

Heaven is Handmade: Knitting its way to 10 years

by Karen Minty



Going into their 10th year in business, Heaven is Handmade is still thriving, thanks to the popularity of knitting. The store offers yarn, knitting and crochet accessories, patterns, yarn winding, knitting support and lessons.

The stereotypical Granny in her rocker knitting quietly on the porch has been replaced by a new creative generation interested in experimenting in tactile hobbies with different natural fibres, techniques and designer fashions.

“Knitting isn’t what it used to be. So much has changed in the yarn, fashion and design industries over the years,” explains co-owner Janice.

“But at the end of the day, knitting is still the same, it’s just sticks and strings,” laughs daughter Caitlin.

The mother-daughter duo, Janice and Caitlin MacSwain opened the store in 2010. It had always been a dream for mother Janice, who has been knitting for over 50 years. With the support of their family,

the right timing and the right location (“this space just screamed yarn store!”), the two started their adventure into the yarn business. The store got its name from Janice’s decade-long tagline: “Heaven is handmade.”

Going into their 10th year in business, the owners are planning some big changes for the business. Creating a comfy social atmosphere, bringing in more knitting and crocheting instructors, and streamlining their product line are at the top of the list. Starting in September, their social knitting group will resume on Wednesdays from 7 - 9 pm. This is a great opportunity to meet other people interested in the craft while working on your latest project.

Heaven is Handmade provides a true boutique experience. “People think we are going to be so much more expensive than the big box stores, but our prices are competitive, and we always have something on sale,” says Caitlin. They offer a diverse line of acrylic yarn as well as more natural fibres that includes alpaca wool, linens, silk and wool blends. “We want to show you that wool can be soft and machine washable,” says Janice, holding out a half dozen skeins of silky-smooth yarn for me to touch.

The owners offer knitting and crocheting classes ranging from one-on-one beginner classes to knit-alongs and workshops in for the experienced crafter. “We understand that everyone stumbles at different spots when learning something new. We want everyone to go at their own pace.”

“Knitting is such a great hobby. Is it an art or a craft?” asks Janice. The resurgence in popularity by the Millennials has brought with it new designs and fashions. Shawls, socks, and halter or cropped tops are very trendy right now. “Two people can knit the same pattern and it looks so different because they personalize it.”

“Knitting also has so many benefits,” adds Janice. “It helps develop fine motor skills, hand-eye co-ordination, pattern recognition and improves math skills. The tactile nature of the craft it also works at reducing stress and provides a creative outlet.”

Heaven is Handmade is located at 250 N. Christina Street and is open Tuesday 10 am - 6 pm. For more information, call 519-491-YARN (9276) or check out their website at www.heavenishandmade.ca

