

15 MINUTES

Scottish style for sale

Before the Camp Fire, Jamie Kalanquin mostly treated sewing as a hobby, occasionally selling her infinity scarves to friends, family and patrons at holiday markets. But after losing nearly everything at her former home in Magalia (including most of her scarves), a friend gave her a gift card to a fabric store, which served as the impetus to move forward creatively. Instead of accepting money from friends post-fire, she suggested that people buy a scarf to support her work. In the two months between the fire and Christmas 2018, she made roughly 1,000 scarves, and from there, the business grew exponentially. This last December, she formally opened Thistle and Stitch, her Chico shop on Zanella Way where she sells her Scottish-themed plaid scarves, embroidered accessories and other locally made items. To find out more, go to thistleandstitch.com

Why the focus on plaid/Scottish themes?

I fell in love with a blue and green plaid pattern years ago, and I still have that scarf. It inspired me to use that style and those fabrics, and it grew from there. My friend told me my stuff would do well at Scottish festivals, and I went to my first one just last year in Monterey. Seeing everyone in plaid and kilts, I had tears in my eyes and thought, "These are



PHOTO BY RACHEL BUSH

my people!" Finding that theme helped me grab hold of a direction and find a niche. I'm planning to vend at about a dozen Scottish festivals this year.

So you're Scottish, then?

I'm part Scottish, but growing up, I didn't really know much about my heritage. I did an ancestry kit and it turns out that two of the top cities where my DNA comes from are located in Scotland. And my husband and I are actually going there for the first time ever this year!

How much inventory do you produce?

I estimated that I have to make about 20 scarves a day, five days a week, all year, to keep up with demand. Most of my sales are in the second half of the year, because I have a seasonal product. But I need to be working on it now to keep up. I use my embroidery machine to work on tote bags and hats, but for my

scarves, I'm just using a basic sewing machine for now.

Why did you choose to set up a brick-and-mortar shop?

When I had booths at events, people would ask, "Where are you located?" But I was just working out of my home at the time, and the business was taking over the entire house, with hundreds of yards of fabric on hand. It was getting mildly insane.

Did you have a background in business before opening Thistle and Stitch?

Nope! [Laughs.] They suggested I do a write-up on myself, and I'm thinking, "I don't know what I'm doing. I make scarves. The end." But I've always had an entrepreneurial spirit, even as a kid. It's been fun to have this business grow and to see that it's bigger than I ever imagined it to be.

—RACHEL BUSH

THE GOODS

V-day, cider and pickin' time



by
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This will be my first truly solo Valentine's Day in over a decade, though I can't say I'm too bothered by it. While interviewing the guys at **The Exchange** and perusing the photos and stories of other local restaurants creating sexy, delicious dishes (see "In the mood for food," page 16), I thought back to last V-Day, when I took myself out for shrimp and grits at **Bill's Towne Lounge** because my boyfriend had to work. It was delicious. That's all to say, don't let being single keep you from eating out, on this most commercial of all holidays or any day.

SPEAKING OF Mountain Mike's Pizza is offering a Valentine's themed pie—in the shape of a heart—throughout the month of February. So, if pizza is your thing, go ahead and order a one-topping large heart-shaped pizza for the same price as a regular round one.

NOBLE CAUSE I mentioned recently that **Ben Nielsen**, who owns **Lassen Traditional Cider**, had once again received accolades for his locally produced beverages. Well, he reached out to me this week for some more news out of the barrel room. He's releasing a new product, dubbed **Paradise Strong Cider**, using all Winesap apples from Paradise's **Noble Orchards**. It'll be available in his tasting room (26 Bellarmine Court) and 10 percent of proceeds will benefit the orchard, which is entering its 100th year growing apples. An extra cool bonus: The logo was created by the folks at **12 Volt Tattoo**, who designed the Paradise Strong logo seen all over town—a pine tree atop a map of California.

EXPANSION TIME It seems every time I turn around I'm hearing about a new place opening up in the **Meriam Park** neighborhood. The most recent is a well-known local business that's expanding into a second location. The lovely ladies over at **Live Life Juice Co.** announced the expansion last week and thanked their loyal customers for their support. I personally love their juices and need to get over there to try some of their other offerings. Apparently local muralist **Roy Steves** (the bike on Fire Station No. 1, Live Life Juice's carrots) will be creating a new piece for the Meriam Park spot. No opening date yet, so stay tuned.

OFF TO MARKET With our annual faux spring comes actual spring preparations. That means getting ready for Chico's **Thursday Night Market**. The **Downtown Chico Business Association**, which hosts the event, is taking applications now for everything from vendor spaces to sponsorships to performer spots. For more info, call 345-6500 or go to downtownchico.com.

TIME TO PICK Attention all hoarders, now could be your time to shine. The History Channel's **American Pickers** show is coming through Northern California and is looking for people with cool, unusual items for its stars, Mike and Frank, to wade through. They're particularly interested in large collections. So, if you think you've got what they're looking for (and you're willing to part with a piece or two), contact the show at americanpickers@cinetflix.com or call 855-OLD-RUST.

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