 to March 2016. Gauge + Tension curated a selection of hard-to-find yarns, featuring many

seven-week pop-up during the run-up to the 2018 holiday season was driven by a desire to connect in person with their customers. "Having a pop-up meant we had greater opportunities to meet and engage with people," Hoang says. The company was able to hold a number of knitting and crochet workshops, as well as to create custom kits for customers in the store. The duo also holds weekly pop-up workshops in London and plans to open another pop-up store this year.

Going Mobile

Dave Broughton and Erica Kempf Broughton, owners of Nomad Yarn, a yarn store housed in a truck that drives around Indiana, came to their pop-up from a different angle. While business owners often start with pop-ups to test the feasibility of more permanent retail solutions, the Broughtons started with a bricks-and-mortar version of Nomad Yarns in Indianapolis before they embraced the spirit of the name of their business and took their show on the road.

Spurred on by a buyout of their store's block by a developer, the Broughtons bought and retrofitted a 25-foot truck (similar to those used by food-truck purveyors) to become a roving yarn store. Dave Broughton said that with "so many local store owners retiring and us wanting to move more into our own hand-dyed yarns and designs," a nomadic pop-up truck seemed like the best next step. "We can reach more areas and customers who miss their local stores, and with shorter opening hours we can focus more on our production of unique items and on growing our online store."

The Nomad Yarn truck now appears in a different location in Indiana daily, visiting farmers' markets, coffee shops, pubs and breweries. "People are super-excited to see the truck is coming, and it's great to see so many happy faces, old and new."

With minimal investment and risk, pop-ups, owing to their short-term nature, let a brand test out a market, connect with their customers in person and add a promotional burst of excitement. Whether you're a yarn store owner or a fiber artist, consider adding a pop-up event or two to your calendar.

• **Be clear about financial split and payment:** Make sure you have a written contract about how sales will be handled and make sure both parties agree. Most stores will ring up the sales for guest indie dyers, with a predetermined percentage going back to the dyer at the end of the day. Though the split will vary, it is often close to the wholesale price going to the dyer and the retail markup going to the store.

• **Create buzz with novelty and exclusivity:** The most successful pop-ups offer something that customers have never seen before. If a dyer's line is already sold in a store, make sure the pop-up sells different bases or colorways than the normal inventory.

• **Promote!** Make sure customers of both the guest pop-up and the host store know about the pop-up by creating social media posts and by featuring the event in newsletters. Indie dyers can help make an event successful by preparing promotional information for the host store several weeks in advance, including photographs, descriptive copy, a price list and any other necessary information so that the store can cut-and-paste it right into newsletters and social media posts.

• **Location:** If you're looking for a temporary storefront, check out websites including thestorefront.com or appearhere.us, which are like Airbnb for pop-up retail. You can also speak with other local businesses—not necessarily craft-related—such as farmers' markets, restaurants or cafés that may be willing to sponsor a pop-up from your brand.

trunk shows with established yarn companies, and in 2017 started inviting indie dyers to her shop for one-day pop-up sales. Hazen explains that the pop-ups are "beneficial to both the dyer and the yarn shop. The dyer gets to showcase her talents, with beautiful yarns and samples, and gets her name out in the community. The shop benefits from reaching new customers, adding income and having the chance to form working relationships with some wonderful dyers."

independent hand-dyers, essentially holding pop-up sales within a pop-up store. Gauge + Tension gave Wang a chance to experience the retail end of the yarn business. Wang says, "I surprised myself by how much I enjoyed having a pop-up shop. It allowed me to connect with knitters in a completely different way."

For Jennifer Lam and Jen Hoang, owners of the London-based Stitch & Story, a company that sells knitting and crochet kits along with their own line of yarn, the decision to hold a

Claire Lui is a writer and knitter living in Forest Hills, Queens.

Fear of Flying

BY DARYL BROWER

A moth infestation can spell disaster for your shop. Here's how to avert a crisis.

One morning at the knitting magazine where I once worked, a colleague opened the door to the garment and yarn closet and encountered a sight that made her stomach drop. Flitting around in the dim light were dozens tiny brown moths. All-out panic ensued. Thousands of dollars of materials and endless hours of work lived in that closet, and we were sure we had lost it all. Should you one day open the door to your shop's storage room to such a sight, the hard truth is that the winged creatures are the least of your problems. The real damage has already been done by the larval stages of the moth. To prevent further damage, you need to understand the habits and life cycles of the pest and take steps to disrupt them.

Taking Off

Clothes moths look for dark, undisturbed areas in which to lay their eggs, so you're unlikely to find signs of infestation in places with constant

Animal fibers are the clothes moth's snack of choice, so wool, cashmere, silk and alpaca-blend yarns are most susceptible. Cotton, linens and rayons are likely safe. All bets are off, however, if those fibers are blended with an animal fiber. When the larvae are large enough and temperatures are right, they pupate and begin spinning a cocoon. Eight to ten days later they'll emerge as adult moths and start the process all over again.

Cross-Check

Before you panic, make certain that what you are seeing are indeed clothes moths, not their less-destructive cousins, grain moths. [See below.] If you can't confidently identify the pests in residence, it's time to call in the professionals. If you are local to a research university, the county extension service can provide resources to help you identify the insect in question and/or provide links to certified professional pest removal services in your area. For a nominal fee (usually about \$50-\$100) the latter will travel to your shop to eval-

sweater samples to your dry cleaner. The dry-cleaning process will destroy any lingering eggs or larvae and remove food stains or perspiration that could lure new insects. Dry-clean all upholstery or curtains as well. For the sake of your remaining merchandise, don't reintroduce obviously infested skeins to the shelves. It's simply not worth the risk. It's possible to salvage the skeins that seem untouched by placing them, tightly sealed in plastic, in a freezer for 48 hours. The practicality of doing so will, of course, depend on the quantity of yarn that was affected. If a large percentage of your inventory is infested or if you are seeing evidence of moths on the main selling floor, bring in a pest-control professional.

Exterminators deal with moth infestations in multiple ways. The goal is to disrupt the living habits of the moths. This can be done through heat or cold treatments or targeted application of pesticides, with costs ranging from several hundred to several thousand dollars, depending on the size of the area and the method of extermination. All will likely require some shop shutdown time for both preparation and treatment. Heat or cold treatments require the removal of any items that can be damaged by extreme temperatures, but you can usually return to the building within a few hours. Chemical treatments may require that the building be vacated for at least 24 hours.

Flight Patterns

Grain moths are a nuisance, but clothes moths are destructive. Determine which you have:

- **Grain moths feed on stored pantry items: cereals, dried fruits, seeds and nuts, for example. They are about three quarters of an inch long, with wings that are grayish near the head of the moth and copper-colored toward the back. Like most moths, they are attracted to light. If you find moths flying in a well-lit area, they're likely grain moths.**
- **Clothes moths feed exclusively on animal fibers. They're small, no more than half an inch in length, with narrow fringed wings that are yellowish gold or brown. They prefer the dark of a storage room, not a brightly lit sales floor. Unlike other moths, they shun light.**

turnover of merchandise or areas that are brightly lit. Boxed-up yarns in a dark storage room or sample garments stacked and stowed in a rarely opened closet, however, can be an enticing all-you-can-eat buffet for pests. An adult female moth has a lifespan of about three days to two weeks, during which time she can lay up to 400 eggs. The eggs are tiny—about 0.5mm in length—and hatch within four to 10 days. It is during this time that they are at their most destructive. The larvae, just a few millimeters long at hatching, start snacking on any and all animal fibers they can find. Their growth is dependent on how much food and moisture they can take in. Given the right conditions, they can reach 1.5cm in length and can remain at the fiber-damaging larval stage for more than two years.

uate the problem and recommend a treatment plan.

If clothes moths are indeed in residence, you have some work to do. Methodically pull yarns from storage and inspect each one for signs of damage—holes, frayed areas, sticky webbing, eggs, larvae. If you find a skein that exhibits these signs, immediately put it in a plastic trash bag. Place the yarns that look to be undamaged in a different bag. Do the same with sample garments.

The next step is a thorough cleaning of any area where you found evidence of the pests. Vacuum the corners of bins, baskets and shelving, then vacuum the floors as well, paying attention to corners, baseboards and molding. Wipe all surfaces with a detergent-soaked cloth and allow everything to dry completely.

Next up, deal with the infested fibers. Haul all

Final Approach

The best way to keep out moths is to keep up with cleaning. If you store excess inventory or samples in an out-of-the-way spot, make a point of frequently rearranging boxes, shaking out sweaters and shining light on the area. Use a dehumidifier or silica gel packs to keep moisture at bay. Do the same for items on the sales floor. Regularly change out yarn bins, vacuum and clean corners. Use cedar hangers for samples and wash or dry-clean any sample items before storing. The idea is to create conditions that aren't conducive to breeding and feeding.

The whirring of tiny wings we found in that storage closet turned out to not be so awful after all. An exterminator quickly identified the insects as grain moths—unpleasant, to say the least, but not the disaster we'd first imagined. We invested in a good vacuum cleaner. You should, too.

Daryl Brower is a freelance writer based in New Jersey. She's finally getting the upper hand in her own battle against grain moths.

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RETAIL PROFILE

BY MARYAM SIDDIQI

Forever Yarn Doylestown, PA



We have great restaurants, a coffee shop, an ice cream shop and bakeries," she says. The quaint town was even voted as having the "Best Small-Town Cultural Scene" by *USA Today's* 10 Best travel rankings earlier this year. "We are so grateful to be part of this amazing town," Qian says.

Though she's celebrating the 15th anniversary of the shop this year, it hasn't always been easy, Qian says. She's done it all while also working an additional full-time job. "There have been times I've wanted to give up because there's never enough time for me to do what I would like to do," she says. "But I am glad I didn't."

Qian launched the shop without a formal business plan—she points out that she still doesn't have one—trusting her gut

to make strategic business decisions. The result is that she's part of a thriving crafts community in Doylestown. She sees the other yarn shops not as competition but as complementary. "I feel the more people we bring into this creating community, the better off we all are," she says.

Forever Yarn is very much a community hub for knitters, a place for learning, sharing and community building, Qian confides. And it goes beyond yarn crafts. "Family members of our customers will say, 'Why don't you go to the shop and see what the ladies say,'" she adds. "My intention is to make everybody happy—witness people being satisfied with their purchases, their finished products. They enjoy their time at the shop."

Qian stocks a diverse selection of quality yarns, focusing mainly on natural fibers including

You can do anything you set your mind to. It might seem cliché, even Pollyanna-ish, but it rings true for Yan Qian. Without any retail experience or any time spent working in the yarn industry, she's grown her store brand, Forever Yarn, from a small shop-within-a-shop into a thriving independent location in Doylestown, Pennsylvania.

"I opened the shop based purely on the passion I have for creating—creating with yarn in this case—and the desire to have a nice yarn shop in this lovely town," Qian says of opening the doors to her store in July 2004, after having spent the previous nine months establishing the business inside a fabric store called Sew Smart.

Forever Yarn sits on South Main Street, right in the middle of the town's hub, where other retail, eateries, museums and parks are within walking distance. "Most retail shops in Doylestown are individually owned small businesses.



A specialty of the shop is yarns that Qian brings in from bespoke independent dyers from around the world. Because of this, “a great many knitters and crocheters identify us as their destination shop,” she says.

cashmere, alpaca, silk and mohair. Among the brands she carries are Woolfolk, Shibui Knits, Life in the Long Grass and Madelinetosh. High-quality merino wool is the shop’s “bread and butter,” Qian says. “I do make an effort to stock yarns from a local alpaca farm and local indie dyers. I am very intrigued by nature-dyed yarns, as they come with such a sublime richness.” A specialty of the shop is yarns that Qian brings in from bespoke independent dyers from around the world. Because of this, “a great many knitters and crocheters identify us as their destination shop,” she says.

To mark her 15th year in business, Qian is filling the calendar with trunk shows and visits from independent dyers. She’s also working with those dyers and with indie designers on custom projects to take to Knitting LIVE! by Vogue Knitting in New York in January.

The knitters who congregate in her 800-square-foot shop range in age from their twenties to eighties. “Some of them are process knitters and some are product knitters. But one thing they have in common is that they are very kind and they all have this desire to create in them,” Qian says. “They appreciate bespoke products. They take pride in what they make.” Some of her die-hard regulars even step behind the till when the shop is very busy to help out Qian and her two full-time staff.



To further foster the family feel of Forever Yarn in the retail space—“I am very fond of our high ceilings and wood floor,” says Qian—she hosts “sit and knit” sessions that are free of charge. The staff also regularly offer sweater fittings during which customers who are working on a sweater project can come in mid-sweater to ensure that the garment will fit perfectly once that final stitch is completed.

Introductory courses are continuously run, from beginner knitting/crocheting to pattern reading, and Qian organizes classes for particular techniques (brioche knitting, Fair Isle, top-down sweater design and more). “I develop individual classes whenever I see the need

for them or because there’s been a special request from a customer,” she says.

“We also have had the honor of hosting some very talented knitwear designers, including Stephen West and Isabell Kraemer, in the shop this year,” she adds. “The frequency of the designer classes largely depends on the schedule of the designers.

“We have a lovely community at the shop. We all truly enjoy each other’s company, and the friendships forged here are precious,” says Qian. “Knitting has brought so much joy and magic to my life. The crown jewel of having this shop is that I have made so many beautiful friends all over the world.”



Forever Yarn

68 S. Main Street, Doylestown, PA 19801
(215) 348-5648; www.foreveryarn.com

Years in business: 15

Staff: 3

Square footage: 800 square feet of retail space

Hours: Tuesday, 11 a.m.–5 p.m.;
Wednesday, 11 a.m.–3 p.m., Thursday, 11 a.m.–
8 p.m.; Friday, 11 a.m.–3 p.m.; Saturday,
11 a.m.–5 p.m.; Sunday, 12 p.m.–4 p.m.
Closed Mondays.

**QUICK
GLANCE**

COMPANY PROFILE

Sandnes Garn

BY MARYAM SIDDIQI

The typical Sandnes Garn knitter knits a lot. We like to think that once a knitter tries our yarn, he or she will find it hard to stop after just one project," says Rebecca Hansen, business developer of exports for Sandnes Garn, a 131-year-old yarn manufacturer based in Sandnes, Norway.

Specializing in natural fibers, the company spins 96 percent of its yarns in its factory in the small south Norwegian town. Approximately 20 percent of the wool the company uses comes from Norwegian farmers, with the rest sourced in Uruguay and Australia. Alpaca comes from Peru and Bolivia, cotton from India, silk and mohair from Romania and South Africa. "Fibers from all over the world meet to be spun, colored and made into 50-gram skeins," says Hansen.

"We think it's important that all knitters are able to see themselves in Sandnes Garn," she adds. "We always work toward being versatile in our designs and focus on being fashion-forward. At the same time, we also want to preserve Norwegian heritage in our knitting patterns. We want to inspire the next generation of knitters by making patterns that are fun and easy to knit."

The company is looking to have a bigger presence in the homes of American knitters thanks to its exclusive distribution partnership with New Jersey-based Mother Knitter, which formally launched the brand in the United States in February 2019.

"The love of all things Scandinavian has been going on for quite some time in the U.S.," says Laurie Brekke, creative director and manager of Mother Knitter. "Even the Scandinavian term *hygge* has made its way into American pop culture as a sort of 'new Zen.' This has created a natural place for Nordic yarns in the U.S. market, which has already embraced Nordic-inspired patterns and designs from contemporary American designers including Andrea Mowry and Caitlin Hunter."

Brekke, whose Norwegian husband Vidar acts as Mother Knitter's strategist and technical director, has long been a fan of the brand. "I fell in love with Sandnes Garn more than 20 years ago, and working with the brand has been a goal of ours for quite some time," she says. "We were waiting for just the right moment to bring them back to the U.S. market—and we feel that time is now."

Both Brekke and Hansen are confident that the brand, which boasts more than 30 different yarn qualities, will resonate with American knitters. "Our products range from thick and cozy Norwegian wool, like Peer Gynt, to thin and soft cotton, like Mandarin Petit. If you want to knit an item with the modern mohair touch, our Tynn Silk Mohair can be paired with any one of our other yarns," Hansen explains. She describes their Smart and Sisu yarns as "work-horses."

"One of our newest favorites is the Kos, meaning 'cozy' in Norwegian, a supersoft, easy-knitting yarn. The colors for each yarn will make stores look like candy shops for knitters," Hansen adds.

Brekke believes this diversity in offerings will help the brand quickly resonate with an American audience. "People who knit and crochet want to see themselves in brands that reflect their values, with sustainable production practices but also, practically speaking, with a variety of patterns, colors and qualities that put





“We think it’s important that all knitters are able to see themselves in Sandnes Garn.”



no limits on their self-expression and diverse ideas,” she says. “Sandnes Garn also produces about 25 pattern books per year supporting the yarn lines—a strategy that has been very successful in driving yarn sales.”

The company launches new designs virtually every other week throughout the year, with releases from mid-August to mid-December and then in January to mid-May. Patterns are developed by the in-house design team; collaborations happen as well. “For the past decade, we have worked with several Norwegian and Danish celebrities in creating new patterns and yarns. We have worked with It Girl Hanneli Mustaparta to create the high-end fashion collection you can knit at home and with former supermodel Vendela Kirsebom to create new classics that will never go out of style,” Hansen says.

Product launches happen seasonally, with the release of new collections and colorways. “Our design department is always up to date on trending colors in the fashion industry, and given the fact that we have our production in-house we are able to quickly adapt to emerging trends,” she adds.

With the constant stream of new products and designs, Brekke has placed a priority on building a social media presence for the brand in the

States. “We are aggressively working with Sandnes Garn to make their patterns more readily available on social platforms, Ravelry in particular,” she says. “This has been the number one request, in large part due to the enormous popularity of their yarn on this site. Currently, their yarn is being used in more than 7,000 projects on Ravelry.”

Mother Knitter was at TNNA last June to reintroduce the brand to the U.S. market and get feedback from retailers, Brekke says, but 2020 will be the big launch for the brand, when it’s a main sponsor at Knitting LIVE! by Vogue Knitting.

“It was very exciting for us and, being a new name for most retailers, we weren’t sure what kind of a reception Sandnes Garn would get. But we were thrilled with the initial—and continued—response and interest from retailers and we are adding to [our stockist] list daily,” she adds. Plans for Knitting LIVE! include a booth, runway show and cocktail reception.

“Everyone at Sandnes Garn has been amazing,” Brekke says. “Not only are their products outstanding, but their design, branding and marketing teams have been extremely responsive to our needs and are eager to further evolve the brand and extend their European market leadership into the U.S. market.”



Address: Kvernelandsvegen 126, Foss-Eikeland, 4323 Sandnes, Norway
www.sandnes-garn.com; www.motherknitter.com

Number of employees: 96

Fact: Environmental responsibility is a priority for Sandnes Garn. “We want to contribute in the fight toward a cleaner environment, so we want the production of our yarns to be as eco-friendly as possible without compromising on the quality. In Norway, we have strict laws to ensure that our production meets environmental standards set by the government, and we are proud to always be working toward more sustainable production,” says Hansen.



HANDWEAVING

A time-honored technique that is so new now.

By Jane Patrick, Deb Gerish and Benjamin Krudwig

What's old is new again: Jumpsuits are back, and so are macramé, tie-dye and weaving. If you've been in retail for any length of time, you've seen trends come in, fall out of favor and then come back—sometimes with brand-new names, other times deliberately marketed as

throwbacks. These cycles have affected handweaving and other textile crafts since the 1960s. People become interested in weaving for the same reasons now as they did then, and retailers can still reach these customers in the “old” ways, using the latest technology.

It seems as though everything in the late Sixties happened organically, when the generation now known as Baby Boomers came of age. Some of these young people rejected the happy bubble of the Fifties, with everyone living in identical houses with identical mass-produced décor. They longed to experience the world on their own terms, establishing a back-to-the-earth movement devoted to poetry, art, craft and natural living. Their communes brought together people who wanted to live self-sufficiently. They wanted to grow their own food and make their own clothes, which naturally led to weaving their own cloth. Result: a revitalized interest in the ancient craft of handweaving.

Occupational therapy (OT) also sparked interest in the craft. After World War II, weaving was often used as rehabilitation for injured soldiers. In fact, Russell Groff founded Robin and Russ Handweavers in McMinnville, Oregon, after learning to weave as therapy after the war. He found he loved weaving and started a business that produced an educational newsletter, published books and launched a mail-order service.

Susan Bateman of Lawrence, Kansas's Yarn Barn also found weaving thanks to OT: “I was going to major in chemistry but soon realized it wasn't right for me, so I decided to give the [physical therapy/occupational therapy] program at the University of Kansas in Lawrence a try.

The curriculum included art classes, with weaving being one of the offerings. I fell in love with weaving and changed my major to art. After graduating, I realized that I needed to make a living, so I decided to open a weaving store. In the beginning [48 years ago], there was so much demand that I was able to teach eight-week weaving classes four nights a week."

Bateman's story isn't unique: Many weaving companies started in the Sixties by happenstance. Their founders had little business background or intentionality. No one made a business plan. They grew their businesses organically by seizing opportunities and making things up as they went. The industry wasn't well developed at the time, with only a smattering of shops around the country, and their owners connected with customers (and each other) in person, by telephone and through newsletters typed on typewriters and delivered by snail mail. There was no internet or YouTube to connect people to the craft. Customers had to hunt for books, teachers, yarn, looms and spinning wheels.

Lou Grantham of San Francisco Fiber (now in Oakland) is another case in point. Falling in love with spinning and dyeing in the late Sixties, she turned her skills into a small business, weaving what she refers to as "bohemian wall hangings" on commission. She also spun yarn and dyed it with natural dyes for crocheted waterproof garments she made for the ski industry. During this time, Grantham was mostly self-taught, not unlike many weavers during this period, who found resources and teachers scarce. She eventually found a weaving mentor in Augusta Oliver, an 86-year-old woman in Santa Barbara who taught her weaving techniques on a proper loom. Grantham's business took a new turn in a San Francisco park. She spied a woman carrying what she thought was a handwoven bag and struck up a conversation, asking if the other woman had woven it and then suggesting that they open a shop together. With a third partner, they opened San Francisco Fiber in 1980, where Grantham found her calling in teaching.

Similarly, Barry and Dan Schacht started their company by happenstance. In 1969, when Dan's girlfriend wanted to learn to spin, they put their woodworking skills to use, sought out vendors, and Schacht Spindle Company was born. They later branched out into manufacturing tapestry looms and other simple looms. In 1976, they made their first floor loom for the Convergence festival in Fort Collins, Colorado.

Equipment suppliers responded to the growing demand from textile artists. The weaving of this time was not unlike the wall hangings you see on Instagram now. Frame looms—big and small, often homemade—were used to create highly textural pieces. (Today's hangings differ only in their brighter and crisper color palettes.) As new weavers gained more experience, they wanted better looms with features including shafts and treadles. Loom companies began

supplying floor looms with ingenious accessories, upgrades and space-saving conveniences.

Weavers also needed materials. Susan Bateman of Yarn Barn notes, "Yarns weren't readily available. I was ordering from Borgs in Sweden and from Oregon Worsted in Oregon, but that was about it." Yarn companies such as Tahki (now Tahki Yarns) emerged to source yarns for the new and growing weaving market.

In the Seventies, retail shops finally began proliferating around the country. They sold yarn and equipment, and they became the primary source for classes in weaving, spinning and dyeing, which helped grow the industry. Loom companies including Beka Looms and Harrisville Yarns, plus now-shuttered businesses Loomcraft, Norwood Looms and Tools of the Trade, sprang up in this heyday. All these businesses formed a close-knit community of equipment suppliers. Fledgling business owners would gather at conferences to share ideas, build relationships and party. The industry saw huge growth through the mid-Eighties.

New Directions

Twenty years after its big revival, interest in weaving tapered off, as the late Eighties saw knitting take off, giving the fiber-arts industry another focus and intense growth. New yarn suppliers opened their doors and craft publishers produced a plethora of knitting books. Weaving shops expanded their product lines to include these goods. Knitting grew and expanded and is credited with keeping the doors open when floor loom weaving fell out of favor.

But when rigid heddle weaving became popular in the early 2000s, traditional weaving stores were slow to embrace this simpler, less expensive entrée into the craft. It was knitting-focused shops that embraced small-loom weaving. Rigid heddle looms helped these shop owners diversify their product offerings and sell more yarn. (The rigid heddle loom, because it doesn't require as much tension, is ideally suited to the same yarns used for knitting and crochet.)

Today, the local yarn shop and the weaving store occupy their own niches within the market, though they cross-pollinate often. Both rely on the same publishers, yarn suppliers and equipment makers, and they appeal to the same customer base of weavers.

Weavers and Weaving Today

In the late Sixties, weaving proliferated primarily because young people sought it out. Today, we are seeing both older and younger people interested in weaving, though each demographic has unique characteristics.

Recent retirees, primarily women, are returning to crafts they learned 30 or 40 years ago. More than one million women retire every year, giving them both time and money to spend on a craft, and they're embracing floor loom weaving. This group includes weavers at every skill level,



1) Barry Schacht demonstrates a tapestry loom.
2) Schacht Spindle Co.'s first factory.
3, 4) Photographs from the past 50 years show Schacht's looms growing—in their space and in popularity.

from beginner to advanced, though they may underrate their abilities if they haven't used a loom recently. Older weavers may need to consider storage space for their looms and yarn, especially if they will downsize their living spaces.

In contrast, younger weavers prefer making highly textured wall hangings on simple frame looms. They weave as a creative expression. They're often inspired by corporate brands such as Target and Anthropologie, which offer macramé pieces, wall hangings and ikat-patterned fabric. They might also come to weaving from the DIY world of Pinterest, Instagram and Reddit. How could they not be drawn in by the colors, textures and overall ease of the craft? While these young weavers may not have a background in fiber arts, they want to dip their toes in the textile waters. They're used to a world of low-cost disposable fashion and may initially recoil from the high price of looms and quality yarn, even if they have the income to spare. They may also have to consider storage space, especially if they share an apartment with roommates or have young children. How can a retail business reach all these potential weavers? Consider how the fiber-arts industry worked in its early days and add some high-tech twists.

Social Media

Retailers can and must use social media as another tool to build their businesses. Think of social media as a way to both gather data and to disseminate information. Follow industry, home décor and lifestyle trends on Pinterest and Instagram: When you know what's popular in the wider world, you can seize the moment and inspire your customers. Social media offers many opportunities for promoting your business, too. Utilize every possible venue to reach people. Publicize events on the store website and in your newsletter, but also on Twitter, Facebook, etc. Encourage customers to post reviews and photos of workshops or other events. You can even offer prizes for Instagram photos posted during the event, as a virtual door prize of sorts.

When you engage with social media, remember that it's an instant megaphone, amplifying everything in the blink of an eye. You're not just transmitting information about a sale or a workshop; you're revealing your personality and your willingness to serve customers. If the atmosphere of your shop doesn't feel welcoming, potential customers may never step through the door.

Customers will also use social media to discuss their experiences at your shop. Millennials and post-millennials are diverse—with nearly half of the population identifying as non-white, they appreciate inclusive companies. These generations are also socially conscious. They will choose to support businesses that align with their own core values and will boycott businesses that do not. Word of mouth travels faster than ever now—if a customer loves or hates something, everyone on his or her friend list will know. Positive reviews mean more than ever, since most millennials do a lot of research before committing to a product. The better you look online, the more traffic you'll get to your store.

Online Shopping

Before weaving stores became common, weavers relied on mail-order shopping, a very lengthy process. Customers would request a sample card from, say, School Products in New York or The Yarn Depot in San Francisco and wait for it to arrive. Then they could place an order for yarn, reeds and other supplies, mail a check, and wait for their package to arrive. Even after stores began to open, not all weavers could shop locally. Today, we've circled back to mail-order shopping, but in a new way: Now people place orders on websites, pay instantly and expect options for quick delivery. Weavers increasingly buy their looms and supplies from a distance. As traditional fiber shops close or their owners retire, customers will become ever more reliant on the internet. While online shopping

allows them to continue their craft, there isn't the same opportunity for a shop community as in the past. Likewise, there is no running to the shop for an emergency cone of yarn to finish a project. Your shop can help fill this void by keeping its website up to date, offering a variety of shipping speeds and finding ways to build an online and in-store community. Customer service is also vital: Shoppers should be able to get help from a real live person when they have questions about products.

Regional Festivals and Conferences

Fiber events both big and small remain popular because weavers can purchase materials, take classes and immerse themselves in an enthusiastic community, which especially appeals to millennials. Regional festivals have been around for a long time: The Handweavers Guild of America held its first Convergence conference in 1969; the Maryland Sheep and Wool Festival began in 1974; and the New York State Sheep and Wool Festival (a.k.a. Rhinebeck) dates back to about 1980. Though there are fewer weaving-specific events today, sponsors note that attendance has increased. Newer festivals such as the Salida Fiber Fest have also emerged. Get a booth for your business if possible, take out an ad in the event program or just attend to make connections. Small, focused weekend retreats, getaway fiber vacations and fiber arts cruises have also become popular. Look for opportunities to participate in events established by other businesses or develop your own to match your brand.

Classes and Kits

Teaching remains one of the best vehicles for growing a shop community, selling equipment and yarn, and creating customer loyalty. At Schacht Spindle Company, when a retailer approaches us about becoming a dealer, we ask if they will offer classes on-site or online. Remote learning has deep roots in the weaving community. Early in the 20th century, Mary Atwater supported herself through her teaching newsletter, courses and mail-order business. In the early 1960s, Robert and Roberta Ayotte offered a correspondence course in monthly installments called Handweaving With Robert and Roberta. Today, people can learn almost everything they need to know about weaving via the internet: YouTube videos, classes from Blueprint (Craftsy), purchased downloadable videos and webinars. Weaving instruction is widely available, and it's one reason for the industry growth we're seeing right now.

Believe it or not, your retail business can benefit from this availability. First, offer live on-site classes. Videos and online courses won't meet the needs of all customers; there will always be a place for in-person instruction, where students can ask questions and get answers immediately. Weavers may also want one-on-one lessons or workshops in specialized techniques. Provide a range of learning opportunities: beginner/refresher classes, in-depth instruction and project-based workshops. Invite big-name teachers to draw returning weavers to your shop, or find textile-oriented online stars to attract millennials.

Second, think about hybrid models that combine video content with in-person support. Imagine a workshop where participants follow along as the teacher provides lessons via the internet, while someone at your shop answers questions and helps students troubleshoot.

Third, help weavers navigate the ocean of online resources. There's a lot of great content available on the internet—but there's also content that isn't so great. Curate the best website links, book titles and book reviews, well-crafted Youtube videos and more in a resource library for your customers.

Finally, create and sell kits that include all the yarn needed to make a class project. Beginning weavers or anyone lacking confidence in his or her ability to combine colors will appreciate the convenience.

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“Teaser” Events

In the Sixties and Seventies, people often became interested in weaving after watching someone demonstrate it in public. Millennials report the same reaction: They see a weaver in action and want to learn the craft for themselves. You can profit from this phenomenon by hosting one-off events that combine weaving with another fun activity.

Plan events that allow groups of friends or family members to participate together, try something new while enjoying something old, and/or give people a chance to make something and take it home. For instance, weavers could bring their own looms and sample a range of wines at a “Wine and Weave” night. At a try-it wall hanging workshop, guests pay a rental fee for use of a frame loom and purchase of yarn, then they take home their DIY wall art. You keep the loom or offer it at a discounted price; either way, you’ve recouped your costs in a single night. Bring a local dyer into the shop and charge a small fee for customers to dye their own skeins of yarn for later weaving. The possibilities truly are endless.

Once you get potential fiber artists into your shop, they’re more likely to return. These events can attract people from many walks of life, and they’re especially appealing to millennials and post-millennials. You’re offering a gathering space, the necessary equipment (which millennials prefer to rent than own) and supplies, and the perfect opportunity for selfies. Participants will quickly share their experiences on social media, and your next event will get even more attention.

Customer Retention

As you plan classes and fiber events, consider how you can retain participants as long-term customers and how they might expand your market. Millennials trust the opinions of their friends far more than family, media influencers or corporations, and they enjoy group experiences more than solo activities.

Younger generations also tend to be frugal, paying for something like a loom only if they feel it will bring value to their lives. Weaving, especially on a floor loom, can be an expensive and space-intensive hobby. Get new weavers to sign up for a newsletter that includes discounts or other incentives to shop at your business. If your shop has the room, offer space and equipment rentals on a month-to-month or drop-in basis. (As an added bonus, if these renters weave during your regular business hours, other customers will come over to watch. It’s another opportunity to promote your classes and products.) Consider rent-to-own and layaway programs for higher ticket items: Smaller payments over a long period of time can make even floor looms affordable.

Doing It All

The challenging but also exciting work of being a retailer today involves expanding everything you do. Create a variety of selling venues and appeal to the broadest possible customer base by providing:

- A welcoming shop atmosphere with hours that meet your customers’ needs.
- In-store and online selling, with strong customer service.
- A presence at regional fiber events.
- A wide variety of classes: try-it workshops, project workshops, in-depth weekly classes.
- Events that combine weaving with other fun endeavors.
- Creative ways to keep customers coming back.

Finally, stay flexible so you can respond creatively when the market changes. Weaving businesses that opened in the late Sixties or the Seventies didn’t start with a plan—they tried everything. Some of these shops are still open today because they adapted so well. For instance, the Yarn Barn in Kansas has both a retail store and an online presence with a strong class schedule. They acknowledge the frame loom weaving craze and sell plenty of small looms, but their love, and emphasis, is on floor loom weaving. Lou Grantham still owns San Francisco Fiber in California and continues to teach. Now students look for her: Last year, architects in San Francisco asked for a workshop in her specialty, tapestry weaving. In short, you’ll find a lot of creativity in weaving itself, and just as much in the marketing of this popular craft.

Jane Patrick is the author of *The Weaver’s Idea Book*. She is the creative director for Schacht Spindle Company and a former editor of *Handwoven* magazine.

Deb Gerish has been spinning and weaving since 1996. She previously edited knitting magazines at *Interweave* and has written several articles for *Spinoff*. She currently works at Schacht Spindle Company as project manager, editor and archivist.

Benjamin Krudwig is a marketing expert in the yarn industry, where he currently serves as the content manager at Schacht Spindle Company. When he is not weaving or sewing, he can be found spending time with his wife and two cats at their Lafayette, Colorado, home.



The Colorado-based Schacht Spindle Company has been making spindles and looms for half a century.

KARIN SKACEL



As the head of the company that bears her name and owner of Makers' Mercantile, a traditional bricks-and-mortar yarn shop, Karin Skacel is an in-demand business owner. She found some time to chat with YMN's Erin Slonaker about Skacel the business and Skacel the person.

YMN: How and when did knitting enter your life?

KS: I actually do not remember learning how to knit. However, I presume it was either my mother or my Oma (German grandmother) who taught me. I was a big seamstress and crocheter in my youth—it wasn't until college that I really started knitting seriously. I do recall applying for a job to teach knitting at Acorn Street [a Seattle LYS open since the early Eighties] in my sophomore year. They turned me down because I was a Continental knitter—and I didn't know how to throw.

YMN: Your parents founded Skacel. Was it always assumed that you would take over the business?

KS: My mother founded the company in 1987 in Germany. My father, who had recently sold his car dealership, joined shortly after. My husband was a Naval Officer at the time, and we were living in Italy, so there were absolutely no expectations of me eventually taking over. I started my work with Skacel in 1988 as a designer after returning to the United States. It was one thing I could do without living near the Skacel offices, which were in Seattle. In 1993, when my husband left the Navy, we moved back to the Seattle area, and I began working for my parents full-time. As the business grew, so did my responsibilities. In 2000, I took a six-year absence from Skacel, as my husband's work took our family out of town. But in 2005, when my parents mentioned selling the business,

I jumped on it! The transfer of our company from my parents to me went very smoothly. Everyone forewarned us how stressful this transition would be, but miraculously it went without a single disagreement. I think even my parents and I were surprised at how swiftly and smoothly it went.



IF THERE IS ONE INDUSTRY WHERE WOMEN LEADERS ARE RESPECTED, I WOULD HAVE TO SAY IT'S THE YARN INDUSTRY.



YMN: Do you still consider the company a family business?

KS: My parents remain on as consultants, and I frequently ask for their advice; however, they are not in the business on a daily basis. My son tried being a representative for us in California for a few years but quickly learned yarn was not his thing. So I am the only official family member working full-time in our company. I still do consider us a family business, however. And I certainly consider many of our team players—Becky Moss and Rob Delmont, who have both been with us for more than 20 years—to be family members. I run the company as if we were a family, allowing input from all our members and never making any decisions without the input from our executive team. So we are family run, just not in a biological sense.

YMN: What has your experience been as a woman owning a yarn company?

KS: It has been a great experience. If there is one industry where women leaders are respected, I would have to say it is the yarn industry. My being a woman has been the cause of several uncomfortable situations with the mills and such, but in the long run, I've earned the respect of everyone I do business with. And quite honestly, except on very rare occasions, I do not notice I am a woman—I'm simply a leader. A leader who has compassion and cares. Not that a male leader cannot have compassion, but I think in general, women are less apt to say, "It's not personal, it's business," because we tend to mix the two more. At least I do.

YMN: I couldn't do an interview with you without talking about addi Turbo needles. Are there any cool new needle innovations you can tell me about?

KS: The first thing I did after purchasing the company in 2006 was ask Selter GmbH, the addi manufacturers, for a sharper tip, and the Lace Needles were born. From then on, Skacel has had a great amount of input as far as product development goes with addi. From the Rockets to the concept of having a sharp tip on one end and a rounder, less tapered tip on another, which is used in the FlipStix and the addi FlexiFlips—this idea came from Skacel employee Chuck Wilmesher—we've worked hand in hand with

addi to create new, innovative products. What's next? Needles that have Bluetooth and hook up to your smart phone. You program your stitch pattern into the phone, and when you make an error in your pattern knitting, it makes a frog sound, "Rippit, Rippit, Rippit..." [laughs]

YMN: How do you decide which yarns will be in your collection?

KS: We actually distribute only three yarn lines at this time: our own line, HiKoo, and Zitron and Schoppel Wolle. Both Zitron and Schoppel are unique lines manufactured primarily in Germany. Both companies are owned by gentlemen who bear their name on the label: Klemens Zitron and Gerhard Schoppel. Zitron stresses the importance of being green—all his yarns have the Oeko-Tex Standard 100 certification. He is always on the lookout for new sources of unique fibers from around the world that are sustainable and environmentally friendly. Schoppel we like to call the "Color Man." His sense of color is amazing, and it shows in his yarns. Although he is also very cautious of the effects his yarns leave on the earth, we think color is his forte. Since both men are very passionate about their yarns, our input really is not heard by them. But that is just fine, as we have our own brand, HiKoo, where we listen to our knitters and our market here in the U.S. and tailor-fit the yarns specifically to our market. Currently, Katie Rempe is our creative director, and she is doing a magnificent job listening to knitters and working with the mills to create yarns that fill their needs.

YMN: What do you do when you're not knitting?

KS: There are so many things I love to do, but running two companies takes most of my time. I don't even get to knit as much as I would love to. To stay mentally and physically fit, I do Bikram's Hot Yoga four to seven times a week, and I love snuggling with my labradoodle, Hank. He's the best snuggler ever. (I hope my husband doesn't read this.)

YMN: What's on the needles right now?

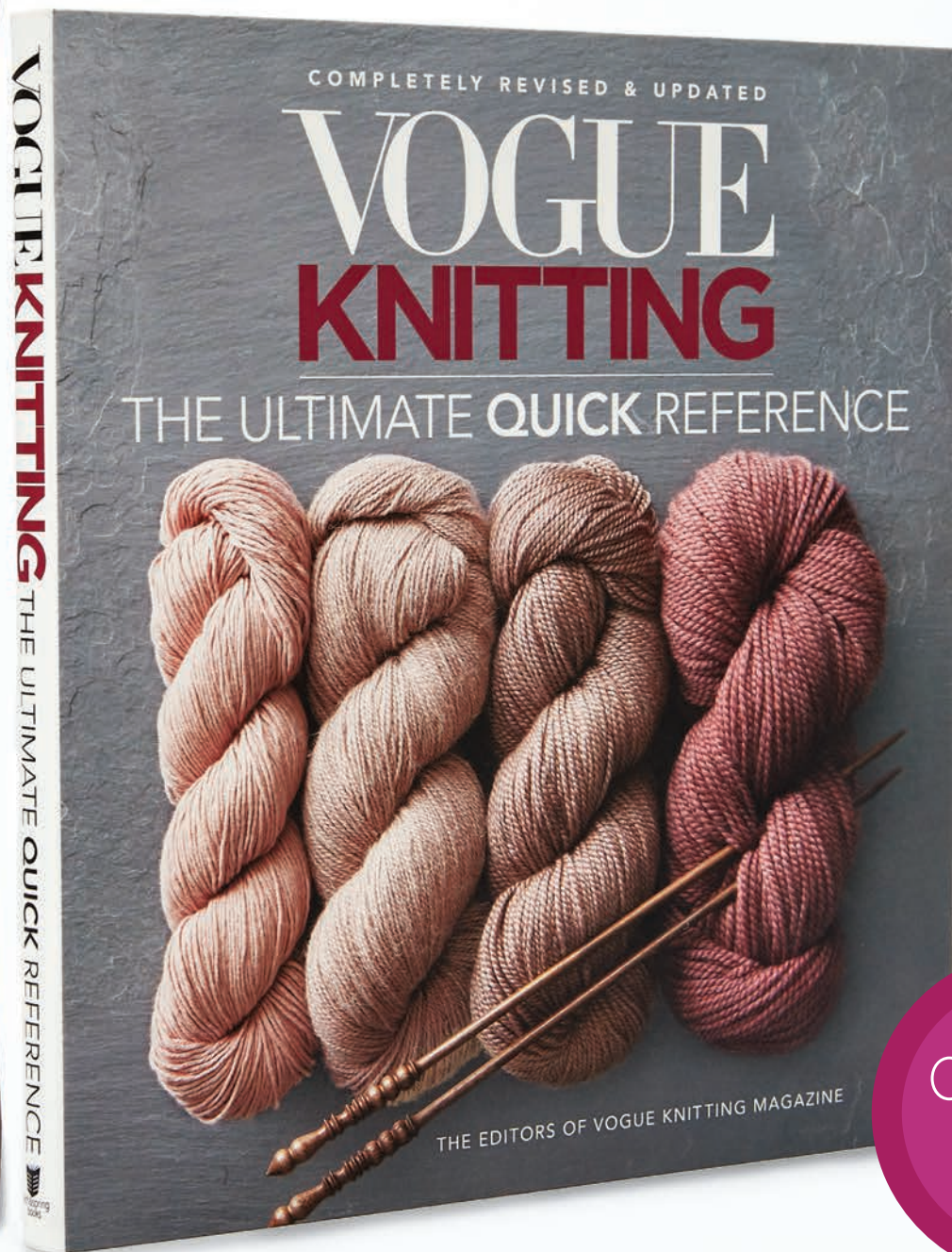
KS: Well, let me start with the needles I am using: the new addi Rocket² square needles with a rounded edge. I love them! They are by far the most comfortable needles I have ever used, and they eliminate my need to use a smaller needle on my purl rows. I am designing a mosaic pattern with a new gradient we are coming out with. So far I've done a lot of ripping out because I have a vision and I just can't seem to get it to be a reality. But I seldom give up. I'll get it right soon. In the meantime, I'll just enjoy the process.

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