



EDWARD STRATTON — The Daily Astorian

Chevonne Karol, left, cooks tapioca pearls while her husband, Jason, runs the cash register.

BUBBLE TEA CRAZE POPS IN SEASIDE

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — After witnessing it on the Las Vegas Strip, Jason and Chevonne Karol decided they would bring the bubble tea craze with them when they moved to the North Coast.

The Karols started in earnest less than two weeks ago, opening The Tea Spot in Seaside's Heritage Square, next to staples like the Seaside Candyman and Wheel Fun Rentals, hoping to catch the spring break rush.

Jason, formerly of the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne, was featured in a Veterans Day story about his studies at Clatsop Community College, and his plans to start a tea shop in Seaside. One of the only other places to get the bubble tea variety is the Saigon Deli, around the corner on Broadway from The Tea Spot.

Driving the business' creation, though, is Chevonne's addiction to bubble tea, which she said started while she was working at a Hawaiian market on the Strip, and a Japanese exchange student co-worker was bringing her bubble tea from a nearby tea house.

They moved to the North Coast from Fort Hood, Texas, last summer and decided that within the year, they'd open their first business, a bubble tea shop in Seaside.

"It wasn't planned this soon," Jason said, adding that the timing of opening was meant to catch the spring break rush — they were a week early. "But with tax returns and my disability, it all just came together financially."

The shop offers black, green, jasmine and milk tea, with upward of 25 different flavors, using Torani syrup, and tapioca pearls or other jellies lining the bottom. The drinks come in plastic cups with cellophane seals, perforated by a large straw that sucks up the morsels with the tea.

They located in Heritage Square, thinking The Tea Spot would be complementary to the nearby cotton candy and saltwater taffy shops.

Bubble tea — also known as boba (slang for "big breasts," because of the large tapioca pearls in the bottom) or pearl tea — originated in Taiwan in 1988. Tea shops there are commonplace, said Chevonne, and flavors run the gamut from the mundane to durian, a thorny, sweet Asian tree fruit that she described as smelling like sweaty socks.

"With the unique flavors, you have to concentrate on the chemistry of the drink you're making," Chevonne said, who cooks boba pearls every three hours for the teas.

The couple are sticking with

the more common flavors for now, with some of their tea custom-blended by Seaside Coffee Roasters. To make the location financially viable, she said, they'll need to sell about 1,500 large drinks a month.

"We're going to have cotton candy, because I'm tired of people coming and asking for cotton candy," Chevonne said about the downside of being next to candy shops.

They hope to eventually add a tea wall, she said, once they find the right distributor, and eventually open a second location in Astoria.

"I don't really think it's about the money," Jason said, who with Chevonne said they hope to eventually provide employment to others. "I think it's about owning your own business and offering the community something it doesn't have."

The Tea Spot, in Seaside's Heritage Square at 21 N. Columbia St., Suite 101, is open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sunday, and is available on Facebook.



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The Tea Spot includes black, green and milk tea variations. Co-owner Chevonne Karol said they mostly avoid sugary powders, like in the center, opting instead for Torani syrups without high-fructose corn syrup for flavoring.

'I don't really think it's about the money. I think it's about owning your own business and offering the community something it doesn't have.'

— Jason Karol

former member of the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne who runs The Tea Spot in Seaside's Heritage Square with his wife, Chevonne

Windermere Stellar honors top brokers

CANNON BEACH — Windermere Stellar announced real estate brokers representing the company's Top 10 percent of 2014 production.

A combined total of 2,008 real estate transactions in 2014 were handled by these professionals in the Portland metro area and the North Coast.

These brokers consistently play a large role within Windermere Stellar's unique culture of charitable giving. Last

year, the company's 11 offices combined to donate \$370,000 to 45 local charities supporting low-income families and children throughout the communities they serve.

"We honor these brokers because they embody the spirit of Windermere Stellar — that of helping to make our local neighborhoods thrive," said Joan Allen, co-owner of Windermere Stellar. "Their success comes from providing their clients with high quality

and personalized service."

The top 2014 broker from the Cannon Beach office was Kate Merrell, a self-professed "real estate junkie." Before turning 40, she had built two new homes and completed major remodels on three. As a real estate broker for the past seven years, she's helped buyers and sellers in Cannon Beach, Arch Cape, Manzanita and surrounding areas.

The top 2014 brokers from the Gearhart office were Me-

lissa Eddy and Barbara Maltman.

A native of Gearhart, Eddy's father was the chief of police, and her brother serves as the town's fire chief. Prior to her real estate career, she promoted the area for the Seaside Chamber of Commerce.

Born and raised in Seaside, Maltman has nearly 20 years of experience and specializes in new construction, ocean front/view homes and the second home market.

Sellers: William M. Roach and Erin M. Partlow
Buyers: Donald D. Feuz and Monica F. Odegard-Feuz
Address: 88979 Katie Court, Seaside
Price: \$435,000

Sellers: David Russell Evans and Betty B. Evans
Buyer: Susan M. Sears
Address: 1417 N. Cottage Ave., Gearhart
Price: \$365,000

Sellers: William E. Peterson and Julie A. Peterson
Buyers: Harry Gross and Karyn Gross
Address: 30 N.W. 17th Place, Warrenton
Price: \$350,000

Seller: Barbara S. Linnett
Buyers: Kathleen Mitchell and Scott E. Mitchell
Address: 132 Susitna St., Cannon Beach
Price: \$339,900

Clatsop County Property Transactions

Sellers: Robert D. Scanlan and Gay Hart
Buyers: Gary W. Peront and Dawn L. Peront
Address: 89100 Manion Drive, Warrenton
Price: \$679,000

Seller: Galway Construction & Design, LLC
Buyer: Susan M. Vasey
Address: 310 12th Ave., Seaside
Price: \$489,000



MIKE WILLIAMS —EO Media Group

Nancy Nisbet

Making the Dollar

INTERVIEWS WITH LOCAL BUSINESSES
BY EDWARD STRATTON

Nancy Nisbet
Elixir Coffee, Tea & Flowers
1015 W. Robert Bush Drive
South Bend, Wash.

When did you buy the business?

"Oct. 31, 2013."

How many employees do you have?

"Right now there aren't as many, because it's not as busy. There are four of us."

Then in the summer you'll ramp up?

"Yeah. Five to six, I would say, because they're all part time. A lot of students, and my sisters of course. I have three, so two out of the three work here."

Why did you decide to buy it?

"It sort of came up last minute. The previous owner approached me with it. I had actually worked here for her. I started in July and then I bought the place in October. I had worked here a few months, and she was looking at transitioning out. She saw my work ethic and decided, 'There's no better fit for anybody other than for Nancy.' So it fell into my hands. I had moved back to the area wanting to adventure into the floral department, so I was a new mom, and I didn't want to work full time, so I took this part-time job. When she approached me with the opportunity I thought, 'Maybe this is my way of working with my flowers and working with my floral adventure.' My ultimate goal was to have a floral shop. I'm not making arrangements all day long; I'm not there yet. Maybe one day."

How did you finance the purchase?

"I did it myself."

Apart from the floral, have you added services?

"There's different merchandise that's available. We switched up the sandwich menu and the coffee menu. Our baked goods are a new item. I purchase them from Madeline Dickerson from Pink Poppy Bakery (Long Beach). That's a new add-on, homemade baked goods. I'd like to grow in that area, where we're selling a dozen scones or a dozen cookies or whatever it may be."

How dramatic is the difference between winter and summer volume?

"My first year I started off in the middle of winter and it was pretty slow. I was looking at my books, and it didn't pick up until March or April, because we mainly base our customers on tourism. I've seen more consistent regulars throughout the year, though. Surprisingly this month hasn't been too bad. I think the weather might have something to do with it, but numbers are extremely up over last year. January is the hardest month. There is community support, and I'm getting more of my regulars coming in. Some businesses shut down in January. Because of my regulars, I don't have to. I stay pretty steady."

Have you had any surprises in learning the business?

"I kind of knew what I was getting into. I had a background in business. I worked for my parents for quite some time. I was manager of the Goose Point Oyster retail shop before buying the coffee shop."

Do you have a favorite drink?

"To be honest with you I drink drip coffee. We do have a few popular drinks. Happy Tea is our most popular tea, it's an iced tea. Lavender-Lemon Spritzer is popular. The other one is a Bulletproof. It's got organic butter, coconut oil and then an Americano. We throw it in the blender and froth it up. It's really high in omega-3s. Sort of allows that coffee in the morning but without the crash. It's a healthier option. That's an avenue I want to go to. We do do gluten-free bread and I'm in the process of changing my menu to add salads."

Do you have any plans to expand the services you offer or are you happy with things the way they are?

"I'm definitely happy with it. No plans as of now. People say that I should expand and put in a drive through, but no. I can't be in two places at once. And I've got a 2-year-old. I'd like to eventually grow all the flowers that I sell. It's what I envision, having a nice big greenhouse."

— Mike Williams