

From hobbyist to storeowner

Woman opens dream coastal business featuring handmade designs

BY ZOË BUCHLI

The pandemic pushed Seasons Sparks to realize her full potential, opening up her dream flagship store in downtown Tillamook this fall.

Her store, Salty Raven, sells a plethora of merchandise that caters to all aspects of everyday life. Many of the treasures you'll find at Salty Raven feature handmade designs created by Sparks, owner and founder of the company.

Sparks started Salty Raven — named after her beach house — in 2017, about a year after moving out to Tillamook.

Before Sparks transitioned to making Salty Raven a full-time focus, she was working at a cards and gifts retail company based out of Portland. She said she started selling Salty Raven products through the Portland company, but wanted to expand beyond that.

Working at a larger company also allowed Sparks to see the gaps in wholesale



Seasons Sparks creates graphics printed on glassware, apparel and mugs.

merchandise, and said one area that especially stood out as needing more variety was graphic T-shirts.

"So I started designing Portland tees and also my octopus design," she said. "That's still probably top of the heap for the brand, and it's very coastal."

Since then, Sparks' inventory has expanded massively to include a wide variety of goodies made for casual, everyday life anyone can appreciate and use.

Right now, glassware is the most popular item Sparks sells. Ranging from wine to pint to juice glasses, Sparks offers a wide range of glassware for just about any liquid adorned with unique designs that are dishwasher and microwave safe.

"I really wanted it to be a lifestyle brand, where you can enjoy the art in all functional parts of your life," she said. "Whether you're wearing it or drinking out of it, it's giving you a way to have a lifestyle with it."

Much of Sparks' inventory includes things you can use around the house, and she believes the pandemic gave Salty Raven a boost in business.

"It's been phenomenal. Everything I sell fits into your COVID lifestyle," she said, pointing specifically to her apparel pieces.

"Really soft, cozy clothing with peaceful imagery, which is something people are responding to and gives them some mild therapy right now," she said, adding her hoodies have a sensory, sponge fleece that customers love.

You'll also find Sparks' book, "Flock of Gerrys," based on "Gerry" the seagull, a frequent flyer at Sparks' beach house, who would eat from her hand.

Originally, Gerry was a T-shirt design, but Sparks drew him a few more friends which evolved into her first book, "Flock of Gerrys — Gerry Loves Tacos," aptly named for what a lover of food Gerry was.



Seasons Sparks in her newly opened storefront in downtown Tillamook.



The Salty Raven in Tillamook sells glassware and apparel printed with Seasons Sparks' designs.

Sparks is cultivating a new seagull friend at her house and is also in the process of writing a second book in the "Flock of Gerrys" series.

Sparks' husband has also hopped on

board to help with the more technical parts of the business. He runs the warehouse and Sparks runs the store, and handles the marketing and designing side of Salty Raven.

The Franklin Apartments



*Providing Elegance & Efficiency to
Downtown Astoria for Over 100 Years*

**1432 Franklin Avenue
Community Property Management**



503-325-5678