

15 MINUTES

DIY  
fun zone

For three years, Katie Mintzer loved hosting craft parties in her backyard—she'd invite her friends over for a sign-making session or to create succulent planters. She contemplated opening her own business for a while, but then she stumbled upon Board & Brush Creative Studio, a franchise wood-working workshop. It started as a holiday wine and crafts night tradition in Julie Selby's Hartland, Wis., basement, and the first location opened in 2015. Now, there are more than 250 across the U.S. Mintzer, who teaches art at a high school in Yuba City, was drawn to the company's aesthetic and recently opened a Chico location. The CN&R sat down with Mintzer at the studio—which has a homey feel, with paint-splattered floors, walls covered in handmade signs, and a freshly cut pine smell—to chat about what makes the shop a good fit for Chico. A grand opening is scheduled for 4–6 p.m. Friday (March 13) at 1380 East Avenue, Ste. 108 (in the Safeway shopping center). Register for workshops online at [boardandbrush.com/chico](http://boardandbrush.com/chico).

What drew you to Board & Brush?

I went to two of the Board & Brush [studios], in Roseville and Redding, and I was like, "Oh, my gosh, I could spend every weekend here," because you leave with a finished product. It kind of appeals to a variety of people that have different interests. Somebody that likes beer can make a beer cap sign. You can do [signs with] anything from coordinates to your favorite beach to supporting nurses [or] people that have strong faith. You can make your own clock or coffee cup holder. Probably the No. 1 thing is everybody gets to pick what they want to make and customize. I just love that at one table we can have people with all different interests creating something completely different.

What is a workshop like?

[Attendees] get a pile of raw wood and then we're teaching them how to distress, stain,

assemble. We're going to have music playing throughout. There's going to be [beer, wine and other] drinks. There'll be meat cleavers [to distress the wood] and nuts and bolts and beer caps and hammers on the table, and everybody kind of just grabs and interacts. We put in ear plugs, and the session starts out with us just letting everything go. ... So that becomes pretty therapeutic, and it gets everybody in the zone. You've got a big variety of glazes and over 80 colors to choose from. And we stop the workshop about four times and give a really quick instruction.

What makes this a good shop for Chico?

We kind of have that small town feel, but people are not afraid to try something new. How much fun is it for people, like some mom, to get away and be here to make a wedding gift ... or a dad in here making a sports [sign] for their kid? To give something handmade that you're proud of is something that I think [some] people would love to do, but they're nervous. We've all done that one DIY project that turned into a Pinterest fail. I think this is a no-fail process that we take everyone through. You can give something that's made by you, but you've taken [out] the fear of messing it up.

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