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SPOKANE IS DOWNTOWN

Spokane is a vibrant metropolitan center serving as the cultural, economic, educational and social hub of the Intermountain Northwest, and at its center sits downtown. Where people come to gather and play, steeped in a century of history and happenings. For anyone who has visited for a minute or lived lifetime in the region, downtown is an integral part of the Spokane experience.

With an accessible city that combines civility, livability and simplicity. Downtown Spokane is known for its rich shopping, its inspired restaurateurs, award winning microbreweries and winemakers, and ambitious events that bring in over 500,000 visitors to downtown Spokane on an annual basis. Spokane is a community of get-it-done dreamers with its abundance of historic architecture, two medical schools, and inventive and ambitious entrepreneurs.

Punctuated by a powerful urban river gorge – second in size only to Niagara Falls – downtown Spokane has direct access to year-round recreational opportunities including the 100-acre destination park, Riverfront Park, the 37-mile Centennial Trail, and the Spokane River for kayaking, fly-fishing rafting and paddle boarding.

Spokane offers a hassle-free antidote to the friction of modern living with an overall average commute time of less than 20 minutes, and with direct access to over 50 miles of urban bike lanes, 38 public transit routes and City Line, a six-mile bus rapid transit route planned through the center of downtown interconnecting the region's livability, healthcare, commerce and education.

We hope you enjoy this competition of stories about the people who make up the character of our city, the dreamers and the doers that define our urban center. ●

WALKABILITY A BIG WOW FACTOR FOR DOWNTOWN LIVING

While most of us grumble, grit our teeth, or gasp in astonishment as we fill up at the pump these days, Michael Jansen is a bit more mellow.

As a resident of the Marjorie Apartments at 107 South Howard Street in downtown Spokane, where he also works as a maintenance technician, Jansen can walk nearly everywhere he wants to go.

"Living downtown is really convenient," Jansen said. "Ninety percent of what I need or want to do, just going about my regular life, is within super easy reach."

While he'll occasionally zip around on one of the Lime electric scooters for fun, walking remains his transportation of choice.

"The time it takes to get in the car, actually drive somewhere, find a parking spot, pay, and get out, you could have walked there just as quickly," Jansen explained.

He especially loves walking the trails at Riverfront Park, soaking up the natural beauty of downtown's urban oasis, from the cascading Spokane Falls to the ducks peacefully gliding along the river.

Of course, one of the big draws of downtown living is all the food options.

"I checked a couple months back and there are forty-three different restaurants and eateries within six blocks of this apartment," Jansen said.

He has his regular go-tos like The Onion and Italian Kitchen but also enjoys trying new places, most recently the Gilded Unicorn inside the historic Montvale Hotel, which he reported was delicious.

For entertainment, Jansen appreciates having the AMC Theatre inside River Park Square close by and has also attended a few shows at the Martin Woldson Theater at The Fox.

As someone who isn't into the club and bar scene, Jansen's perfect night out downtown is seeing a show at

Spokane Comedy Club.

"Spokane isn't regarded as one of the big cities of the world, but the comedy club here gets lots of famous talent going through it on a regular basis. I was really surprised and happy about that," Jansen shared.

Jansen recently got to see one of his favorite comics of all-time perform at the club – Christopher Titus – which he said was the best show he's ever seen.

In April 2021, Jansen was one of the first residents to move into the Marjorie Apartments when NAI Black completed renovations of the historic James S. Black Building, originally built in 1970.

The apartments were named after Marjorie Black Peterson, who, along with her husband, James S. Black, purchased the building in 1970.

"Everything was absolutely brand new and in perfect condition," Jansen said. "It's a really fantastic old building. And for the location and quality, it's not a bad price on the rent."

A transplant from the west coast, Jansen can't imagine calling any other place home now.

"I love Spokane. It's big enough to where you've got anything you could want to keep busy, but at the same time, it

has that small-town feel," Jansen said. "People are a lot more friendly. There's more of a sense of community than you get other places."

Much like the changes we see in nature each spring, Jansen likens these changes to downtown Spokane as we emerge from the pandemic.

"I moved downtown in the middle of COVID. A lot of places had shut down and were reorganizing, but over the last several months, there are tons of new places opening up and everything's getting all fresh and new. It's been really nice," Jansen said.

Like many Spokane residents, he's looking forward to the big downtown events coming back this year, including Pig Out in The Park and Hoopfest. ●

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EMMA RUE'S LUXE CAFÉ

For Delicious Coffee, Pastries and Desserts & Cocktails

Emma Rue's, a newly opened 1920s Parisian-inspired luxe café in downtown Spokane, is a decades-old dream for married couple Bryan and Alyssa Agee and their friend, Aaron Hein.

After the Agees moved back to Spokane from Oregon, they were talking about all the things they loved and missed about the Portland food and drink scene, offerings that just weren't available here.

An idea began percolating, and the three of them came up with a concept that would incorporate all of their individual passions: artisanal coffee (Bryan's special-

ty), craft cocktails (Aaron's specialty), and French-inspired desserts (Alyssa's specialty).

Their search took several years until they discovered the corner space in the historic Symons Block Building at 15 S. Howard St.

Right away, they knew it was "the one." As a history buff, Alyssa fell in love with the beautiful old building, as well as the location itself.

"At heart, I'm an urban city girl," she shared. "I've always loved the energy and vibe you get from the pedestrian life. I wanted to be really close to the core and all the amenities that are such perfect partners for us."

They want to be that place where, once you're done enjoying your entertainment for the evening, whether it's a symphony, concert or show, you can come in and enjoy an amazing house-made dessert, pastry, cocktail or espresso in an elevated way.

Alyssa, who reported she will "probably die with a piece of chocolate cake in one hand," is especially excited to be a hub for those looking to satisfy their sweet tooth late in the evening without having to get take-out from a deli counter.

Although 2020 wasn't ideal for deciding to open a new business, they took the leap of faith and officially launched Emma Rue's in mid-August of 2021.

Their goal is to introduce Spokane to things they haven't yet experienced. "We don't want to just replicate what our neighbors are doing," Alyssa explained. "We want to be able to offer that other option."

Because there are already fantastic local roasters in town, along with great coffee shops, restaurants, and wine bars that focus on local, it was important for Emma Rue's to be different.

"Part of what creates an interesting and diverse downtown core is that you get a variety of offerings within a small geographic area," Alyssa stated. "It increases walkability appeal, both for tourists staying in the hotels and for people who live downtown."

Even though downtown is not as busy as it used to be due to COVID, they know it's only a matter of time before the area springs fully back to life.

"Resiliency is the word that comes to mind for anyone who has weathered the downtown all the way through COVID," Alyssa said. "We have braced ourselves for the long game. Yes, it's a slow ramp-up, but not as slow as we originally thought, and that is very encouraging." ●

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METHOD JUICE CAFE IN WEST END OF DOWNTOWN

Try It and You'll Fall in Love

For meat lovers who swear that nothing will ever beat the taste of a juicy burger, one sip of a made-to-order smoothie, one bite of a refreshing acai bowl, or one spoonful of energizing chia pudding from Method Juice Cafe is enough to make them reconsider.

When general manager Alicia Newman joined Method three years ago, she was admittedly a bit blind to the vegan lifestyle. That all changed as she began to work with the product, taste her way through the menu, and hear story after story of customers sharing a similar message: "Your

food makes me feel better!"

That's the goal at Method Juice Cafe: to bring health and wellness to the community. And now with their newest location in the West End of downtown Spokane, they're able to introduce even more people to their delicious, all-organic juices, smoothies and healthy eats.

A few years back, the West End of downtown – the area between Monroe and Maple, running along Sprague, Riverside and First Avenue – wasn't a big place for tourism,

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METHOD JUICE CAFE IN WEST END OF DOWNTOWN

Try It and You'll Fall in Love

yet owners Nick Murto and Tyler Lafferty, who also own The Union Studios, saw the potential for a resurgence. They wanted to be among the first to transform the area and help spread out downtown without going into Kendall Yards.

The space at 1309 West 1st Avenue was perfect. Their plan was to build a new location for The Union – offering yoga, spin and TRX – with a grab-and-go Method Juice Cafe attached to it so athletes could get a quick smoothie or acai bowl post-workout.

After teardown of the original vacant building, the

seven-story rebuild of what's now known as the Parkview West building got underway. The result was a stunning new Union/Method location on the street level, featuring old brick from the original building with a very modernized look.

Even though the pandemic took their opening plans on a long detour, their patience persevered and the doors to The Union West and Method fully opened in May 2021. Now the focus is on getting the word out, not just to athletes, but to anyone who wants to live a healthier lifestyle.

"Our products aren't a one-size-fits-all when it comes to people's health needs," shared Alicia. "Especially with juice cleansing and smoothies, you don't want to just recommend anything. That's what makes us unique. People can add in different boosts depending on what they're looking for, whether it's heart health, digestive help or brain activity."

Having Brick West Brewing Co. across the street is bringing more foot traffic to Method, and the Airbnbs in their building are bringing the tourists. More houses are being built along the river and there are more condos than ever before in downtown Spokane, helping to ignite growth in the area.

What they enjoy most about the West End of downtown is the big-city feel within a tight-knit community.

"We really love our partnership with Brick West Brewing," Alicia said. "We do yoga and mimosas with them in their courtyard and bring our vegan cookie dough samples. It's a great relationship."

Method's top-selling smoothie at their new West End location is the Blue Majik, blended with coconut milk, pineapple, banana, blue majik – a proprietary extract of spirulina – and raw agave.

And one of their most popular items to turn meat-loving skeptics into vegan believers is their signature Taco Salad. It features spicy ranch, cumin, and turmeric tossed with romaine, cabbage, carrots, tomatoes, onions, black beans, and crushed tortilla chips, then topped with avocado, cilantro, and lime.

"You'd never know it's a vegan-based dressing," shared Alicia. "It's fantastic, it's got flavor, and it's so good for you."

For people who are wary of coming in because of the vegan aspect, Alicia's message is this: "Just come try it and you'll be surprised. You're going to fall in love." ●



WELCOME TO **ZERO-EMISSION**



CORE FOUR Step Outside Your Comfort Zone

When Janelle Brennan took her first Barre class at a friend's studio nine years ago, it immediately clicked. In the seventh grade, after getting her first horse, she began competing in dressage, which she describes as a "synchronized dance between you and your horse." Dressage requires a lot of body cues and core strength, and in doing Barre, she got the same feeling of being in touch with her body and strengthening it from deep within.

After her friend got pregnant, Janelle was asked to start teaching a few classes each week. She quickly grew addicted to the feeling of being part of someone's positive journey, to watch them grow stronger and more confident. It was a completely different world than her day job as a lawyer.

Eventually, Janelle was given the chance to purchase the studio, but her daughter was only a week old at the time. During a late-night feeding, Janelle decided, "This is crazy! I can't do it!"

It was a regret that would shadow her for four years. Janelle finally got to the point where she didn't want to wake up in 30 years, wondering what could have been.

After brainstorming with her friend, Janelle knew she needed to push the limits to create a place that didn't already exist in the saturated fitness market. She started thinking about what she loves to do and the kinds of workouts she loves to have. From there, she started developing classes, including a twist on Barre, which she calls Sculpt, and a boxing-cardio class called Strike.

In April 2019, she officially opened the doors to Core Four Collective, a multi-practice fitness studio located at 125 South Stevens in downtown Spokane.

"I wanted to create a place that was like your third place: work, home and Core Four – where you can come to the studio and commiserate, you can celebrate, you can take a break. And know that we're all here for you. We can create these connections that you may not have already formed in your busy life," Janelle shared.

When Janelle moved to Spokane 21 years ago to attend Gonzaga, downtown was not as vibrant as it is today. It's a fitting analogy with Core Four's building space. When they first started leasing, there was only one other tenant, and now it's filled up. This speaks to the bigger downtown and how much it's flourishing.

"It's cool to have so many more restaurants, businesses

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Photo By:
Mica Sansaver

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"It's cool to have so many more restaurants, businesses and people in this central hub of activity where people can see our sign and come in. To be part of that energy is really neat," she said.

For Janelle, the best part of being downtown is the walkability for clients. Pre-COVID, they got a lot of business from people staying in the hotels downtown, and many clients attend classes during their lunch breaks. As

a busy lawyer, Janelle understands the need for escape.

"I love that minute you can take to get away from your computer. You can completely free your mind, reset everything, refresh yourself, and then come back to whatever you're doing better and stronger."

When the COVID-19 shutdowns began in March 2020 – not even a year into her business – Janelle wanted to keep clients engaged, so they began streaming one fitness class a day.

"We decided we're going to do this; we'll show up," Janelle said. "It doesn't matter if we're at home struggling, or the kids are screaming in our ears, we're going to take these moments for ourselves and still find a way to meet."

Janelle's goal for the future is to grow the Core Four community and be known as the most "inclusive exclusive club," where everyone wants to join, not just because it's so cool, but because of how they'll be cared for – mind, body and soul. She's looking forward to doing more partnerships with Riverfront Park over the summer and hosting various events and pop-ups throughout the region.

Her advice to other women who want to open their own businesses is to never let fear stand in the way.

"Sometimes you have to step outside your comfort zone to see what you're capable of," Janelle said. "If it works out, beautiful. If it doesn't, at least you got to try something you loved for a bit." ●



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PANDEMIC PIVOT CONNECTS CULTURE AND SUPPORTS SCHOLARSHIP

One year into lockdowns, the Spokane Hispanic Business Professional Association (HBPA) held their largest annual fundraiser virtually.

The 27-year-old business association's mission is to promote and serve business growth, professional development, education opportunities, cultural preservation and social justice for the Hispanic community in the Inland Northwest.

Early each year, HBPA raises thousands of dollars to fund scholarships at their Annual Viva Vino & Brew Gala. Going virtual in 2021 was a big hit to the bottom line, a disheartening return after a year of pivots.

"Something needed to happen so we could raise the same amount of money as prior to the pandemic," says Viva Vino & Brew 2021 event chair Francisco Gutierrez. "My thought was, if we can bring on a new event and get us back to the same level of fundraising that we did previously, and the event was successful, then it's a win-win."

That's how the Tacos Y Tequila Festival was born. A COVID-safe outdoor event that allowed for lots of social distancing. The casual drop-in event shut down a city block adjacent to Riverfront Park in downtown Spokane and featured a beer garden with tequila tasting flights, as well as food trucks, food and vendor booths of HBPA members, local artists, and a vaccination clinic.

Music was a centerpiece of the two-day event, with Mariachi bands, flamenco dancers, salsa music, Aztec dancers and more. "One of my favorite things was definitely the music," says Gutierrez. "In my childhood there was

always Mariachi music, somehow somehow it was there. To be able to share that with the people of Spokane, in that setting, was a good time."

The mission of the event was to raise money, but it was also an opportunity for HBPA to create more awareness about the organization, its mission, and the community of individuals behind it.

"To have people show up because it looks like a fun event, and then to be able to learn a little bit more about the organization that's putting it on, that's huge. That's where we can get people's eyeballs, and they can learn that we support businesses and support scholarships."

Gutierrez gives a lot of credit for the success of the inaugural event to the committee. "My co-chair, Isabel Mazcot, Vice President of Business Relations for HBPA was

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The DoubleTree by Hilton Spokane offers stunning river views on the banks of the Spokane River next to Riverfront Park and Spokane Falls. We're connected to Spokane Convention Center via sky bridge and walking distance to Gonzaga University, River Park Square and Kendall Yards.

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PANDEMIC PIVOT CONNECTS CULTURE AND SUPPORTS SCHOLARSHIP

a big part of the success. You need a right-hand man to bounce ideas off of, and she's a get stuff done person." Committee members were pivotal in reaching out to their network of businesses and sponsors to help get the event off the ground.

The event was one of the recipients of a cultural event grant sponsored by the Downtown Business Improvement District, intended to foster new and diverse events to stimulate cultural sharing and community. Gutierrez was overwhelmed by support from sponsors and partners. "Without the sponsors, we don't put this event on. To have them give us that vote of confidence says something from a generosity standpoint. It says, 'We support your organization, we think the event is going to do well, and here's how I'm putting my money where my mouth is.' That was huge."

The community responded as well. Throughout the two days, \$40,000 was raised, far exceeding the fundraising goal.

"It was Saturday evening when I just felt it," says Gutierrez. "I took a step back and saw the crowd, and how much fun people were having, the smiles. Having a good time listening to good music, enjoying it with their friends and strangers."

The Tacos Y Tequila Festival will return the last weekend of August in 2022, ending the summer and leading into Hispanic Heritage Month, which runs mid-September to mid-October. "I'd like to continue to grow the event, but keep that same intimate feeling with more

food and art vendors," says Gutierrez "I want people to come from other parts of the state, and understand that HBPA is here in Washington and we can help you."

"Five years from now, when you say Tacos and Tequila I want people to think of Spokane, and HBPA." ●



BIRDS IN THE COAST

Creating Custom Bags, Couture Clothing & Community

Jáiz Boyd, owner of Birds in the Coast, always thought he'd be a writer. As a teen, his buddies were doing hip hop music and Boyd would write lyrics for them. Eventually he began doing their styling and became well known for his skills at shredding jeans.

But it wasn't until he was gifted a sewing machine at age 21 that his fashion career really took wing. A pattern for a "very simple and cheesy" duffel bag came with it, and even though Boyd had never used a sewing machine, he thought, "OK, I can figure this out."

Boyd admitted his first duffel bag looked terrible, but he decided to carry it around anyway. Well, imagine his surprise when a guy at the gym asked who the designer was and offered him \$50 for it! (He still gets a chuckle knowing that first bag is out in the world somewhere.)

Buoyed by that encounter, he went home thinking this was something he could reproduce and master. Before long, his family and friends started buying bags, and Boyd officially created the business Birds in the Coast in 2013.

Having grown up in the Bay Area, the name is a nod to when seagulls would fly in from a storm on the ocean. As kids, Boyd and his friends took that phrase and used it as an exclusive call, a sort of "code" to be aware of your environment.

"If we were getting ready to leave to a party or event, or if you needed to get everyone's attention, you would yell 'birds in the coast,'" Boyd shared.

Today, it's an inclusive term, which Boyd described as a mindset – being aware of positive change in the world, building community, and speaking life and love into each other.

All of Boyd's bags are handmade and one of a kind. He typically does smaller runs of 10–20 bags at a time, which quickly sell out.

"People love them, which is cool because the silhouettes that I utilize are really unique," Boyd said. "We try to stay away from recreating Louis Vuitton bags, not using the same print where we're putting our name or logo all over

the bag. We go for a more minimal aesthetic and very simple but unique bags. I get to experiment and try new things and people really support it."

Boyd especially loves using vintage materials in his bags. His grandma used to travel to Africa three times a year through her church, so he has an abundance of African materials and kente cloth originally printed and dyed in villages in Somalia, Ethiopia and Senegal.

One of their more consistent suppliers is Spradling, based out of Costa Rica. They manufacture marine vinyl, aka "vegan leather," a PVC composite-type material utilizing melted-down plastics.

Spradling goes through a rigorous system to carbon offset everything and produce zero waste, values that align with Boyd's. Whatever scraps he can't use, he sends to Spradling to be upcycled into backpacks for kids or for netting to clean out the ocean.

In addition to bags, Boyd also creates 100% handmade custom clothing. His goal is to step into special occasion wear in a more consistent way, offering ready-to-wear come January 2023.

"What we want to do is compete, from an American standpoint, with French couture. So that will mean handmade garments, everything made in house. We would be truly a couture store," Boyd said.

When Boyd and his wife, Corinn Bleck, the "financial guru" of Birds in the Coast, found the space at 709 North Monroe in downtown Spokane, they knew it would be perfect.

"We wanted to have an environment that's more community-oriented instead of just being a storefront, where I could work out of and host events around my bags and clothing and my wife could showcase her furniture and artwork," Boyd said.

The couple is excited about using their space to invest in and bring more culture to downtown – in a high-quality way that doesn't feel pretentious – hosting art installations and events through their branch of Birds in the Coast called Adjust.

They've already hosted Spokane Ensemble Theatre's "Spokane Sings Sondheim" and will be collaborating with them on an upcoming fashion show, which Boyd said will be a very interactive experience.

When Boyd, wearing a t-shirt, shorts, and skateboard shoes, first stepped off the plane from California during Spokane's snowy, record-breaking winter of 2008, he wasn't sure what he had gotten himself into, but he soon knew he'd never want to leave.

"I absolutely love the city and the people here," Boyd shared. "I think we have a lot of great artists, and so for me, that's what I'm investing in. It's what's made me believe in this area and want to stay." ●



BOO RADLEY'S We Try to Encourage Everyone's Quirks

Named after the eccentric recluse in the classic novel "To Kill a Mockingbird," Boo Radley's is Spokane's "toy store for all ages" where you can discover all things wacky, edgy and unusual.

From old-school lunchboxes and socks with sarcastic sayings to a myriad of pop culture-themed gifts, it's a place unlike any other for family and friends to shop, smile and laugh.

In her quest to keep things fresh and unique, owner Jen Menzer orders new products almost daily, and if she sees their inventory other places, they move away from it.

In recent years, their stickers have emerged as a hot seller, especially their Spokane-themed stickers. Boo Radley's staff comes up with the funny and offbeat text, and one of their employees – an amazing artist – helps design them.

"We try to encourage everyone's quirks here," shared Jen. "Everybody's got a different talent in their wheelhouse, and we let them exercise that creativity."

What Jen loves most is when she overhears customers telling their out-of-town friends: "This is my favorite store. I had to bring you in here!"

Jen can relate.

In 2001, her husband worked at Boo Radley's and Jen would often come by to hang out and rearrange books. She was there so much, owner Andy Dinnison finally offered her a job.

Even though Jen had never worked retail, she fell in love with it and knew she'd found her calling. Within five years, she became the manager, and in March 2020 officially became the store's new owner.



"I love the people I work for, and I love the people I work with," Jen said. "I get asked if I have friends outside of work, and the answer is not really. I'd rather go to work and hang out with friends."

Their location at 232 N. Howard Street allows Jen and her team to easily experience the best of downtown Spokane. On breaks they can walk across the street to Riverfront Park, relax and enjoy the sights. "What other city gets to have a river running right through the middle of it?" Jen commented.

Throughout the past two years, Jen's been blown away by the community support they've received. When Boo Radley's was closed for 80 days during the pandemic, Jen would get emails all the time with people asking, "How can I support you?" "Can we buy gift cards?"

Especially during the holidays, people were adamant about not buying anything online and instead shopping local. To see Spokane residents supporting their own tribe instead of the national big guys is something Jen will never forget.

"I think of Boo Radley's as our special clubhouse," Jen said. "I like everyone when they come in to hopefully get in on the joke that we're telling, or just be a part of the conversation—Come join the 'Boo Club'!" ●

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FROM HERE Amplifying Black Voices

When Ginger Ewing was growing up, there was a decades-old narrative that if you were going to have fun or be successful in your twenties, you were going to have to do it anywhere but Spokane.

Yet when Ginger hit her twenties, she still loved Spokane more than ever. She was working as a curator for cultural literacy at the Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture and recognized some incredible pockets of creativity within the city. Ginger's boyfriend (now husband) and three friends, who all worked in the creative industry, saw them too.

The problem was how siloed those creative pockets were. Emerging artists, established artists, poets, visual artists ... everyone was separate. They also noticed a lack of opportunity for underbelly, grassroots-type artists.

So they asked themselves: What would happen if we put all these people together in one room for one evening?

That was the impetus for Terrain, an annual, one-night-only art and music event in downtown Spokane that celebrates local artists.

Recalling their first event in 2008, Ginger said, "We had no idea what we were doing, but we were dreaming big!"

In its first year, Terrain featured the work of 30 artists with 1,500 people in attendance. In 2019, that number grew to 274 artists with 13,000 in attendance.

Their flagship event is how Terrain, the arts organization, was born. Today they provide a variety of programs and events to build community and economic opportunity

for local artists and creators, with the majority of their work focused in the downtown core.

As a black-led organization, it's always been in Terrain's DNA to promote artists of color, indigenous artists, queer artists and other underrepresented voices. It's not about giving these groups a voice – they already have one. It's about amplifying their voice.

One of the ways Terrain is doing this is through their collaborative retail storefront, From Here, located in Riverpark Square downtown. As the name suggests, everything in the store is locally made from a diverse group of artists and makers in Spokane's creative community.

"When you purchase something at From Here, you're not only supporting a local nonprofit and a local business, but you're actually supporting a human being right here in Spokane," said Ginger.

While she's felt largely embraced by the community, there is still work to be done in creating an inclusive city that not only embraces diversity but cultivates it.

"I say to people all the time there's not a day that goes by that I'm not reminded in some capacity that I'm a black woman living in Spokane." She'll often hear things like, "Wow, you're so articulate for being black," words that are intended as a compliment but cut deep. Ginger is quick to point out this is a problem nationwide; Spokane is simply the lens in which she views the world.

"My hope lies in the conversations I'm hearing our young people have," Ginger shared. "For the first time in my life, I feel like there's the opportunity to push our society forward in a really impactful and long-lasting way." •



DO IT WITH SOUL

Thrifted, Unique Artwear



Sisters Erin Corder-Brown and Emily Barbour, owners of Do It With Soul in downtown Spokane's West End District, describe their eclectic clothing shop as a peek into their closets.

Growing up, their clothes weren't the kind you'd buy off the rack. Their mom worked as a seamstress, so they were always encouraged to be creative. Instead of throwing out stained t-shirts or jeans with holes, they'd repurpose them.

Corder-Brown made her first dress at the age of six, and one of Barbour's early memories is sewing a purse out of the back pocket of some jeans.

"We've always been into thrifting and altering, so it made sense to keep it going and turn it into a business," Corder-Brown shared.

The women go to estate and garage sales and inherit clothes from family members, then alter the pieces, turning them into unique artwear.

"I love it when people are blown away with how successful my sister is at altering products," said Barbour, whose strength is the business side of things.

She's heard from many people who recount Pinterest fails at tie-dying, cutting jeans into shorts, or cutting shirts into crop tops.

"That shows me how hard my sister works with her creative side," Barbour said. "Pinterest can look all fun and games, but at the end of the day, you have to have 'it.'"

Their most popular items are what they refer to as "band flannels," where they take thrifted, upcycled-found flannels and patch a band logo or any kind of iconic image from tattered t-shirts onto the back of them.

"You can throw that on the simplest of outfits and feel unique 100 times over. It's really fun," said Barbour.

In addition to vintage artwear, a few from-scratch pieces, and new wholesale in small batches, you can also find some home décor, wall art and even hutches at Do It With Soul.

"There's something for everybody," Barbour said. "It's not a 10-minute shopping stop; it's an experience."

Born and raised in Spokane, Corder-Brown holds a degree in apparel design and merchandising from WSU, and Barbour graduated from the University of Idaho with a degree in advertising and business.

Once she became a mom, Corder-Brown wanted more freedom and flexibility than what a traditional job could offer. After some late-night conversations about life and making your passion a business, Do It With Soul was born in 2016.

The sisters started out at vendor malls and swap meets, working out of their basements. Eventually, they opened a workshop studio in the Sprague District.

When their lease ended right before the pandemic, it was a chance to reset, regroup and really think about where they wanted to be next.

They'd had their eyes on downtown Spokane's West End neighborhood for a while. Barbour teaches yoga at The Union West and knew how unique and fun the community is, so when the space at 112 South Cedar Street opened up, they knew it was "the one" and opened the doors to their new home in February 2022.

With breweries, boutiques, coffee, yoga and more all in downtown Spokane's West End, you can make a total afternoon of your visit, and they encourage you to do so.

"We're excited that this area is turning even cooler than it was pre-pandemic," Barbour said.

They're looking forward to all the foot traffic the warmer months will bring, and for the start of The City Line, Spokane's first bus rapid transit route, which will have a stop near their shop. ●

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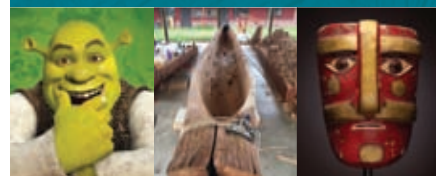
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Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture northwestmuseum.org

PINK FERN COLLECTIVE CLOTHING BOUTIQUE

Everyone Is So Ready for This!

"This is just what Spokane needs!"

For Roisheen Leinen, owner of Pink Fern Collective, a newly opened clothing boutique in the West End of downtown, this customer feedback is music to her ears.

Pink Fern Collective offers on-trend, comfortable, fun clothing that appeals to customers across all generations.

"My philosophy is I want people to look good in what they've purchased from my store, feel good when they leave the store, and we don't have to break the bank to achieve that," Roisheen said.

A stay-at-home mom for twenty years, Roisheen had always dreamed of opening her own clothing store, but living in the Bay Area, it was impossible because of the sky-high rents.

As fate would have it, one day Roisheen read an article about Spokane. Intrigued by the food scene and Riverfront Park, she took a quick flight to check things out... and decided she never wanted to leave!

"I love Spokane. It's my new favorite place on the planet," Roisheen shared.

What stands out the most to her is how friendly everyone is, from her neighbors to the people working in grocery stores and restaurants.

"It's insane all the good things I've seen happen here," Roisheen said. "It's a totally different culture than the Bay Area. Everyone's miserable because they're stretched to the limit. Coming to a place where everybody's nice is just so refreshing."

Initially, Roisheen started Pink Fern Collective during COVID as an online store only, but she kept thinking it would do well as a brick and mortar. When she discovered the space in the Hotel

Indigo building at 1107 W. 1st Avenue, she fell in love. It had the right square footage, the right lease rate, and tremendous walkability appeal.

Pink Fern Collective is on a very popular path down 1st Avenue, as hotel guests walk from one destination

to another. With Echo and Fringe & Fray, downtown's consignment boutiques, on that same path, it's a lovely stroll for shoppers. In the true spirit of downtown business collaboration, Roisheen will send shoppers to the consignment boutiques ("10 out of 10 and at the top of their games!") and vice versa.

When she hears negative comments about the west end of downtown, Roisheen said it's usually from people who have been in Spokane for 30 or 40 years and associate the area as chain link and rundown, like it was three years ago. They simply don't realize how vibrant and fast-growing it is now.

"It's a fabulous community. I just feel like I lucked out," Roisheen said.

Not sure what to expect, Roisheen was shocked at how swamped they were in their opening two days, and within three weeks, she had already sold out of items. She's also excited to see so many repeat customers.

"The feedback I've received is that everyone is so ready for this," Roisheen said. "They're so ready to shop again and wear cute clothes, and get out and be normal again. So I've received very positive response." ●

“

My philosophy is I want people to look good in what they've purchased from my store, feel good when they leave the store, and we don't have to break the bank to achieve that.

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SOLITUDE BARBERSHOP

Bringing Modern Vintage

For Jake Rosenberg, stylist and owner of the newly opened Solitude Barbershop in downtown Spokane, the compliment he loves hearing most is “the vibes here are immaculate.”

His goal was to re-envision the traditional barbershop and create a space that people hadn't seen before – a separation from everything else. Hence, the name Solitude.

Located at 9 South Howard Street in the Symons Block building, Rosenberg describes the atmosphere as modern vintage.

Inside you'll find leather accents, subway-tiled floors, a beautiful green accent wall, LED lights that illuminate the ceiling purple, Japanese neon signs, and an abundance of plant life.

But, of course, the intangibles are everything.

“I think one of the big pulls here is genuinely everybody is welcome – any race, religion or ethnicity. Whatever your hair type, it's taken care of here,” said Rosenberg.

“It ties back to the name,” he explained. “This is

Solitude. This is a separation. You can come and get a haircut, come and be at peace, and know you're going to get quality service.”

He said that for some people, especially men, it's the first time they experience physical touch in our non-emotional culture.

For others, it's the first time they have somebody sincerely ask how their day's going, where they have a dedicated time to talk about their lives and what they're going through.

After a year-long journey filled with dramatic highs and lows (a story that's one for the barber's chair!), Rosenberg opened the doors to Solitude Barbershop in January 2022. Just a few months in, and he already has a client list of 300 strong.

“We really blew up. To see the exponential growth with this place has been spectacular,” Rosenberg said.

He's been greatly encouraged by all of the community support, especially from his neighbors downtown.

“I am overjoyed to be a part of this block,” Rosenberg

Continued Page 22

“We like to showcase our work and our clients and really make them the star of what happens here.”

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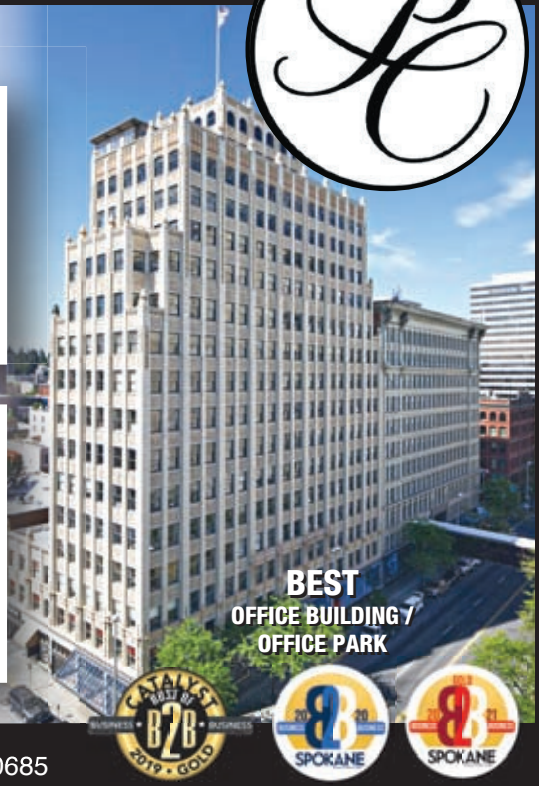
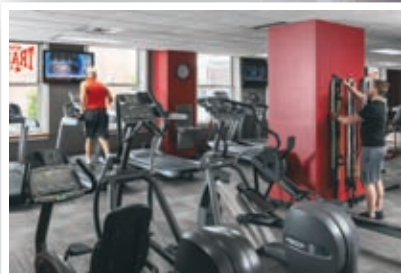
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SOLITUDE BARBERSHOP Bringing Modern Vintage

shared. "I love our location. I love Howard Street. We all own businesses on the block, but none of us are strangers."

In addition to participating in fun events downtown, such as First Friday, Rosenberg's plan is to add two barbers, as well as a tattoo artist station in the backroom. He also has a photo studio inside.

"We like to showcase our work and our clients and really make them the star of what happens here, because without them, this is just a place where hair's on the floor," Rosenberg said.

Born and raised in Spokane, becoming a stylist wasn't

on Rosenberg's radar in high school. After graduation, he enrolled in the fire science program at Spokane Community College, excited to become a fireman.

One day, while sitting in his car in the school's parking lot, Rosenberg, who had also considered becoming a pastor at one point, sent up a little prayer to the "Big Guy."

"I was like, 'God, I hope that whatever I do, I'm serving you to the best of my ability and that what I do will bring forth abundance of life.'"

Immediately, the idea of becoming a hair stylist popped into his head – washing people's hair and serving them in an intentional way.

Five minutes later, he was an official dropout of the fire program, and quickly enrolled in Glen Dow Academy, Spokane's local beauty school.

Within his first month, he became the school's ASB vice president, acting as an ambassador, setting up fashion shows, and aiming for the top.

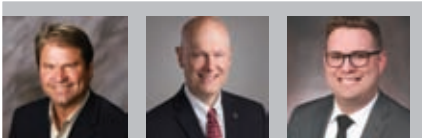
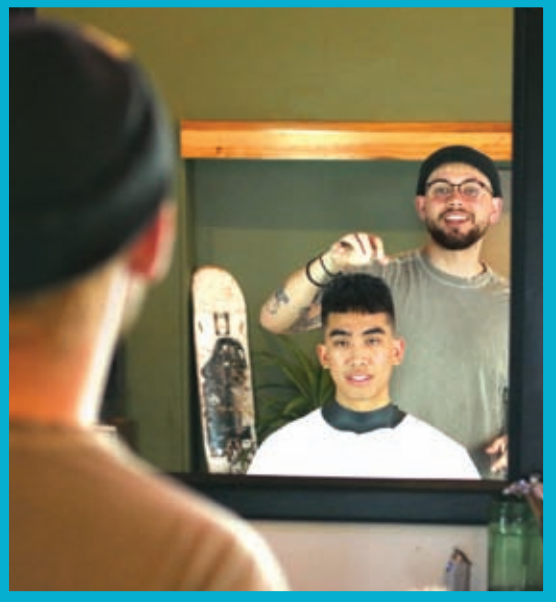
Upon graduating, he worked at various barbershops over the next four years, amassing a loyal group of clients, many of whom followed him to Solitude.

Whether it's a client who goes above and beyond to write a review, or a client who comes in having a really good day and drops some knowledge on him, those are the moments that keep Rosenberg inspired on a daily basis.

"There are these human connections that I get to make, up to 12 a day, that not a lot of people get. I get to be a people person," Rosenberg shared.

For someone who used to get kicked out of class in high school for talking too much, he feels blessed to have found his calling.

"I was told I'd never be able to get a job if I didn't shut my trap. Well, I've made a job where I don't have to shut my trap," Rosenberg joked. ●



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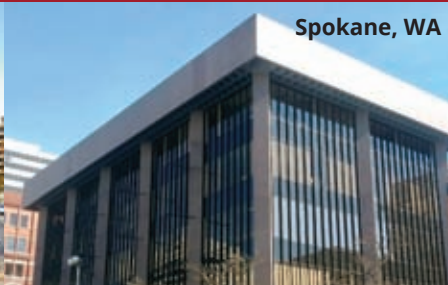
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DH

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Creating a culture where people can thrive has always been the vision at DH, a locally owned advertising, public relations and branding agency.

CEO Michelle Hege – the “H” in DH – draws on her own experience as a working mom to find ways to put their people first, whether it's flexible schedules or work-from-home opportunities.

“We work in a demanding and deadline-driven business,” Michelle shared. “We’ve really tried to create an environment where people don’t have to choose between taking care of a sick child or attending an important client meeting.”

Michelle’s parents were small business owners, and from a very young age, she always loved the no-limits aspect of it, the idea that you can create something and take it anywhere you want to go.

When Jim Desautel founded the agency 26 years ago, Michelle was the very first employee. She and her three business partners have since grown the agency to 29 team members, serving clients throughout Spokane and the Pacific Northwest.

In an industry ruled by big multinational companies, it's unique to be independent like DH. This has allowed them to pursue the kinds of projects they're passionate about, especially in the social change space. Their campaigns have tackled tough issues such as opioid misuse prevention, traffic safety, vaccine hesitancy and COVID-19 information in underrepresented audiences.

After years of leasing, when the space came up for sale in the Morgan Building on Riverside, Michelle and her partners jumped at the chance to buy an office condo downtown.

“We just love the energy of downtown,” Michelle said. “It’s the heart of the city.”

One of the biggest perks is the walkability to all the amazing locally owned bakeries, coffee shops and restaurants. And in a profession where creativity and fresh ideas are a must, nothing beats walking meetings and brainstorm sessions conducted along the scenic Centennial Trail.

Although several of their projects got delayed when COVID-19 hit, much of DH’s work in the past year has been pandemic related, helping organizations get vital information into their customers’ hands. The ultimate compliment is when they hear, “I don’t know how you guys do it, but I feel like I’m your only client!”

Michelle’s goal for the future is to continue growing a strong and sustainable business.

“We’re not trying to dominate the world,” Michelle said. “We just want to have a company where people want to work, where they can produce great work, and where they feel like they can make a difference.” ●



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DOWNTOWN SPOKANE A Great Place to Do Business

If you want to know about the pulse of downtown Spokane, no one is more in tune than Gordon Hester, President & CEO of Kiemle Hagood, a commercial real estate agency founded in 1973.

"Our company started downtown and I've spent my 32-year career downtown in the same building," shared Hester.

While COVID brought downtown shopping and foot traffic to a screeching halt, Hester is encouraged to see things on the rebound, due in large part to the office market returning for in-person work.

"At the height of the pandemic, 50% of downtown was empty and we're closer to 25% now, so it's definitely improved," Hester said.

To witness the change firsthand has been exciting.

"I recently went to Purgatory, the new whiskey bar that opened downtown, and it was packed. I went over to O'Doherty's the other day – packed. And MOD Pizza had a line out the door today," Hester said. "It's incredible to see businesses doing well again in a vibrant downtown."

Hester believes that continuing to get office workers back will be a key to downtown's success in the coming year, as they make a major impact on hospitality businesses.

"The ability to concentrate a large number of customers

in a small area is very significant for downtown," Hester said. "You don't have to rely on actual vehicle traffic, you have people traffic working a block away to patronize your business."

Like many companies bringing their workers back, Hester has focused on the social interaction aspect that you

don't get from working remotely. Now more than ever, though, it's relevant to the employees, from office pizza parties to fun events, so they can enjoy being face-to-face again.

For Hester, it's the synergy of downtown that he's valued most through the years.

With nearly every major banking institution within walking distance, as well as the two largest accounting firms, all the major law firms, and three of the largest commercial real estate companies downtown, it makes doing business so much easier.

From an employee standpoint, the multitude of restaurants and shopping

opportunities compacted into five blocks is an amenity you can't find anywhere else in Spokane.

While Hester usually spends Monday-Friday downtown, he recently went to a weekend hockey game with his son and was amazed at how busy the area was.

"It's great to see people shopping, dining, going to venues and concerts, and experiencing the heart and soul of downtown," Hester said. "That's really what downtown is: it's the heart of your community."

With so much to offer, it's no surprise that more people want to open businesses downtown, and now's a perfect time to do it.

For commercial retail and office space, rents have remained flat for the last couple of years. The increase people have seen in residential rates hasn't occurred in the commercial market.

As the city continues to shake off its COVID cobwebs, Hester sees many opportunities for downtown to flourish even more: re-engagement with the University District, right on the edge of downtown; re-engagement with development and leasing opportunities that had been put on the backburner; and re-engagement with the homeless and crime issues so people feel safe about downtown.

"You can't believe the one or two negative things you see because there's a lot of incredible stuff happening downtown," Hester shared.

As for Kiemle Hagood, located at 601 West Main Avenue, they're getting ready to expand their office and grow another 5,000 feet downtown.

"We're putting our money and our efforts downtown because we believe in the positive environment here," Hester said. "It's a great place to be and do business." ●

“

It's incredible to see businesses doing well again in a vibrant downtown.

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LOKEY CAFE

Coffee & Healthy Eats in a Low-Key Atmosphere

Spokane native Kelly Stronk spent the majority of her teen and young adult years in coffee shops. They were always the place to be, whether studying or meeting up with family and friends.

She dreamed of opening her own coffee shop someday, but accepted it as just that – a dream.

"I never knew that being a business owner was an option for me," Kelly shared. "I grew up thinking that I was an employee, that I would work for people, that it was my role in society."

Even though she had a 9 to 5 job with good benefits, the nagging thought of "I can't see myself doing this forever" greeted Kelly each morning. That's when she and her partner, Ben Butler, started tossing around the idea of owning their own business.

Kelly's mind went straight to the atmosphere she had always loved – a coffee shop – and she knew the perfect space for it, too ... at 903 West Riverside in downtown Spokane. The problem was, there was already a business in that location.

As fate would have it, just two weeks later, the couple found out the location was up for lease, so they decided, "OK, let's do this."

"We were actually in quarantine when we created the business, so I was able to pour myself into it for two weeks straight and really hit the ground running," Kelly said.

Six months later, they opened the doors to LoKey Cafe, a name partly inspired by Kelly and Ben's personalities: chill and low key.

"We wanted to create a place where everyone would fit in," Kelly said. "It's low key, but also fun and funky and unique. There's no other place like it."

Their name is also a fun play on words to low carb, keto-friendly eating. Kelly is quick to point out, however, that everyone is welcome whether they eat low carb or not.

"People are really reacting to the quality of our food," Kelly shared. "You can come in and have a healthy lunch that's not going to bog you down or make you tired later."

Everything is fresh, healthy and made in-house with a full transparency of the calories and macronutrients (protein, carbs, fat) listed on the receipt, a decision influenced by Kelly's own health journey.

During COVID when all the restaurants were shut down, Kelly was able to really focus on her health and nutrition at home. She lost 30 pounds, felt incredible and had tons of energy.

But as restaurants began opening up, Kelly started gaining weight again, even though she thought she was making healthy choices.

She said there was nowhere in Spokane that offered a full macro breakdown of their foods, so LoKey was built on the idea to be a place where

people could get a full nutrition breakdown.

The crazy life-style of a business owner has been an adjustment for Kelly. Rather than 9 to 5, she's working 70 hours a week, starting at 3 a.m. when she begins preparing and weighing food for the day. Despite the long hours, she wouldn't change a thing.

"I love being able to interact with our guests, to get to know their names and hear their stories. It's amazing."

She's also thrilled to be part of the growth and community of downtown. Having lived in Spokane all her life, she believes that nothing compares to the camaraderie and "we're all in this together" mentality of downtown business owners.

For others who are considering making a major change like she did, Kelly offers this advice: "Don't wait for the right moment because it will never be the right moment. If you believe in something and it makes sense, just go for it." ●



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THE NEXT BIG COMMUTE

Dan Hayward commutes from his home on Spokane's South Hill to his law practice in the Empire State Building.

Not the one in New York City, the one on the 900 block of west Riverside in downtown Spokane.

Hayward's practice, which focuses on employment law, unemployment, discrimination, law, retaliation and harassment, might be headquartered 2,500 miles away from the New York Empire State Building, but his commute is definitely east coast-inspired, often ditching the car for alternative transportation.

Hayward takes advantage of modern technology by making the five-mile commute into downtown via an electric bike. He purchased the e-bike late last year to make his self-propelled commute a bit easier, and to extend his biking season.

The best part of his commute is the savings of both money and time. "If you're trying to compare parking downtown, it's at least \$150 a month and no matter where you park you're still going to walk at a certain number of blocks." On his e-bike, Hayward can get from

home to office in under 20 minutes. "It's less money, exercise, and the fastest way to get there," he says.

Hayward still drives his car from time to time. "I don't take the bus because it's like 45-minutes, and I can't commit an hour and a half of my day, so biking seems like the natural answer to me," he says. When Hayward does drive, he will park

outside of downtown and walk into the office about a mile.

Because e-bikes can run at speeds up to 30 miles per hour, he sticks to roadways. "You have to be smart, keep an eye open, and be safe." As his own boss, Hayward is allowed to be flexible in his work times. He chooses to commute during off-peak hours when roads are less congested.

Hayward says he's looking forward to the much-needed resurfacing coming to Riverside Avenue this summer. "I'm pretty excited about the Riverside bike lane coming through, because that's going to be smooth,

it's rough." At the high speeds that e-bikes run, even a small amount of gravel on a roadway can be a hazard for cyclists. Quality, clean road surfaces are important to a smooth and safe ride.

Maintaining a professional appearance as a cyclist takes pre-planning. "I have an armoire, and I just keep a lot of clothes in it. I keep five days of clothes here at the office," says Hayward. "On an e-bike, you can get away with the clothes you wear and just don't work too hard, biking into work."

Hayward believes that two-wheeled electric transportation is the wave of the future for commuters, especially in areas that don't experience extreme winters. "You'll find that a lot of these emerging technologies are being adopted in China and India," he says. For now, he's happy to be a trendsetter locally.

For anyone looking into purchasing an e-bike or bike for their own commute, Hayward recommends thinking realistically about the commitment. "Treat it like you would your car," he says of the maintenance and upkeep required.

Hayward's wife, Sarah—who recently went back to work—is riding an e-bike of her own. With two young children at home it takes coordination, but the family enjoys the practicality and lifestyle benefits that come with being an e-bike family. ●

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On his e-bike, Hayward can get from home to office in under 20 minutes. "It's less money, exercise, and the fastest way to get there," he says.

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1ST AVENUE COFFEE

Serving Up Damn Good Coffee

The idea behind First Avenue Coffee was brewed out of necessity.

Deborah Di Bernardo had owned Roast House Coffee, a specialty wholesale coffee roastery, since 2010. They'd received several Golden Bean Awards from the world's largest coffee roaster competition, yet try as she might, no one seemed aware that one of the finest coffee roasters in all of North America was right here in Spokane.

To get the word out, Deborah decided to open a retail coffee house. It was the perfect solution. She wouldn't be competing with her wholesale customers – primarily grocery stores and restaurants – and she'd be able to share her award-winning coffee with the masses in Spokane.

In April 2019, she officially opened the doors to First Avenue Coffee, located at 1011 West 1st Avenue. From the start, Deborah knew her coffee house had to be different than what anyone else was doing.

With 3,000 square feet of space, First Avenue Coffee stands out as one of the largest coffee houses in the U.S., boasting a 40-foot-long coffee bar with 10 different organic coffees, from Africa to South America, all sourced and roasted by Roast House Coffee.

In her mission to serve “damn good coffee” that's for the greater good, every coffee is sustainable, ethically traded, 100% organic, bird friendly, shade grown and Rainforest Alliance certified.

“We have more coffee than anybody in the entire area on that bar, and that could not have happened anywhere other than downtown Spokane,” said Deborah.

With The Historic Davenport Hotel close by and The Fox right across the street, it's the perfect location for tourists to drop in for a coffee and a delicious house-baked goodie. Deborah's hope is that more locals discover this hidden treasure as business gets back to 100% seating capacity.

During all the shutdowns and takeout-only rules amid the pandemic of the past year plus, it had been tough for Deborah to stay afloat. Not even a year old in March 2020, they were just starting to gain traction with booking their space out for large special evening events like fundraisers, birthday parties and anniversaries when the pandemic hit.

Still, Deborah has persevered and can see the big picture despite the challenges. That's always been a secret to

her success and a trait shared by many women in business: big-picture thinking that's centered around friends, family and community.

However, Deborah believes that in order for more women to be successful as business owners, ironically, they need more support from other women.

“At this point in my life, I've experienced it over and over where women will dismiss women-owned businesses more than men,” she shared. “Men will take more of a chance, but women are probably our biggest critics.”

Bringing this conversation to the table is important to create lasting change. Deborah is encouraged by the increasing local support she's received from women in Spokane. And as women pay it forward to other women, amazing things can happen. ●



AN EVENING (AND THEN-SOME) IN DOWNTOWN

By Kevin Campbell

As we all slowly reemerge from the shutdowns of 2020 and 2021, it's fair to say there's a bit of pent-up energy to get back into the world and hit the town. Fortunately, downtown Spokane never fully disappeared during those times, and has been waiting with open arms. There's no shortage of things to do and places to go in the heart of the Lilac City. What follows are suggestions, a road map if you will, of one of many different wonderful evenings you can spend here in downtown Spokane.

To ensure a good evening, you need to make sure you're coming into it to completely stress-free. What better way to relieve stress than hurling sharp objects at a wall? For the first activity of the evening, make your way to Jumping Jackalope Axe Throwing, where you are truly in good hands. Owner Miguel Tamburini is a professional axe thrower and has been ranked number one in the world multiple times in recent years. He and his staff foster a very safe and controlled environment while bringing out your inner "bad axe". Beginners have no need to fret, as Miguel has a near-guarantee he can get anyone to stick an axe in three tries or less (it proved true for everyone in our party).

Fun side note: You don't have to just throw axes at Jumping Jackalope—Ninja stars, saw blades, meat cleavers and machetes are all things you can hurl at a target here.

Perhaps you don't need to cater as much to your wild side, or prefer a more relaxed environment to start your evening off. In that case, head to Pinot's Palette or Polka Dot Pottery in River Park Square and release your artistic abilities. While in River Park Square, be sure and pop into From Here to check out one-of-a-kind items and thoughtful gifts all made by Spokane artists and makers.

Now that we've got the evening's ball rolling, it's time to keep it going with Happy Hour. Ask anyone in the know on the west side of Washington, and they'll say Chef Ethan Stowell of Ethan Stowell Restaurants (ESR) knows how to do Happy Hour right. Fortunately, he recently brought his talents to Spokane with the opening of Tavalàta in Old City Hall across from Riverfront Park. From 4-6pm nightly you can get select entrees for half off—But don't spoil your dinner tonight! Stick to the masterfully made cocktails, ESR wines or local beers. For appetizers, try the croquettes, or the grilled focaccia with pear, whipped mascarpone, aged balsamic and olive oil.

If you want to save Tavalàta for a full dinner experience (and that's a wise move too), try the Happy Hour at Bistango Martini Lounge where owner Reema Shaver can make you her famous Lemon Drop, or Cochinito Taqueria for delicious margaritas made from scratch.

You've wet your whistle. It's time for dinner.

For my money, Wooden City can hold its own against any favorite haunt in culinary epicenters like Chicago or San Francisco. But don't just take my word for it, look to the multiple awards they've already received in their relatively short tenure from The Inlander's "Best Of" readers poll,

including "best new restaurant," "best appetizers" and "best old fashioned". With a chic, yet inviting interior, sit down to a menu that has no misses from top to bottom. Start with a small plate of the blistered Hungarian peppers that locals rave about. While entree options like the lamb bolognese and wood fired 1/2 chicken are top notch, even carnivores would do well not to overlook the beet ravioli. Wooden City's take on this taproot vegetable is so impressive it would leave Dwight Schrute in awe.

Of course there's no shortage of other places in downtown to have memorable dinners. For something new and different, head to Queen of Sheba in the Flour Mill on the North Bank. Here you'll experience not just delicious Ethiopian cuisine, but a truly unique dining experience. On the casual side, head to Purgatory for quality bar food. While there, you can sample any of the over-500 whiskeys that adorn their main wall.

“These are all merely my humble suggestions, and there's so much more to offer here in this great city.”

You've had your dinner, now how about a show? Head to the Spokane Comedy Club for a laugh. This intimate venue with a quintessential brick backdrop and candle lit tables is always good for a guffaw. Comedy fans will likely recognize the evening's headliner, as the Club regularly hosts entertainers with notable features on the likes of late night talk shows, Comedy Central or Netflix. If you'd like a dose of more traditional culture for your evening, head to the Martin Woldson Theater at The Fox, home to our city's own Spokane Symphony. Throughout their season, the symphony caters to a wide array of tastes. Enjoy

performances of masterpieces like Carl Orff's Carmina Burana, or go see a screening of Star Wars with the original score performed live by the symphony.

By now the clock says it's late, but if the night is still young to you, you've got plenty of options yet. For a lively finish to the night, head to Flatstick Pub, where you can partake in your choice of the classic mini golf, or branch out into Duffleboard (an amusing cross between mini golf and shuffleboard), or Wickets (a cross between mini golf and croquet...you see the theme here). Or indulge in the retro and patronize Gamers Arcade or Berserk Bar. Between the two, you'll surely get your fix of pinball machines, air hockey, and even classic video games if that's your pleasure.

And if you're just out for a simple nightcap before turning it in, make your way to Cease and Desist. Don't be deterred when upon entering you're met by a wall of fine literature... Look closely at the bookshelf on the right and you'll find it's actually a hidden entryway into one of Spokane's finest speakeasies. No matter what you order here, I assure you it's the bee's knees (just keep it on the down-low and don't do things like write about it in a magazine).

So there you have it, an evening (and then-some) in downtown. These are all merely my humble suggestions, and there's so much more to offer here in this great city but one thing is for sure—If you want an experience in the Inland Northwest, just remember Spokane is downtown. ●

RENEGADE ROOM

I Don't Do a Lot of Voodoo in the Winery

When you walk into Renegade Room by MonteScarlatto, don't expect a stuffy atmosphere where people take themselves too seriously. "It's not supposed to be 'whisper time,' it's called Renegade for a reason – you're supposed to have fun," said owner and founder Joel Mackay.

Upscale and chic, Renegade Room rebels against the norm of traditional wine tasting. Yes, it's a winery, but it's also a bar and restaurant with fine food, curated local craft beer, "wine on tap," and even pink and red wine slushies – a favorite summer treat for riders of the Spokane Party Trolley.

Located directly across from the Historic Davenport at 822 West Sprague Avenue in downtown Spokane, Renegade Room is the second home of MonteScarlatto Estate Winery in Washington's Red Mountain Appellation, offering 100% estate-grown wines, including Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Barbera, Merlot, Malbec, Carménère and Petite Verdot.

Joel describes his wine as "old-world style and taste," which he credits to their lack of machinery. "Most of our machinery is our shoulders and arms and legs," he said.

When it comes to how Joel got into wine making, everyone expects a romantic story, but in reality, it was a practical decision.

In 1994, he purchased a broken-down house on 18.5 acres of property in Benton City. Joel's dream was to plant cherry trees and sell the fruit, but he quickly discovered he had no irrigation water and a well that didn't produce more than a gallon-and-a-half a minute. By the time Joel got the well put in and the house refurbished in 2006, his property was inside a squiggly line designated as the Red Mountain AVA (American Viticultural Area). Just like that, cherry trees were no longer an option, so he decided to transform the land into a vineyard.

Joel prides himself on the uniqueness of each of his wines. "When you go to wineries, a lot of the wine tastes the same no matter what varietal it is. Because I'm the farmer, I want people to taste the fruit that came out of my field," he shared. "I don't do a lot of voodoo. I let the Cab Sav taste like Cab Sav. I let Malbec taste like Malbec."

Their flagship wine is Dawn's Bikini Barbera, named in honor of Joel's late fiancé, Dawn, who lost her battle with cancer in 2012. Dawn helped plant, prune and tie this unique Italian varietal ... always wearing a bikini! Joel would tease her about it, saying he was going to put her likeness on the bottle. Before she passed away, Dawn gave her blessing, but warned Joel that if she didn't look good she'd come back and haunt him!

Having opened its doors in August 2018, Renegade Room was just gaining traction when COVID-19 hit. Suddenly, the things that made downtown such a magical location – the venues, guests at the Davenport, and people who would stop in after work – all went away, leaving Joel with overhead but no customers for months.

Fortunately, he saw an extreme uptick in wine club memberships, and people are finally starting to come back to enjoy food and wine in person.

Just like the wine, you'll find it's the people that make Renegade Room so special. As Joel puts it: "When you enjoy the people, the wine always tastes better." ●



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TWO WINEY BITCHES TASTING ROOM

Don't Let the Name Fool You

Like their name, there's nothing conventional about Two Winey Bitches, one of downtown's newest tasting rooms, located at 107 South Madison St.

All of their wine is made from 100% organic fruit that owners Steve and Margaret Walser grow on their 630-acre family farm near Ford, WA. There are no grapes whatsoever!

General Manager Eleacia Walser, Steve and Margaret's daughter, said it's important to leave your preconceived notions about wine at the door.

"Usually the preconception with a fruit wine is that it's going to be very sweet, that it's going to be sort of a summer wine, something that's made and then designed to be enjoyed within a few months. That's very untrue of what we have."

They ferment everything to no sugar left at all, so it's completely dry. Then they taste all the wine, decide how they want to best showcase the fruit, and manipulate it as needed. The wine then ages for about a year in the cask and a minimum of one full year in the bottle.

"It's amazing how much difference the aging makes," said Steve. "Most fruit wines are pretty fresh. This is not that. This is all aged and it just changes completely over time. It matures like grapes."

"Even if you open it, it just gets better the longer you let it sit there," Eleacia shared. "That part is different than a grape wine. You open that and two days later, it's going to be vinegar. That just doesn't happen with our wines. We've asked every professor, every sommelier we've ever met, and nobody really knows why, because there just isn't the research for fruit wines."

Margaret discovered this "blooming in the bottle" phenomenon as one of the happy accidents along their wine-making journey.

After she and her (now retired) wine-making friend submitted a bottle of blueberry wine to the Spokane County Fair, Margaret kept the one-third-full bottle with its winning ribbon on her sunny kitchen windowsill. A year later, out of curiosity, she opened the cork and smelled the wine, and to her astonishment, it smelled amazing. Even more astonishing, it tasted INCREDIBLE.

"99% of our wines do this beautiful blooming thing," Margaret said. "You don't put it in a refrigerator; it just sits at room temperature and it doesn't go bad."

Margaret was a "wild one" from Detroit who moved to the Springdale area at the age of 18 to quiet her heart and escape the craziness of the city. A few years later, she met Steve when they were both working at a natural foods distribution warehouse. They fell in love and decided, "OK, we're going to farm."

Organic before organic was even a thing (Steve actually worked a bit with the certification in Washington state),

they started farming Willow Wind Organic Farms in 1981 and ventured into wine making in 2013.

The Walsers credit their artesian water as a secret to growing such tasty fruit, which includes apricot, blackberry, blueberry, cherry, peach, raspberry and elderberry.

"We don't use anything dangerous in the soils that could leech down and bother the water because we love our water. It's delicious," said Margaret.

Two Winey Bitches is one of only a handful of wineries in the entire country to make true fruit wines. Interestingly, most European wines were fruit wines until grape wine exploded onto the scene. The Walsers are reviving the old-world tradition of really fruit-forward, yet very complex, very "winey" types of wine that you just don't see anymore.

Wanting to give a face not only to their winery but also to their farm and all the wonderful things they're doing with their fruit, the Walsers decided to open up a tasting room in downtown Spokane.

It was love at first sight when they discovered the space at 107 S. Madison. Even though the empty office space was all drywall, they could see its potential. They brought in beautiful reclaimed wood from a barn they took down on the farm, tin from an old shed, and even the bar itself was crafted from Eleacia's old treehouse tree.

Adorning the walls is artwork from several local artists, and they participate in First Friday every month. "We want to be part of the community; we want to share with the community; we want to give to the community. If everybody does that, I really think Spokane is on its way up," said Margaret.

Two Winey Bitches sells bottles, serves wine by the glass, and offers "Flight and a Bite," featuring three 1-ounce tasters and an elevated, well-planned bite to complement each wine. Three tasting sets are available: dry, sweet and a "mixed bag."

Steve does offer this warning: "The biggest problem with this wine is it's dangerously delicious."

It's so drinkable because there's no astringency – it's a completely different kind of wine experience than most people are used to.

"There's no 'wine mouth,'" Eleacia explained. "None of that red heavy feeling of, 'Oh, I just drank a bunch of wine.' You're ready for the next sip of whatever's coming because it's so light and so fresh."

You also don't get a hangover from any of the wines, so you can wake up feeling fabulous. They are extremely light on the sulfites, only using it as a very basic cleaning agent.

Eleacia's favorite compliment from their wine tasters is: "I'll be back and I'll bring friends."

"That, to me, says they not only liked it now, but they're going to like it later, and they're going to come back and they're going to bring more people with them so we can spread the word. That makes me happy." ●

“The biggest problem with this wine is it's dangerously delicious.”

PUTTING THE FUN IN FORTY

Some people call Lance Kissler the Kevin Bacon of Spokane.

Kissler, who is involved with multiple civic and nonprofit organizations throughout the region, knows a lot of people. When he started planning for his fortieth birthday, he was looking for a way to celebrate that was able to include his many friends and acquaintances.

"My goal was to include a variety of activities so friends could participate," says Kissler of his birthday vision.

Kissler's big day included stops at five different locations throughout downtown Spokane. Guests were invited to sign up – ala cart – for the activities that fit into their schedule and interests. The 12-hour event toured nYyne Bar & Bistro, LaserMaxx, Jumping Jackalope Axe Throwing, Flatstick Pub, and Purgatory Craft Beer and Whiskey Bar.

"I wanted to try some activities I had not done before," says Kissler, "Like axe throwing and Flatstick."

The marathon event worked well in downtown because all the venues were within walking distance. "People could park easily and come and go as they wanted to. It made it an easy day for people to show up when they were available and interested, and provided a variety of activities."

For Kissler, Nyne was the most memorable part of the celebration. "We kicked off the day with a drag brunch that was themed Schitt's Creek at nYyne Bar & Bistro. It was a unique experience because they are not normally open on Sunday. They were really flexible and I worked with the staff to line up the entertainment and menu." Attendees were encouraged to come dressed as characters from the TV series.

"nYne is where most of the guests were. It was unique enough that people who attended really enjoyed it. It wasn't just about getting people together to see me, it was about gathering with friends to have a fun experience."

Kissler also wanted his birthday to be open and available for all ages. "There's stuff for people of all ages to do in downtown, that's what great about. When we were at LaserMaxx we saw lots of kids, but it was a lot of fun for adults, too, and everyone in-between."

All the stops along the party route made it easy for Kissler to plan for ahead of time, and he was able to reserve most experiences in advance. "The only challenge was on my end, ensuring that I was making reservations, pre-paying, and staying in touch with my own guests to make sure they were committed far enough in advance that we would have space available. I used SignUpGenius and it worked out well."

Kissler's review of his birthday received five stars. When asked if others would be able to replicate the experience he says, "I think there would be other options for venues and activities for people to consider if they wanted to mix it up and do something



different than what I did. That's one of the nice things about downtown is that it offers a different flavor for everyone." ●

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HOCKEY FANS ARE CRAZY FOR LORD STANLEY'S SPORTS BAR

Local hockey fans have a lot to cheer about this season, and not just because the Chiefs and Kraken are underway! With the recent opening of Lord Stanley's, Spokane's premier hockey bar, now they have a place that's just for them to watch the big game – with sound!

"People are loving it," said Lord Stanley's co-owner Eowen Rosentrater. "Everywhere you go it seems like football or some other sport is paramount, so they're excited to have a place to watch hockey with sound, where it's not on a side TV."

Located at 108 N. Washington Street in downtown Spokane, Lord Stanley's, aptly named after the founder of the Stanley Cup, boasts a huge 165-inch projector screen for watching hockey with sound, plus 15 additional TVs so you never have to miss a moment of action.

The inside of this new bar is like an "Easter Egg Hunt" for hockey fans, with fun "treasures" to discover throughout, from framed hockey jerseys to small memorabilia items.

One feature that's hard to miss is the incredible hand-built bar with over 800 hockey pucks encased in it, and fans of all ages are obsessed with the "1980 Miracle on Ice" bubble hockey table.

When Rosentrater and her business partner/fellow hockey enthusiast Jesse Koester came up with the idea to open a hockey-themed sports bar in the vacant space in the American Legion Building, they knew there was a need for something like this in Spokane. Still, they weren't sure what to expect, especially opening during a pandemic.

So far, they've been pleasantly surprised.

"We didn't realize how big of a hockey community Spokane had, but we're quickly learning," said Rosentrater.

The atmosphere inside Lord Stanley's is especially

vibrant when the Seattle Kraken play, as strangers become fast friends rooting for their new favorite team.

As part of the exclusive Seattle Kraken Anchor Alliance, Lord Stanley's will be giving away Kraken prizes during games. They also offer a "Celly shot," where any time the Kraken score a goal, the shot is just \$3.

As any self-respecting hockey fan knows, you can't watch the game on an empty stomach. Fortunately, Lord Stanley's is serving up lots of delicious eats.

Popular menu items include poutine (fries with gravy and cheese curds) and their barbeque brisket, Reuben, and hummus flatbreads. Nordic Smoke BBQ, featured on Food Network's "Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives," makes all of their mouthwatering brisket and pulled pork.

Their drink menu includes custom cocktails, hockey-themed "puck shots," and shot skis served on – what else – a hockey stick!

When there's a hockey game on, it will always take center ice, er, stage, on the big projector screen, but otherwise, they'll show other sports games.

Since opening their doors in early September, the owners of Lord Stanley's have been blown away by the support of their customers, as well as the downtown community itself.

"It's very collaborative," Rosentrater said. "We go back and forth to each other's restaurants and bars and enjoy each other's food and company. It's just a blast."

Lord Stanley's is open daily 11 a.m. to midnight or later (kids are welcome until 9 p.m.). They do open for the early morning football games on Sundays and will soon be offering weekend brunch. ●

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