

SMALL BUSINESS SPOTLIGHTS

Small businesses and professional practices are the backbone of our community. Unlike big chains, they contribute to the character of our town, helping to make Bloomington the special place it is. Small businesses create good jobs and keep money circulating here rather than having it leave town for corporate headquarters in New York City, Atlanta, or elsewhere. And with small businesses, you know the owner, and he or she can get to know you. In this special advertorial section, we feature the stories of local businesses with fewer than two dozen employees. Each business is unique and making a contribution to the common good.



Photos by Martin Boling



Scholar's KEEP

Molly Otto, general manager;
Matt Plaisier, executive chef

(l-r) Molly Otto
and Matt Plaisier.

Molly Otto and Chef Matt Plaisier knew at early ages that they wanted careers in the restaurant world. That desire came to fruition on May 3 when they opened the doors to Scholar's KEEP at 717 N. College.

Otto realized at age 6 that she wanted to be a server when she grew up. The Chicagoland native started working in suburban restaurants at 14 and says she hit the apex of her career when she learned the importance of hospitality. "Hospitality truly is an art, and if you can do it well and consistently, it's very rewarding," she explains. "I've always loved service—being a server has always been my most favorite thing."

For Bloomington-born Plaisier, his culinary education started in his mother's kitchen where he learned the joy of bringing people together through family recipes and comfort foods. In fifth grade, Plaisier moved to the East Coast, but followed his dream of becoming a chef to Le Cordon Bleu in Chicago. Through his education and experience working around the city, Plaisier developed his own style, self-described as a combination of sophistication and understatement.

Their individual careers brought the young couple to Capital Grill in Chicago where they met. Four children and several years later, Otto, 36, and Plaisier, 38, decided to move

back to Bloomington and follow their restaurateur dreams by opening Scholar's KEEP.

In doing so, Otto and Plaisier have partnered with Lyle and Kerry Feigenbaum, formerly of Scholar's Inn and owners of the building that is home to Scholar's KEEP. Working with interior designer Loree Everette of Phenomen, the new restaurateurs wanted to reimagine space to epitomize their slogan, "Eat great and drink late." That included replacing the four-seat bar with a massive one. "A main part of the project was building a great bar-seating area and keeping the dining areas as lovely as they used to be," Otto says.

The remodel included removing an original staircase that no longer provided access to the second floor. "The upstairs area is a little quieter for guests who want a more intimate experience," Plaisier says, adding that they wanted to update and modernize the space while preserving its uniqueness. From the main level, a ceiling mural of Athena, the goddess of wisdom, still looks as if she lifted the roof and peers down on diners. She was painted in 2000 by Jeff and John Thom, when the Feigenbaums remodeled and opened the rafters. "She will always stay," Otto says.

Athena isn't the only piece of history Otto and Plaisier embrace in their new ven-

ture. They delight in telling how the building once housed a café downstairs and a brothel upstairs—with patrons admitted for \$50 each—and how the cellar was part of the Underground Railroad.

While history is important, Otto and Plaisier are focused headlong on the future. "We have created a unique dining experience whether you are looking for a modern, casual, fine-dining experience or a modern-day version of the classic gathering spot," Otto says. Plaisier adds that the menu is well-rounded with vegetarian, vegan, and healthy options, as well as comfort food. As chef, he says his cuisine is simple yet elevated—taking favorites and adding his flair to create the heightened experience, while still being accessible for college students or families on a budget.

Otto and Plaisier hope that Scholar's KEEP becomes a neighborhood hangout—or home away from home—with its elevated culinary offerings and energetic bar featuring shrubs, infusions, syrups, and craft beers. The bar is open weekends until 2 a.m.

"We want you to keep eating, keep drinking, and keep coming back to Scholar's," Otto says, with Plaisier adding, "Stop in, say hi, and become regulars." For information, visit scholarskeep.com.



Marigold Clothing Linda Shikany, owner

As a child, Linda Shikany would go shopping with her mother, then go home to play store. “It just seemed like, at an early age, this was where I was going to be,” Shikany says. That interest led to working in clothing stores while studying retail management at Purdue University, traveling as a district manager and buyer, and, in 1989, starting her own business—Marigold Clothing, a contemporary boutique in Indianapolis.

Marigold Clothing carries an eclectic mix of apparel, accessories, and gift lines—like Cut Loose, Comfy, and Komarov—that Shikany says encourages lifestyle dressing for women of all ages. “Lifestyle dressing means buying items that fit your life, mixing and matching them instead of making them all outfits,” she says, adding that it’s also important to have fashion advisors like Marigold’s employees who listen and help customers find their personal style.

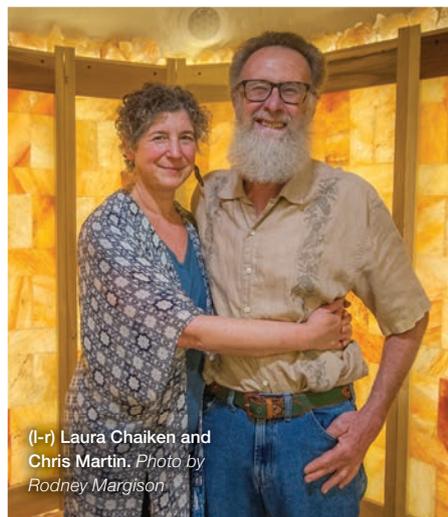
Shikany and Marigold’s employees believe in slow fashion, a movement of designing, creating, and buying garments for quality and longevity. Many of the boutique’s items are made in America and crafted by smaller production labels using recycle-friendly practices. “We all have a responsibility to be environmentally conscious,” Shikany says. “People are throwing away stuff too quickly.” She adds that a piece from Marigold will last for years. Visit marigoldclothing.com or call 317-254-9939 for more information.

Bloomington Salt Cave Laura Chaiken, owner

When Laura Chaiken and Chris Martin started visiting salt caves, the results were so beneficial they wanted to share it with their community. “Thousands of people around the world breathe and feel better with halotherapy,” says Chaiken, owner of Bloomington Salt Cave, 115 N. Madison St. “We want to serve our community in helping people of all ages. It’s a safe and effective antimicrobial, antibacterial, allergen-free experience.”

Chaiken explains that she and Martin put their dreams and skills together to create and build the pink Himalayan salt cave with four tons of salt using all-natural and environmentally friendly materials. A generator crushes pure sodium chloride into micron-sized particles that are breathed deep into the respiratory system, working as a “bronchial toothbrush” for the airways. “We live in a high pollen-count area,” Chaiken says. “Many people suffer from asthma, allergies, and sinus congestion.”

“Alongside halotherapy, we offer guided meditations, restorative yoga, foot reflexology, gong baths, and other events that change every month,” she continues. They also have a buy-four-get-five special and will rent out the entire cave. Making sessions affordable is important. “It’s a chance to unwind and relax in an environment that encourages that,” Martin says. “This is something we see helping people and making their lives a little better.” Schedule an appointment at bloomingtonsaltcave.com.



(l-r) Laura Chaiken and Chris Martin. Photo by Rodney Margison



(l-r) Zack Land and Steve Mascari.

B-Town IT

Steve Mascari, owner; Zack Land, lead network engineer

B-Town IT owner Steve Mascari and lead network engineer Zack Land believe communication is the key to successful partnerships. Instead of entering a new venture with a preconceived idea about how an IT strategy must be structured, B-Town IT evaluates a company’s needs, then establishes the appropriate goals and budgets. “We give the benefits of an IT department without the cost,” Mascari says.

B-Town IT provides security analysis and solutions, disaster recovery systems, basic workplace systems, remote access, wireless connectivity, and strategic planning. “We try to make technology accessible,” Mascari explains. “We are dependable, communicate effectively, and empower clients.” And because B-Town IT has extensive experience in HIPAA compliance, they specialize in medical and legal offices as well as property management and real estate businesses. “We are well-versed in tried-and-true solutions, and we love discovering new technologies that help our clients achieve their goals,” he adds.

Mascari and Land value community and feel that giving back is an important part of business. B-Town IT is honored to support nonprofit organizations such as Community Justice and Mediation Center, Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Central Indiana, Friends of T.C. Steele, and Trinity Episcopal Church. “We’re proud to take care of these pillars of our community,” Mascari says. Learn more at b-townit.com or call 812-345-0479.



(l-r) Dr. Charles Coughlan and Dr. Kevin Coughlan.

the lab pouring models, making retainers, and making mouth-guard transfer trays. Although he considered oral surgery, Dr. Kevin chose orthodontics because procedures are more easily controlled—and don't involve blood.

"It's a good field," he says. "It has a positive impact and people are not normally afraid of orthodontists."

In 2003, Dr. Kevin bought the business from his father, who stayed on part-time until 2011. Much of

his business involves braces, retainers, and Invisalign clear braces, and he always keeps up with technological advancements and changes. Most of his services have transitioned to digital, including a 3D X-ray machine that emits a third of the radiation while capturing more information.

Dr. Kevin's focus is on providing a welcoming environment for his patients and staff alike. "We try to treat everyone like family," he says. "We go above and beyond to make people comfortable and understand things." Part of that includes keeping employees for many years. He says patients find comfort in seeing the same faces—even after 15 or 20 years. "Whether it's the person who answers the phone or calls them for a follow-up, our employees take pride in doing their jobs and in our reputation," he says.

By talking and listening to his patients, Dr. Kevin learns what causes are important to them, and then he gives back to the community based on those interests. He is an active supporter of Hoosiers Out-run Cancer, Lou Gehrig's disease-related events, and most any local sports team or activity in which his patients are involved. "The community is real important to us," he says. His dad adds, "You have to give back. It's important." For more information, visit coghlanorthodontics.com.

Coughlan Orthodontics

Dr. Charles Coughlan, founder; Dr. Kevin Coughlan, owner

Coughlan Orthodontics, 2911 E. Covenanter Drive, has held a long-standing presence not only in the Bloomington community but also within the Coughlan family. Dr. Charles Coughlan started the orthodontic practice 50 years ago and his son, Dr. Kevin Coughlan, joined him exactly 21 years later on August 1, 1989.

Helen Coughlan, Dr. Charles' wife and Dr. Kevin's mother, lightheartedly blames her husband. "He's the instigator of this whole thing," she says, having herself spent 21 years handling payroll, paying bills, running errands, and cooking for staff meetings.

When Dr. Charles was a child, his father worked at a factory in Indianapolis until the end of World War II. He was then given the choice of helping start a new assembly plant in Louisville, Kentucky, or one in Australia. "My mom wouldn't move to Australia, so I ended up in Louisville," explains the 80-year-old patriarch.

That led him to attend college and dental school at the University of Louisville. "I wanted to either be a surgeon or a dentist, and then I thought sometimes surgery

doesn't turn out well, so I decided to go to dental school," he says. After graduating, he joined the Army as a reserve officer and then studied orthodontics at Indiana University in Indianapolis upon being discharged. "I decided to be an orthodontist because that was the field I knew the least about after I got out of dental school, and it needed more dexterity than regular dentistry. I've always liked to do things with my hands."

Once finished with all of his schooling, Dr. Charles decided to make Bloomington his home and opened Coughlan Orthodontics on August 1, 1968. "I was the first university-trained orthodontist in the city," he says. In 1977, the practice moved from its original location on East 3rd Street to Auto Mall Road, and in 1991, his architect son, Mike Coughlan, designed the current location.

Meanwhile, Dr. Kevin's experience at Coughlan Orthodontics began as an eighth-grader when he and his brother cleaned the office. After getting his driver's license, Dr. Kevin spent summers until college in



Eli's Sandwich Shoppe

Eli Seidman, owner

Influenced by his family—third-generation furniture store owners—Eli Seidman always dreamed of owning a business. “I remember picking my dad’s brain about what it was like to be a business owner, so I think that seed was planted from an early age,” he says. “I’ve always loved food and wanted to open a restaurant.”

So when he graduated from the University of Kansas in 2015 and returned home to Springfield, Illinois, Seidman started working on a business plan. Ten months later, at 23, he moved to Bloomington and opened Eli’s Sandwich Shoppe at 601 N. College. “It was a pretty quick turnaround,” he says. “I could have gotten an M.B.A. from a university, but I figured this would be a much better experience. There’s no better way to learn than actually doing it.”

Now 25, Seidman says it helped that he was young when he took the risk, though some experience might have helped through the rough spots of starting his shop, which offers daily-baked sweet bread and homemade chocolate chip cookies to accompany its sandwiches. Seidman believes having his own delivery drivers attracts customers, as does having pull-in parking. He even gives customers up to 50 cents to help with parking. “Eli’s will feed you and your meter,” he says. For information, visit elissubs.com.

Balanced Natural Health

Dr. BreAnna Guan, owner

Dr. BreAnna Guan began her career the traditional way, but quickly discovered a conventional medical program wasn’t right for her. “I just felt like something was missing,” she says. “I was really interested in health, but wasn’t finding that in the traditional premed route.” Additionally, traditional medicine was failing to address various ailments that both she and her family were encountering at the time.

Dr. Guan’s path took her to Seattle, Washington, where she studied naturopathic medicine at the nationally accredited medical school Bastyr University. At Bastyr, the focus is on creating better health using natural and preventative medicines. “The body has an innate way to heal itself,” Dr. Guan says. “If you cut a finger, the body knows how to repair it so long as it doesn’t come across an obstacle. Our bodies react the same when too little sleep, too much stress, or a poor diet serve as obstacles.”

An initial appointment with Dr. Guan involves a comprehensive 90-minute discussion that covers everything from family and medical history to diet and lifestyle. “I don’t recommend every diagnosis the same,” says the N.D., or naturopathic doctor. “I first look for underlying causes and then connect the dots to look at the body as a whole.” Learn more at drbreannaguan.com.



Photo by Richardson Studio

Skin Aesthetics Medical Spa

Kathy Pafford, owner

Kathy Pafford, a licensed medical aesthetician and owner of Skin Aesthetics Medical Spa, believes being a small business owner lets her provide individual services that match her patients’ desires. “I pride myself in trying to listen to what a patient wants and finding a conservative solution—financially and procedurally,” Pafford says.

After working in Bloomington for 10 years, Pafford moved her office from Howe Street to 2801 N. Walnut, Suite 8, in August to facilitate the growth of her practice. “This is what I’ve done for the last 20 years, and I want to perfect my craft and take care of my patients,” she says. “Ultimately, it’s your face and you have to be pleased with what you get. The patient’s care is first and foremost.”

Licensed as an advanced injector, Pafford does Botox, Dysport, and dermal-filler injections; laser hair and vein removal; microdermabrasion treatments; and chemical peels. She also carries a line of skin care products. “It’s nice to help everyone, regardless of what decade they are in, slow down the aging process and get comfortable with where they are,” she adds. “We can tweak as we go and soften, so it’s not so hard for a person to deal with the aging process, which is tough.” For more information, visit skin-aesthetics.net.

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