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Crowning Brown County

ONE HAT AT A TIME



Dale Ann Gramman uses various accessories ranging from bands, jewelry, feathers, patches, matchbooks, scraps of paper and more to personalize cowboy hats, fedoras or trucker ball caps. *Dakota Bruton*

Queen Hat Co. specializes one-of-a-kind hats and experiences

STORY BY DAKOTA BRUTON

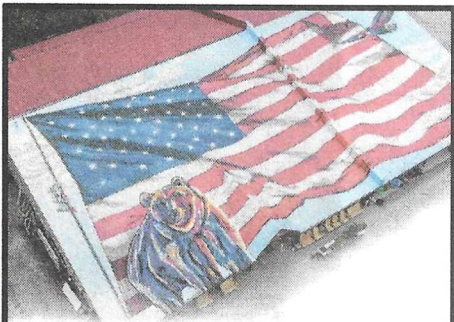
With warmer weather comes country music concerts, festivals and line dancing.

Picture this, you wait all winter for concert season only to show up in the same cowboy hat as every other crowd member. How will you keep from getting lost in a sea of the same few hat styles?

That's a problem Dale Ann Gramman at Queen Hat Co. aims to fix with her custom, one-of-a-kind hats. Gramman crowns everyone with a personalized piece that incorporates their personality and style. Her meticulous and trained eye leaves customers with a hat of their dreams. Her passion for the craft is obvious with how personal she makes every appointment. No matter the amount of customers, her attention is focused on the hat at hand and customer in the chair.

Queen Hat Co. moved from Antique Alley to their current location, 65 Franklin Street, in September, offering a larger space

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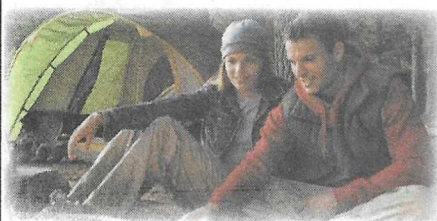


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to host more inventory, customers and private events. But the shop does not stop there, they also sell custom hats and jackets for dogs. Gramman's two poodles, Letty and Louis have their very own unique pieces as models for the shop.

Gramman spent most of her life showing horses and her daughter, Hunter Marie Tharp, actively participates in horse shows around the country. The horse show circuit is where Gramman's love for millinery sparked. "We did our own hats and one thing led to another, next thing I know I'm working out of my garage doing orders."

According to Gramman, her daughter is currently sitting in the top 15 in the nation, "that's how the hats have gotten all over the United States."

The business began with custom straw hats and Gramman hopes to get back to creating them, but they are "extremely time consuming", generally taking around two weeks per hat. She also offers custom hats steamed, stetched and banded in-house.

The first step of the process is to try on different styles to find what fits best and feels the most comfortable, "that way they get the style and look that they want."

Whether you prefer cowboy hats, fedoras or trucker ball caps, Queen Hat Co. has a wide selection of choices ranging between \$20 and \$500 to be customized and made your own, including "Charlie 1 Horse" and "Resistol" cowboy hats, in addition to other popular brands. All accessories are offered on an a la carte basis,

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Dale Ann Gramman holding her two poodles, Letty and Louis. The dogs are a staple of the shop, greeting customers and modeling their very own jackets and hats. *Dakota Bruton*

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meaning customers pay individually for each accessory ranging from \$1 to \$50. Gramman designs and builds the perfect hat for no additional cost. The shop also sells accessories like hat bands, jewelry, purses and other items.

Accessories include bands, feathers, jewelry, pins, scraps of paper, buttons, knife holders, matchbooks, patches, stickers and more.

"We try and incorporate a lot of natural elements into it, we try to use some of the fun stuff" Gramman said while attaching a feather to a cowboy hat. All of their feathers come from bird rescues or local sources, she also uses alligator hide and porcupine quills. "If we don't all work together around here, it ain't going to work. That's just how it is, that's life in general."

They host private events, including birthday and bridal parties.

Instead of blowing out birthday candles, Queen Hat Co. prefers to light an entire cowboy hat on fire. What better way to celebrate another year of life? This image even inspired their current motto, "everything is fine", surrounded by a picture of a hat in flames.

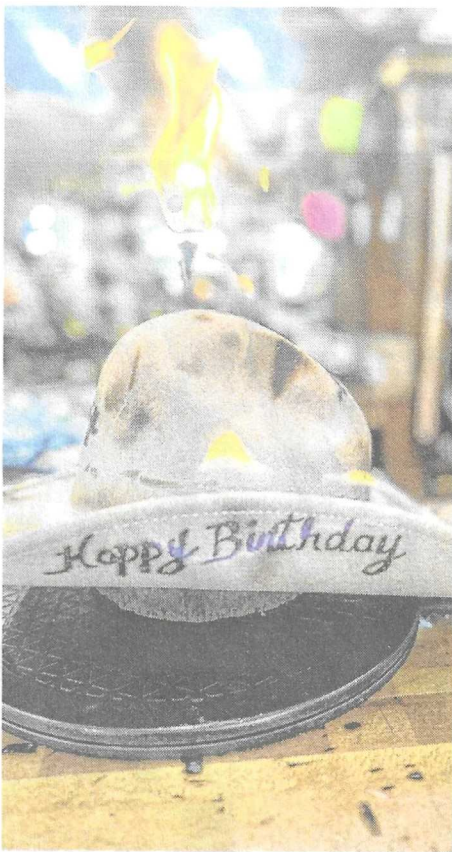
For bachelorette parties, Gramman said that most groups get drinks and snacks at other local establishments to bring with them for their event. She hosted one Saturday, April 26 with a live band on the porch. "A lot of fun stuff goes on over here," she said. One of the most comical activities Queen Hat Co. offers during private events is "little calf roping" in the alley, which helps participants get in the cowboy spirit.

"When someone comes in, we work with them to find the hat that they love," Employee Lea Killough said. "then we come over here (the accessory bar) and there is a plethora to choose from." Sometimes customers will struggle when trying to design their hat in their head, but Killough recommends leaving the design portion

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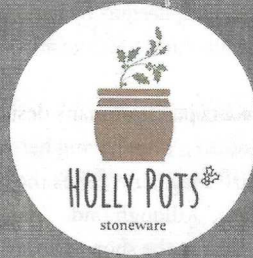
Queen Hat Co., located at 65 Franklin Street, Nashville specializes in handmaking one-of-a-kind hats that reflect the wearer's personality. Dakota Bruton



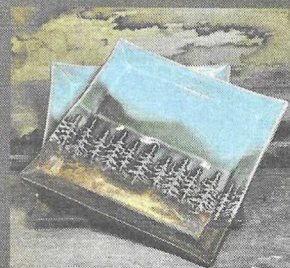
Birthdays are celebrated a little differently over at Queen Hat Co., instead of lighting candles, they light cowboy hats on fire. Dakota Bruton

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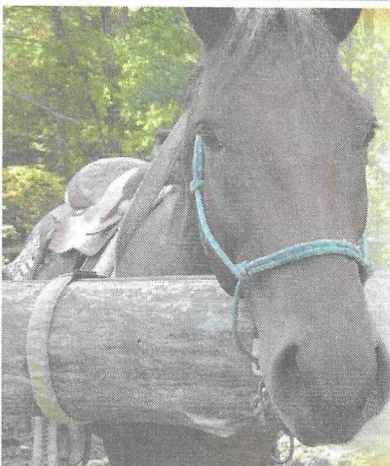


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to Gramman.

"She's the artist ... no two are the same, these are signature," she said. "There's just thousands of things that she can do."

Once the hat is embellished with the chosen accessories, she can also burn or brand it, even burning designs by hand before branding her crown emblem, the finishing touch to all Queen Hat Co. hats.

While hat bars are not a new concept, Gramman's designs draw in customers from all over the country, even having her work displayed in the national "Cowgirl" magazine. "She's the best, if not in the country then in the Midwest," Killough said.

Killough began working part-time at the shop as a way to stay busy and get out of the house. "I'm retired and this is what I do for fun ... It's an honor to work for someone who's so good at what they do and it's always something different," she said. "I see people come in and leave so happy every time, they're just thrilled. She's making people happy one hat at a time, it's creative and joyful. I just love how satisfied the customers are."

Gramman hopes they can garner the reputation as being the party place where people make appointments and host events.

The shop is open Fridays and Saturdays, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. and everything else is "by chance." Making an appointment is the best way to ensure availability and can be made on the Queen Hat Co. website at <https://queenhatco.com/contact/>.

The newest addition to Queen Hat Co. is a laser, which allows Gramman to make more precise burns, including branding logos for local businesses. Any businesses interested in branding can contact Gramman online or by phone at (812) 593-4447.



QUEEN HAT CO.

Location: 65 Franklin St.

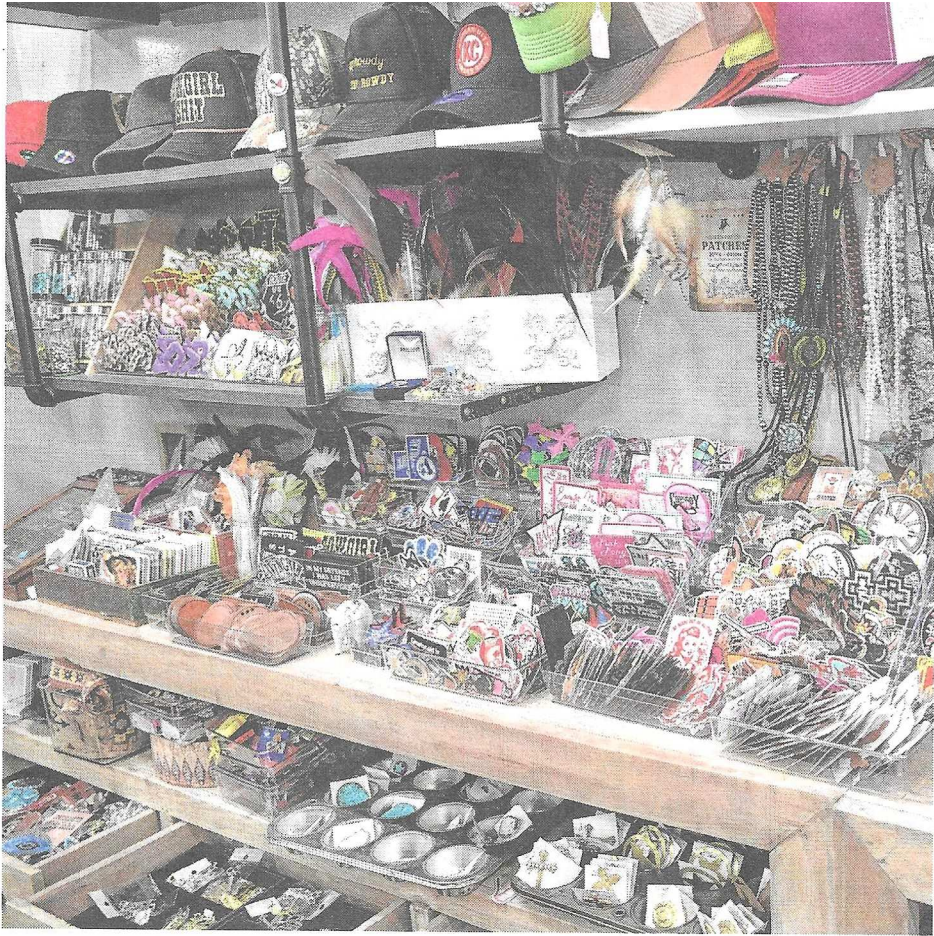
Phone: 812-593-4447

Website: www.queenhatco.com



Queen Hat Co. hosted a bridal party Saturday, April 26 with live music, custom hats and calf roping. Photo provided.





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