

# R U R A L ADVANTAGE

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# About **Rural Advantage**

**Welcome to November's Issue of  
RURAL ADVANTAGE!**

The first magazine for Rural Entrepreneurs,  
about Rural Entrepreneurs, by... you guessed it,  
**Rural Entrepreneurs.**

The whole idea behind Rural Advantage is to showcase  
entrepreneurs and small business owners, at all different stages of  
the process, in hopes of inspiring others to follow their dreams.

Being from rural America (Montana) ourselves, we discovered  
(by accident, in doing market research for our own various  
business ventures) just how many movers & shakers there are all  
over the place. People are doing amazing things everyday, from  
everywhere, including "the middle of nowhere!"

So, the idea to create a platform on which we could "team-up"  
with and showcase these incredible entrepreneurs and their  
products' was born.

We want to showcase the work of people just like you,  
to inspire people just like you (and us).

**Be prepared to be inspired,  
Christen & Kalvin**

# THE *Last Best Box*

THE FIRST EVER  
*Montana-based, Montana-themed*  
SUBSCRIPTION GIFT BOX COMPANY

Created and founded by fourth generation Montanan, Scott Sacry, and his wife Amy, with a mission to share and spread their deep appreciation for the state of Montana.

Scott grew up in Whitehall, MT, near where his ancestors homesteaded back in 1877.



Currently living in Stevensville, Montana, with their two daughters, Scott and Amy were struck with the idea to create a business that would allow them flexibility, whilst supporting the state and the small businesses that they know and love so well.

THUS, *The Last Best Box*,  
GOT ITS START IN JANUARY OF 2017!



# HOW DOES *The Last Best Box* WORK?

Like most subscription box services, customers subscribe and then they receive a box at the beginning of each month. The boxes are filled with a new selection of products each month, sometimes an eclectic mix of products, and some months the products are centered around a theme. In September, for example, they did a very popular "Butte" themed box, which featured all products made in Butte, MT.

*\*IN ADDITION TO THE MONTHLY SUBSCRIPTION, BOXES CAN ALSO BE PURCHASED AS ONE-TIME GIFTS, OR CUSTOMIZED USING PRODUCTS THAT HAVE BEEN FEATURED IN PAST BOXES!*



## *What we find so special about this company*

is the surprise and discovery that comes with it each month! Scott and Amy are making the act of "getting the mail" fun again, by combining receiving handcrafted packages with the amazing products of incredibly talented Montana Entrepreneurs all across the state. Whether you live in Montana and are just looking for a way to discover new Montana-made products, you're from Montana but living elsewhere and feeling homesick for a little Montana fix, or you know anyone who feels a bond with Montana and wants to keep that connection wherever they may be... This is the perfect service to provide a "slice of home" in true Montana fashion.

## *Box Talk:*

*WE SAT DOWN WITH AMY AND SCOTT TO LEARN A MORE ABOUT THE LAST BEST BOX'S OPERATION AND WHAT'S ON THE HORIZON FOR THIS RURAL MONTANA COMPANY. HERE'S WHAT WE LEARNED:*

**RA:** WAS THERE AN "AHA!" MOMENT THAT SPARKED YOUR WHOLE VISION?

**LBB:** The idea for the Last Best Box came not so much as an "AHA" moment but rather a progression of events. I met someone running a successful subscription box business in Missoula... It seemed like an interesting business idea, so, I investigated and researched the subscription box industry. I found that there were literally thousands of boxes filling thousands of niches, but there were none focused on Montana. Given how much we love Montana, we thought there might be a niche for a box focused on products made here and we figured we might as well be the ones to start it!

**RA:** WHAT HAS BEEN THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU HAVE FACED AS AN ENTREPRENEUR/ SMALL BUSINESS OWNER?

**LBB:** Much like any business idea, the hardest part is starting. Luckily, there are lots of resources available for subscription box start-ups, but it still took a few months of research and planning to get all the pieces in place. It is a relatively simple business model that doesn't require much capital to get things going, but deciding where to focus our efforts in terms of advertising and marketing is one of the biggest challenges we are facing.

**RA: IF YOU HAD TO START ALL OVER, WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?**

**LBB:** Our business is still new and we're still learning as we go. Some of our ideas have worked and others haven't. We spent quite a bit of time between January and May trying to build momentum and interest through our Facebook page. In hindsight, we may have drug that out longer than needed – you don't want people to get interested in something and then have to wait several months for it to happen.

**RA: ANY ADVICE FOR ASPIRING ENTREPRENEURS?**

**LBB:** The best advice I would give for people who have an idea and are thinking of starting a new business is to just plunge in and do it. Make sure you have the fundamentals covered, and then just hit go. There will never be a perfect time, there will always be doubts, and there will always be reasons why it might not work. Like they say, you miss 100% of the shots you never take.

**RA: HOW DO YOU PULL YOURSELF UP WHEN YOU HIT YOUR ENTREPRENEURIAL "LOW DAYS?"**

**LBB:** I would say, lean on close friends and family when you need help, and then just do something, make the call, send the email – if you just keep pushing on, something positive is bound to happen that will re-motivate you.

*And if that doesn't work, there's always beer and whiskey (Montana-made, of course).*

**RA: WHAT HAPPENINGS ARE YOU MOST EXCITED ABOUT FOR YOUR BRAND IN THE UPCOMING FUTURE?**

**LBB:** The monthly subscription is always exciting because every month we're discovering new Montana products, talking with new businesses, learning new stories, and discovering unique products. It's always pretty cool when we put a product in our box and it leads to the company getting more orders or vendors as a result.

Outside of the monthly subscription, we're putting together a larger selection of one-time boxes that customers can buy separate from the subscription. For example, we'll be offering a Montana Coffee/Tea box, a Montana Camping Box, and a Montana Apothecary Box in time for people to send as Christmas gifts this year. We are also excited to expand our service to more Montana companies as an option for corporate gifts. We think we can offer Montana companies a unique way to thank their clients, employees, and business partners while supporting other Montana businesses!

"Just plunge in and do it. Make sure you have the fundamentals covered, and then just hit go. There will never be a perfect time, there will always be doubts, and there will always be reasons why it might not work."

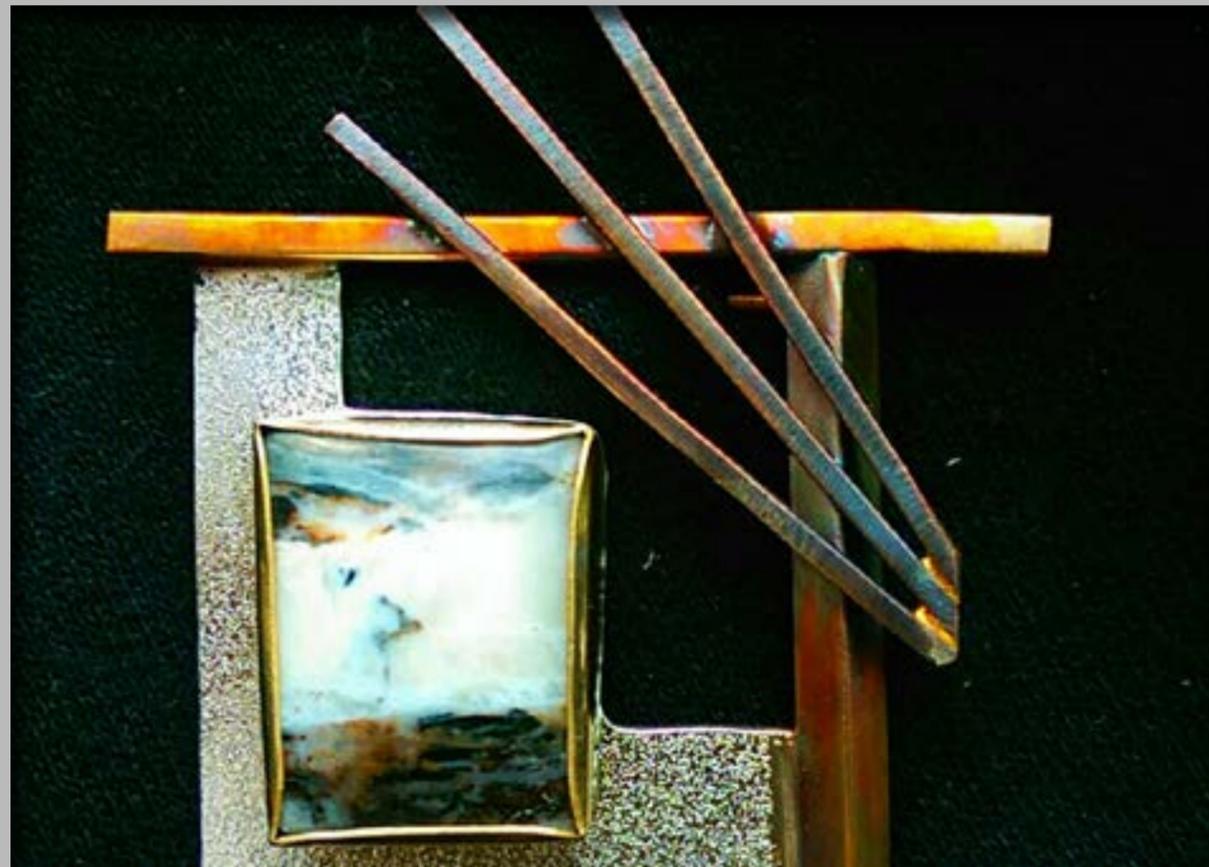
TO LEARN MORE ABOUT

*The Last Best Box*

IS TO VISIT THEIR WEBSITE

[WWW.LASTBESTBOX.COM](http://WWW.LASTBESTBOX.COM)

YOU CAN ALSO FIND THEM ON FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, TWITTER, AND PINTEREST.



T • HAWK STUDIO



**MEET**  
*Rachel*  
*Hawkinson,*

a fine metalsmith based out of Casper, Wyoming. With an undeniable flair for funky, Rachel handpicks stones of all colors and shapes and mixes them with metal to create jewelry for people who love bold statement pieces with offbeat finesse.

As an artist, Rachel dabbles across the board, but when it comes to metal-work she focuses on complex fabrication techniques, excellent craftsmanship, top quality materials, and unique design. She works mostly on custom orders, made specially and specifically to fit any given client's personal pizzazz.

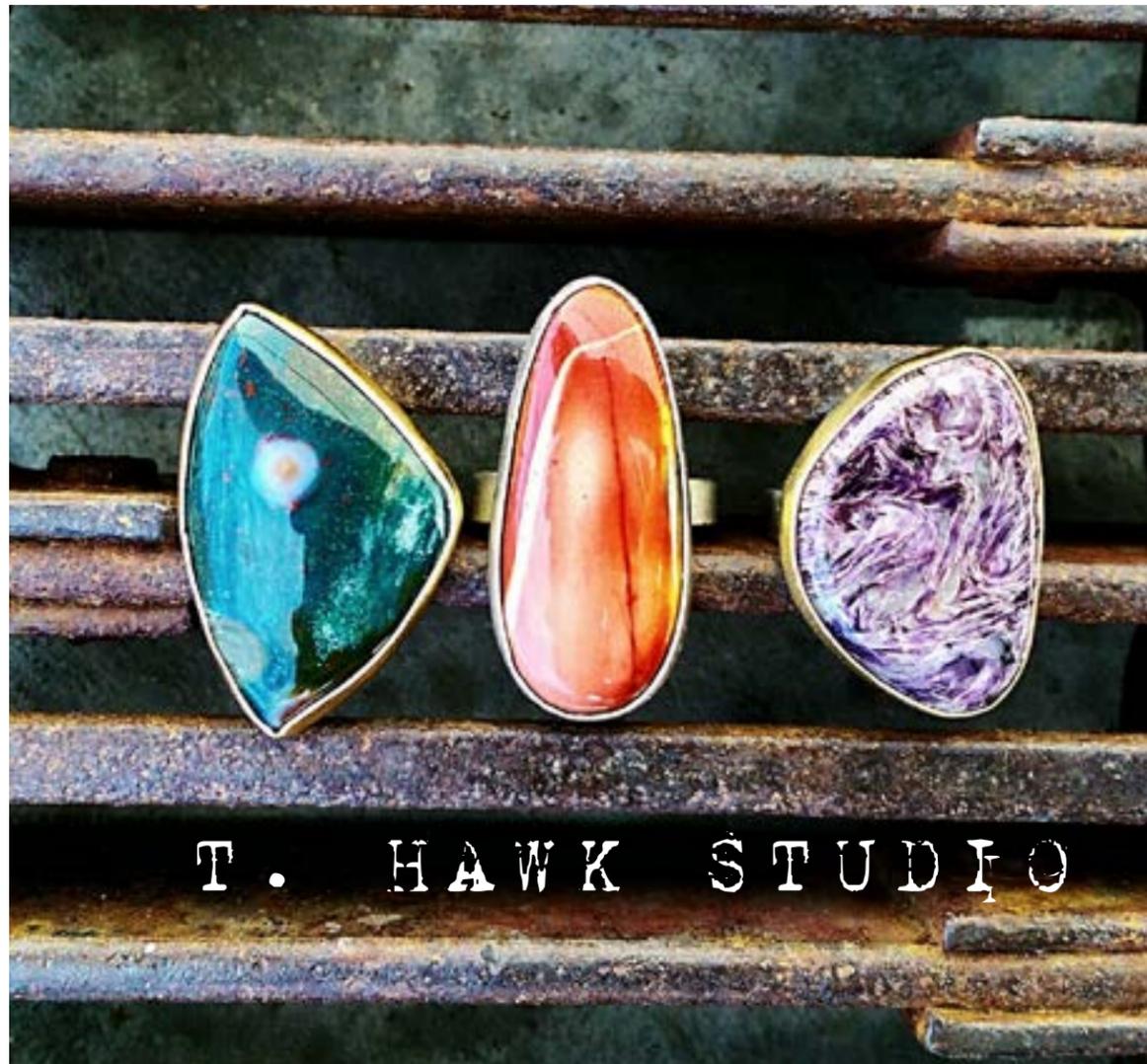
When she isn't working on custom designs, she can either be found in the studio working on a new idea for a gallery show, or designing new funky, chunky rings.

**A LITTLE MORE**  
**ABOUT Rachel**

As a kiddo growing up in Casper in the middle of an oil crash, I mainly hung out in the garage with my dad, who was an oilfield welder. He always let me push the squishy green start button on the welder, it roared into life and I watched my dad take sheet metal and heavy gauge wire and turn it into bird perches, bicycle racks, and other random objects people needed and were willing to pay for... I think that's where I picked up this need to work with my hands.

Then at the University of Wyoming, working towards a Bachelors in Fine Art and Humanities, I took a fine metals class. With my very first project in that class I knew that metal working was where I was supposed to be; I had found my niche in the art world. Over time I realized that people liked to wear my jewelry, and as each piece sold, I slowly built my own studio, one tool at a time. And so...

**T. Hawk Studio**  
**was born.**



**WHAT HAS BEEN THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU HAVE FACED AS AN ENTREPRENEUR?**

I think the biggest challenge of doing something you are passionate about, is in the beginning. You doubt yourself or the possibilities that will be available to you. In the end it doesn't matter if you have doubts, that's normal. What matters is that you never give up. I had to tell myself many times "just keep creating" even when I was completely frustrated.

I eventually learned that mistakes turn into lessons, which in turn improves craftsmanship and strengthens design concepts. I've learned that playing around with materials and making mistakes allows me to make treasures instead of trinkets. As a jeweler, I don't want to make trinkets. I want to make well crafted work that is clearly my own, and will be passed down

**IF YOU HAD TO START ALL OVER AGAIN, WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?**

Even as a youngster I understood the creative side of my business, how to take raw materials and transform them in to more than the sum of their parts. When I started making jewelry, that's all I did for years. I didn't market, or sell it. I had no idea how to grasp all the working parts of a small business. I just wanted to make unusual things....

*If I could do anything differently, I would have taken a few business classes in the beginning. I think it would have gotten me further, faster.*



**HOW DO YOU PULL YOURSELF UP WHEN YOU HIT YOUR ENTREPRENEURIAL "LOW DAYS?"**

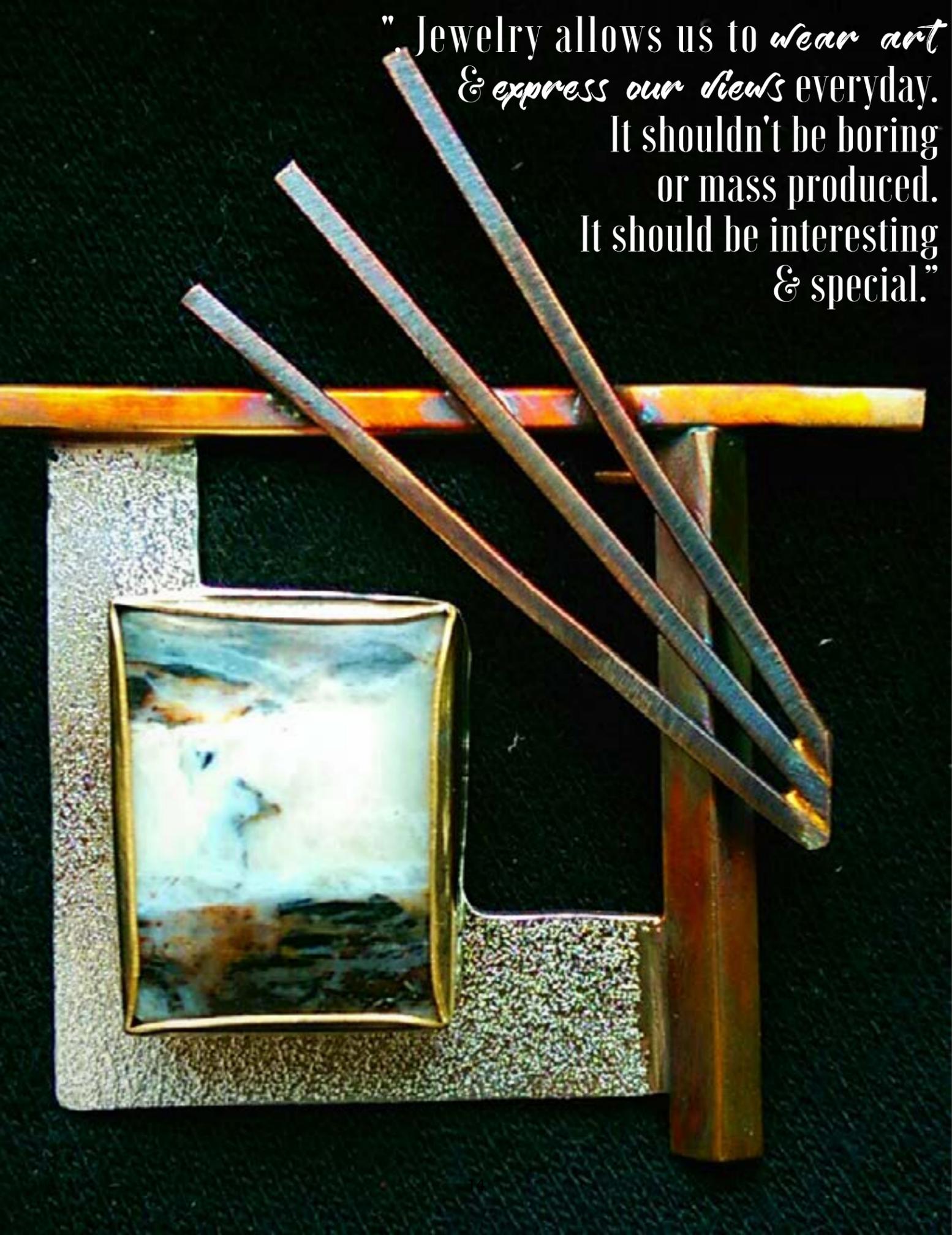
When I have my low days, I just have to know that I will have my high days too. I definitely have days where I don't want to deal with the ins and outs of running a business. I just want to make something without thinking about where its going to end up. And so, that's what I do.



**I  
UNPLUG  
FROM  
TECHNOLOGY  
(except my stereo)  
AND  
CREATE.**

Another thing that really helps keep the low days at bay is being around other creative types with a sense of humor who encourage and support me.

” Jewelry allows us to *wear art*  
& *express our views* everyday.  
It shouldn't be boring  
or mass produced.  
It should be interesting  
& special.”



RURAL ADVANTAGE

I am currently the manager at **Haven Gallery** (The Old Yellowstone District in Downtown Casper, WY). **The Haven** is a gallery, artist co-op, and gift shop with handcrafted goods from local artisans and there is always something to learn and inspiration to be found with the constant bantering back and forth at the gallery.

**WHERE IS YOUR BRAND HEADED RIGHT NOW THAT YOU ARE MOST EXCITED ABOUT?**

My genuine hope is that I can continue to build my business on solid relationships with my clients and make work that is interesting and tells a story...

**T. Hawk Studio** is all about handcrafting one of a kind items that are personal for the customers, wether it's a custom project with input from the client or just something of my own making.

*-Rachel*

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT  
**T. Hawk Studio**  
VISIT THEIR WEBSITE  
[WWW.ETSY/THAWK.COM](http://WWW.ETSY/THAWK.COM)  
YOU CAN ALSO FIND THEM ON  
FACEBOOK & INSTAGRAM





All it  
takes to  
*change the world*  
is a little  
inspiration  
and a lot of coffee,  
in no particular order.

# *gerry myers photo*

Gerry, of *Gerry Myers Photo*, is a wedding and lifestyle photographer from small-town Montana, now living in rural Wyoming with her husband and two little boys. Gerry credits the decision to become a self-employed entrepreneur as one of the best decisions she has ever made because it has allowed her the opportunity to raise her sons, while still nurturing her passion by having a full-time photography business.



## *What we love most about what Gerry does...*

It only takes one glance to see that Gerry Myers has a unique ability to capture the whimsy and playfulness of love and life in a simple still-frame. That talent, coupled with her passion for storytelling through the subjects of her photos, and her flexibility to travel all around Montana and Wyoming for her business, make Gerry Myers Photo a perfect example of what RURAL ADVANTAGE is all about.

And though Gerry's focus has been primarily on weddings and family shots in MT and WY, social media is constantly expanding her reach to other states, which is exactly what we want convey with Rural Advantage... Just because you started your business in your own rural pocket of America, doesn't mean you can't take it everywhere. Gerry Myers Photo is proof of exactly that!

# Life as an Entrepreneur, as told by *Gerry Myers:*

TELL US ABOUT THE “AHA!” MOMENT FOR YOUR BUSINESS:

*gm:* The photography market is very saturated, but I honestly think there is plenty of room for everyone! The trick is to find your niche, and then be sure to serve your clients within that niche well. My “AHA moment” came several years into my business, when I finally identified my target clientele, and realized that by doing a good job they would not only become repeat business, but ultimately, clients for life. For example, most of my wedding clients come back and hire me for when they are expecting their first baby and for family photos long after that. I feel very blessed that I get to document people during the most special occasions and throughout their lives.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU HAVE FACED AS AN ENTREPRENEUR?

*gm:* My biggest challenge has definitely been going from an entrepreneur to a  
*“Mamapreneur.”*

Balancing my time between my business and my family has been my biggest struggle. My kids are home with me all day, and I want to be sure I’m spending as much quality time with them as possible. Therefore, there are many days that I wake up very early to get my work done before they get up, or others, when I stay up late editing and working on things long past when they go to sleep. It can be draining, but it’s worth it.

I also know the days are coming when I can have a more balanced schedule, so *for now*, I’m fine with getting a little less sleep.



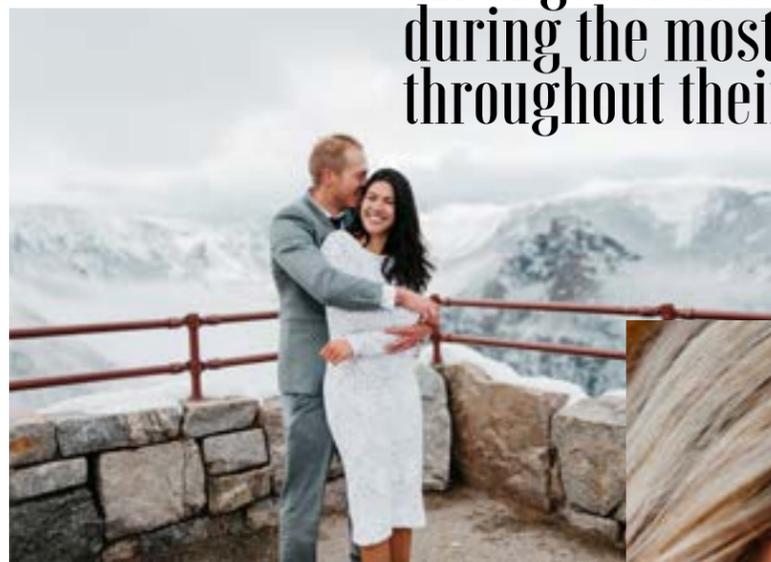
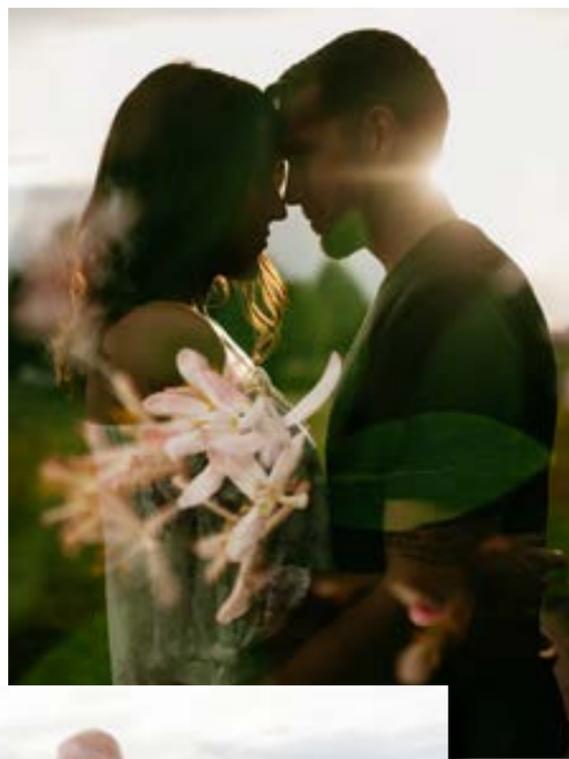
IF YOU HAD TO START ALL OVER AGAIN,  
WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?

*gm:* If I could do one thing over again, I would have trusted that little voice in my head sooner and dove right into my photography business. I went to college to become an elementary teacher, and I felt obligated to use my degree; however, my drive and passion were in photography. I would teach during the school year and then do most of my photography during the summer months. It was getting hard when I would have couples wanting to book weddings into the school year that I would have to turn down because I couldn’t travel. Eventually, I had to stop kidding myself and decided to finally take the leap and be a full-time photographer,

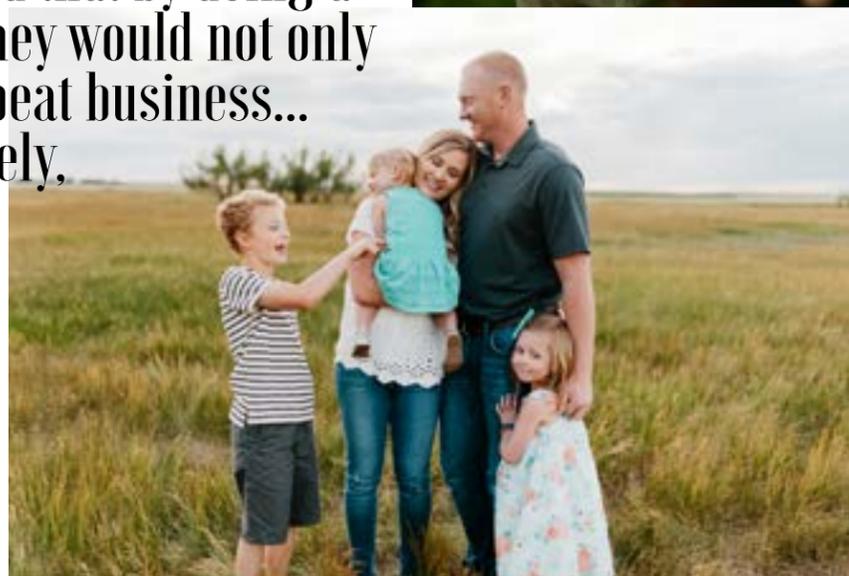
*and I haven't looked back since.*

My “*aha!*” Moment

came when I finally identified my target clientele, and realized that by doing a good job, they would not only become repeat business... but ultimately, clients for life.



I feel very *blessed* that I get to document people during the most special occasions throughout their lives.



I also know the days are coming when I can have a more balanced schedule, so *for now*, I'm fine with getting a little less sleep.



HOW DO YOU PULL YOURSELF UP WHEN YOU HIT YOUR ENTREPRENEURIAL "LOW DAYS?"

*gm:* On low days, I make a pot of coffee, throw in my headphones, and listen to a few podcasts to get my day started. I have learned so much from fellow entrepreneurs by just listening.

I think a lot of people think photographers have such an easy job. Don't get me wrong, I absolutely love what I do, but taking the photographs are only about 10% of my job. The rest is editing, scheduling, answering emails, paperwork, and traveling.

It is definitely important to be able to take good photos, but it's equally as important to be good at the business side of things. Also, entrepreneurship can be lonely. I spend a good chunk of my time by myself.

I find it so important to connect with people doing the same thing as you. That way you can pick each other up!

*-gerry*

Speaking of picking each other up, *as a thank you* for the opportunity to be featured in RURAL ADVANTAGE...

Gerry is "paying-it-forward" by offering an amazing exclusive deal to RURAL ADVANTAGE readers! (That's you!)

So, if you are interested in booking a session with Gerry, what better time than now? Just mention this article and RECEIVE \$300 DOLLARS OFF any of her wedding collections!



I have learned so much from fellow entrepreneurs, just by listening.

SEE MORE OF *gerry's* WORK, & CONTACT HER FOR BOOKING DETAILS AT [www.gerrymyersphoto.com](http://www.gerrymyersphoto.com) SHE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!  
Also, follow her on Instagram & Facebook @[gerrymyersphoto](https://www.instagram.com/gerrymyersphoto) [Gerry Myers Photo](https://www.facebook.com/gerrymyersphoto)



*River & Pine*  
**RENOVATION**  
 MONTANA COMPANY

*Bri Sweningson*  
 is putting her unique stamp  
 on what started out as a fun hobby but  
 is now transforming into a lucrative passion.



With an eye for aesthetic decoration and a knack for interior design (in this case redesign), Bri is a self-proclaimed small project fiend.

Growing up, Bri's favorite passtime was teaming up with her aunt to decorate, redecorate, and just generally improve upon anything they could get their hands on, whether it needed it or not. That was just what they had always done for fun... Which pretty much sums up how Bri's new business venture *River & Pine* got its start.

Just over a year ago, in need of a hobby, Bri and her aunt decided to give the 1969 Red Dale camper that had been sitting on their property for the past 10 years a much needed "facelift." Well, the project flew by. (Because, shocker: work doesn't feel like work when you're doing something you love!) Not to mention that they also had a blast doing it, and the previously out-of-commission camper was not only functional, but suddenly it was fashionable too!

**Because, shocker:  
 work doesn't feel like work  
 when you're doing  
 something  
 you love!**

So they decided, after several hard-earned camping trips in their spiffed up camper, it was time to start on another. Upon finding their second "fixer-upper" and getting it finished fairly quickly, Bri decided to post it for sale, just to see what would happen...

# River & Pine Renovation

Well... Here's what happened: Over ten people replied to the post that day, and just like that, their second project was sold in less than 24 hours. So they did it again, and the same thing happened.

This same process occurred four times in a row, four quick (and more importantly fun) projects, and then four even quicker sales. If that wasn't enough to convince Bri she was onto something, they also had two separate people contact them wanting custom campers! Having since completed those, Bri has finally decided to make a real-go of her favorite little hobby, bringing you River & Pine Renovation.

Because we are *obsessed* with this company (seriously, check back with us next year, we may just be living in one of Bri's masterpieces)...

We asked Bri some questions to get a better idea of how she works her magic.

## The Rundown

RA: WHERE DO YOU BEGIN?

*BS:* We find our "fixer-uppers" anywhere in Montana. If we see one sitting in someone's yard that hasn't been used in a long time, I'll just pop in and offer them cash on the spot, or just give them my number for the future.

RA: HOW MUCH DO YOU TYPICALLY PAY FOR THE "BEFORE CAMPER?"

*BS:* The price range varies, but I'm willing to give people what they want for them. Most of the campers we get are damaged, whether it be water damage, exterior damage, or the parts aren't working... But that's the fun part of the project! There's no challenge if you just slap on some paint and throw in a decorative pillow.

RA: WHAT IS THE MAIN FOCUS OF YOUR WORK, ONCE YOU GET YOUR HANDS ON A CAMPER?

*BS:* That depends a lot on the condition we buy them in. We always do floor, walls (in pine or subway tile), ceiling, countertops, tables and little add-ons here and there. The exterior is also sealed and it is fully decorated.

Think  
HGTV  
meets  
Montana:  
Think HGRV

RA: HOW LONG DOES EACH PROJECT TYPICALLY TAKE?

**BS:** Again, that all depends on the shape the camper is in when we get it, and also the weather. The exterior can't be worked on unless it is above 50 degrees outside, and a lot of the time the electricity isn't working correctly, which, you can imagine is not a lot of fun when it is 30 degrees (or less) outside. *Gotta figure in that Montana weather, of course.* But on average, I would say one month.



RA: DO YOU HAVE HELP? HOW MUCH OF THIS DO YOU DO WITH YOUR OWN TWO HANDS?

**BS:** Yes! My aunt and I really head these up together, she's really great at the redoing the upholstery. My uncle also teaches me something new everyday, especially when it comes to the electrical side of things. So between the 3 of us, we do all of it ourselves.



RA: WHO IS YOUR PRIMARY CLIENTELE?

**BS:** Anyone who wants to explore or just live off the grid for a bit! We put a lot of heart into each camper individually and we want them to go to the right person. Every camper is affordable, I never want to be greedy, the renovations are not about profit. **Every camper will be priced between \$4500-\$6500**

RA: WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE?

**BS:** The weather! Montana can be so cold, I don't have a workshop to work in so some days can be extremely brutal, but you just have to bundle up!

RA: WHAT UPCOMING PROJECTS DO YOU HAVE ON THE HORIZON ON THAT YOU'RE MOST EXCITED ABOUT?

**BS:** Right now I'm getting campers ready for the spring time. We are also going to be building a mobile store for an awesome outdoor gear and apparel company called Trxstle (an awesome new startup). You can check their store and Kickstarter here: [Trxstle](#)



**GO ALONG FOR BRI'S RIDE BY FOLLOWING HER ON INSTAGRAM @river\_and\_pine**



**I know there are challenges on the road ahead, and I'm sure there will be some campers that won't sell as quickly, but I am finally doing something I that love & have a passion for. So all I can do is continue to pour my heart into each project and trust that eventually the right person/family will come along and love them as much as I do!**

Introducing:

*bh&co*

A family run company out of Meridian, Idaho, with a mission to provide affordable, quality items that meet or exceed their customers' expectations.



Brent & Morgann, pictured with their three children, Noah (4 years old), Piper (2), and Rowan (0).

### *bh&co creations*

is made up of Brent and Morgann Halbersma, a husband and wife team that specializes in wooden essential oil bottle holders and home décor items. Together, bh&co designs all of their products with paper and pencil or in Google Sketchup, and fabricate everything in their garage.



### HOW THEY GOT THEIR START...

Just over a year ago, Morgann quit her full-time job to be a stay-at-home mom to their three children. In the midst of this transition, she found herself feeling increasingly drawn to finding alternative/natural ways to support their family's health. From that interest, she began using Doterra Essential Oils and is now a Wellness Advocate for Doterra.

Upon Morgann finding a new and flexible career path, Brent, a full-time engineer who sits in front



of a computer all day, was itching for an outlet to do something both productive, and with his own two hands... Simultaneously, they were realizing they needed to find a storage/organization solution for the many essential oil bottles that were rapidly accumulating around the house.

They looked online, and though there were some options for display holders, they didn't like the aesthetic of any of them. So, they decided to make their own. Brent jumped on Craigslist immediately to pick up some used wood-working tools, and just like that, *bh&co creations* was born.

# Getting to know Brent & Morgann

RA: WHAT HAS BEEN THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE OF YOUR ENTREPRENEURIAL JOURNEY THUS FAR?

**bh&co:** The biggest challenge in running a small business is time-management. It's an interesting juggling-act raising 3 little kids, working a full-time job, finding time to spend quality time with your spouse AND running a small business! It's not for everybody, but we love what we are doing.

RA: IF YOU HAD TO START ALL OVER AGAIN, WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?

**bh&co:** I would have started our small business sooner. It can be very intimidating starting a small business but my advice to anyone who is thinking about starting their own would be, just do it!

RA: WHAT ARE YOU MOST EXCITED ABOUT FOR YOUR BRAND IN THE UPCOMING FUTURE?

**bh&co:** Right now, we are focused on the oil holder niche, but I am excited about broadening the products we can offer by learning how to use a CNC machine. The CNC I will be using can mill (cut) soft and hardwoods, aluminum and acrylic. The CNC is a very versatile machine and I am excited about the new products we will soon be offering!

We find ourselves looking at social media & getting a boost of confidence/motivation from other makers!

RA: HOW DO YOU PULL YOURSELF UP WHEN YOU HIT YOUR ENTREPRENEURIAL "LOW DAYS?"  
**bh&co:** We draw a lot of inspiration from social media i.e. Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest and Youtube. There are some amazing businesses, entrepreneurs and content creators out there. Whenever we experience a lack of motivation, we find ourselves looking at social media and getting a boost of confidence/motivation from other makers!

VISIT AND SHOP  
*bh&co creations*  
[HTTPS://WWW.ETSY.COM/SHOP/BHANDCOCREATIONS](https://www.etsy.com/shop/bhandco creations)  
Or follow them on Instagram  
[@bhandco creations](https://www.instagram.com/bhandco creations) &  
[@essentiallymorgann](https://www.instagram.com/essentiallymorgann)





# Ekam Yoga Studio

Ekam Yoga Studio is a brand new addition to downtown Bozeman, MT. Ekam Yoga was built on the idea that your yoga studio should be *a place where your real life fades.* and you get to take a time out.

Ekam strives to deliver an elevated yoga experience to anyone who demands more from their practice. From free yoga mats, to towel service and spa locker rooms, They have done their best to think of everything you could possibly need to achieve whatever goals or expectations you might set out to find in your yoga experience.

Creating a *reliable haven* from the stressors of the outside world.

Prioritizing our *clients' experience* over everything else.

Taking our jobs seriously in that we want to be *undeniable in our excellence,* but not taking ourselves so seriously that clients can't relax with us.

I had a clear vision of what a studio should be, & if no one else was going to build it, I would.



# Getting To Know *Bailey Evans* Owner & Founder of Ekam Yoga Studio MT

WHAT WAS THE IDEA THAT SPARKED YOUR WHOLE VISION FOR EKAM YOGA? DID YOU HAVE AN "AHA!" MOMENT?

*I* don't think there was a singular "AHA!" moment per se, more like a lot of little moments along the way. When I first started teaching yoga, I accidentally found a niche working with very affluent clients. So right off the bat I understood what level of service every person should have.

*It should be flawless.*

As time went on, I didn't understand why I couldn't find a studio that had that a mindset of "excellence above all else." I had a clear vision of what a studio should be, and if no one else was going to build it, I would.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE AS A SMALL BUSINESS OWNER?

For me, finding my voice as a leader for the Ekam team. I personally am very disciplined and (some might say), intense. I needed to create an atmosphere of excellence, while still being a supportive boss. I wanted to raise the bar, but do so with grace. I want to disrupt the way yoga studios are designed, created, and run, but I always aim to do that in a way that is respectful to existing studios.

IF YOU HAD TO START ALL OVER AGAIN, WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY?

I don't think I would do anything differently. The mistakes were opportunities for growth.

HOW DO YOU PULL YOURSELF UP WHEN YOU HIT YOUR ENTREPRENEURIAL "LOW DAYS?"

Agh... What a real thing. This past month was my hardest as an entrepreneur, but my most successful as a business...

So all month was a push-pull of figuring how to balance having the "low days" of being an entrepreneur with the steady grind of running a business. I handle most stress through exercise, so that always helps. I also try to figure out if there are actionable steps I can take to improve, and if not, just ride it out.

WHAT HAPPENINGS ARE YOU MOST EXCITED ABOUT FOR YOUR EXAM YOGA STUDIO IN THE UPCOMING FUTURE?

Right now I am most excited to continue to foster the incredible team of teachers we have at Ekam. I also just recently became an exclusive Lululemon retailer and am really excited to see how that changes and grows the business! -B

Stop by and visit *Bailey* & her extraordinary team at  
 9 East Main St. Bozeman, MT.  
 Also find them at [www.ekamyogamt.com](http://www.ekamyogamt.com)  
 Or follow her on Instagram [@ekamyogamt](https://www.instagram.com/ekamyogamt)



"I don't think I would do anything differently. The mistakes were opportunities for growth."

"I needed to create an atmosphere of excellence, while still being a supportive boss. I wanted to raise the bar, but do so with grace."



**Meet Adam & Ashley Couchis, husband and wife, and founders of RUSTIC RANGE FABRICATION.**

Based in the rural Parma, ID, Rustic Range Fabrications is a brand new shop committed to the creation of rustic items to add unique character to any home or business. Adam and Ashley focus primarily on producing unique pieces by combining metal and wood to create picture frames, table legs, and benches, unlike any ordinary piece.

**Most notably, Rustic Range finds joy in collaborating with their customers on personalized custom designs to decorate any space.**



## What Caught Our Eye

We stumbled upon Adam's work on Instagram, and couldn't help but be inspired by the unique craftsmanship that each of their products entails.

**Their mission is to bring a personalized, handmade touch to any living or office space, and we have no doubt their products accomplish exactly that.**

The love for what they do, coupled with the hardwork and sweat that goes into each piece is not lost on us. We are so impressed by what they've accomplished insuch a short period of time, and we look forward to keeping an eye on where they're headed!

PHOTO CREDIT  
 Sarah Weatherspoon Photography  
[@swphotography9](https://www.instagram.com/swphotography9)

# A LOOK INSIDE RUSTIC RANGE

Adam & Ashley told us a little about their Entrepreneurial Journey thus far.

## **RA: WHAT WAS THE IDEA THAT SPARKED RUSTIC RANGE FABRICATION?**

**Ashley:** Adam made me some picture frames made of gunmetal steel and rusted steel with wood accents for Christmas last year. I thought they were the coolest things I'd ever seen and was amazed that he created them himself... We had talked a little about him starting his own business, and I knew I couldn't be the only one who would love these unique frames, so we started there and Adam has continued to make awesome, unique stuff.

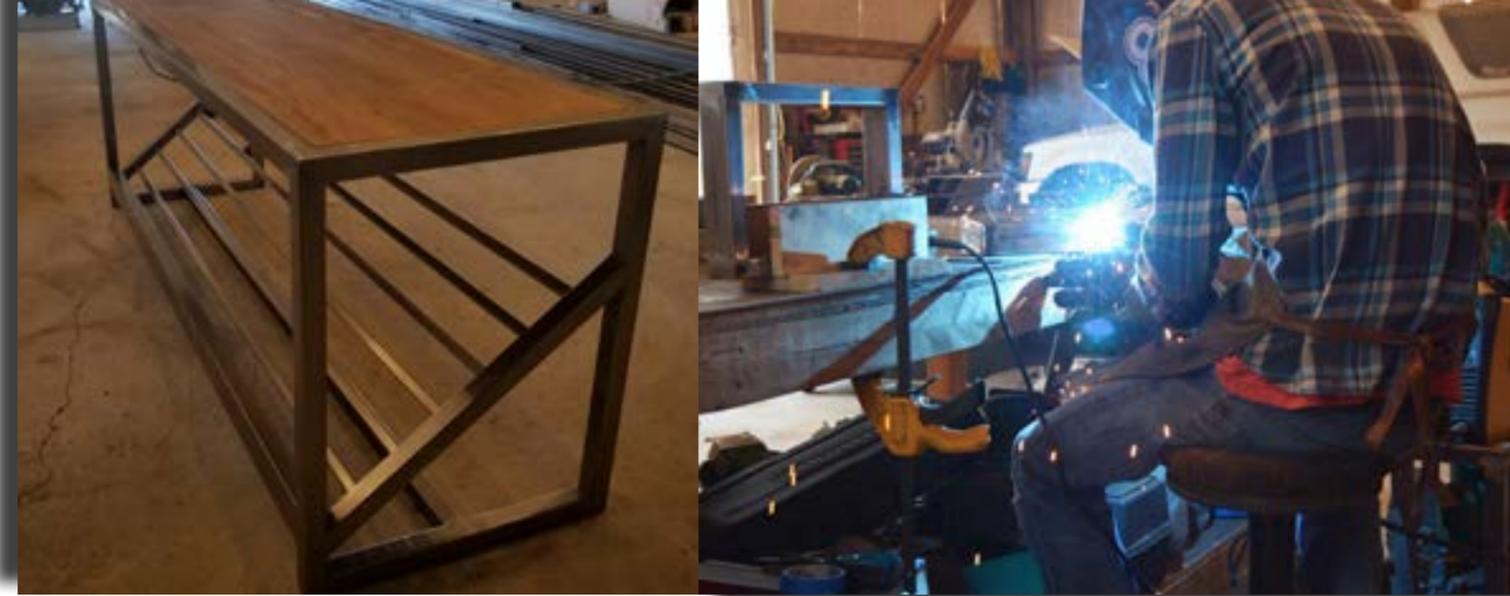


## **RA: WHAT HAS BEEN THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU HAVE FACED AS AN ENTREPRENEUR/ SMALL BUSINESS OWNER?**

**Adam:** The biggest challenge was the startup. I quit a good job, moved states and bought a small ranch in a rural town so there was a lot going on at the time.

## **RA: HOW DO YOU PULL YOURSELF UP WHEN YOU HIT YOUR ENTREPRENEURIAL "LOW DAYS?"**

**Adam:** On low days I get in the shop and start creating a new item or experimenting with different stains or patinas. That really helps remind me that I am doing something that makes me happy, and something that both allows me to provide for my family and be with them more. It also helps to look back at what we have already created<sup>46</sup> as a small business.



FIND RUSTIC RANGE FABRICATION  
ON ETSY AT [RUSTICRANGEFAB](https://www.etsy.com/shop/rusticrangefab).

They also have a website coming soon!

In the meantime, Follow them on

Instagram: [@rusticrangefabrication](https://www.instagram.com/rusticrangefabrication) & Facebook: [RusticRangeFabrication](https://www.facebook.com/RusticRangeFabrication)  
to keep up with their new creations, and get updates regarding when they may be at a trade show near you!





**THANK YOU FOR READING!**  
**One last thing before you go...**  
**Wherever you are,**  
**stop right there!**  
**Take a photo like this & tag us**  
**@RURALADVANTAGE**  
**to show off your**  
**“RURAL ADVANTAGE”**