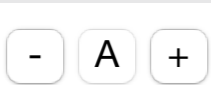




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Madras soap maker opens storefront

Holly Scholz January 27, 2021

Penelope's Soaps and Such offers bath bombs, lotions, fabric, sewing notions and candles



HOLLY SCHOLZ/MADRAS PIONEER - Penelope's Soaps and Such owner Angela Rhodes prepares to slice freshly made jasmine-scented soap. Although she's been in the soap-making business for six years, her new storefront opens next week in downtown Madras.

One day, about seven years ago, a Madras woman decided she wanted to make soap. So, she bought a book about soap making.

She made every recipe in her new soap book with the goal of having a table full of products come time for the Fourth of July Madras Saturday Market.

That's how Angela Rhodes' business story begins.

"It was absolutely a hit when I got there. People were so excited about it," Rhodes says of her first market. "They were just thrilled with the amount and the variety, so then I got more excited about it because I just loved it so much. I started making more stuff."

She called her business Penelope's Soaps and Such.

On Thursday, Feb. 4, Rhodes will open her first storefront in downtown Madras, featuring her cheery scented soaps, lotions and bath bombs as well as her friend's fabric and candles.

"It won't be done yet, but we'll be open because people are asking me. I can't stave them off," she laughed.

On Jan. 1, Rhodes moved into the newly renovated Wallan Shepard building on Fifth Street, just north of C Street. Developers Jeff and Nicole Hassannia acquired the building next to the old Stag restaurant in early 2020.



Rhodes invited Laura Smucker to rent a space in her shop to sell fabric, sewing notions and candles. The two artisans had met three years ago at a Madras Christmas bazaar.

"I saw her at the market and her lovely array of soap," Smucker recalls. "She had all her soap, and I had a little dinky booth with like five candles."

"We just really hit it off after that," Rhodes said.

The next summer, Smucker's Saturday Market table was packed with candles.

"I was so proud of her," Rhodes said.

Smucker's section of Penelope's Soaps and Such features apparel and quilting fabric, notions such as needles and thread, as well as her natural soy candles and wax melts.



HOLLY SCHOLZ/MADRAS PIONEER - Angela Rhodes, left, and her artisan friend Laura Smucker offer soaps, lotions, bath bombs, candles, fabric and sewing notions at Penelope's Soaps and Such.

Rhodes has moved her production from her home to the new shop, where customers and passersby can watch her make soaps and such. Besides bars of body soap, she makes solid shampoo, solid hair conditioner, bath bombs, lotion and bubble bath. She has a line of men's soap, beard oil, beard soap and shaving soap. She also has a line of CBD products.

She uses more than 50 scent varieties in her products, such as black raspberry, lime coconut, jasmine, coffee, peppermint cream, lavender mint, patchouli and sandalwood. It's a 24-hour process to make one batch of soap, and then it needs to cure on racks for four weeks.

Rhodes gets her supplies from a variety of distributors. The products are made with clean ingredients and are environmentally safe.

"I buy baking soda 100 pounds at a time and cocoa butter in 55-pound blocks," she said, adding that her husband just picked up five 5-gallon buckets of olive oil.

Rhodes, Smucker and some friends will offer soap, candle, quilting and greeting card classes as well as demonstrations.

"It's going to be a really fun place for people to come," Rhodes said. "It's a gathering place."

Rhodes shares the tender story of how her soap business came to be named Penelope's Soaps and Such.

"The name Penelope is the name we gave our unborn baby girl," Rhodes says. "Her precious little life was taken from us in order to save my life, which was threatened by a very rare, but deadly infection. The little feet on our labels are actual to-size replicas of the ink prints of our baby girl."

She says that each bar of carefully handcrafted soap is a reflection of her and her husband's small Angel named Penelope.

"This is our small way of memorializing our little one," Rhodes said.

Sidebar

Penelope's Soaps and Such

Opens Thursday, Feb. 4

Owner: Angela Rhodes

Address: 81 SE Fifth St., Madras

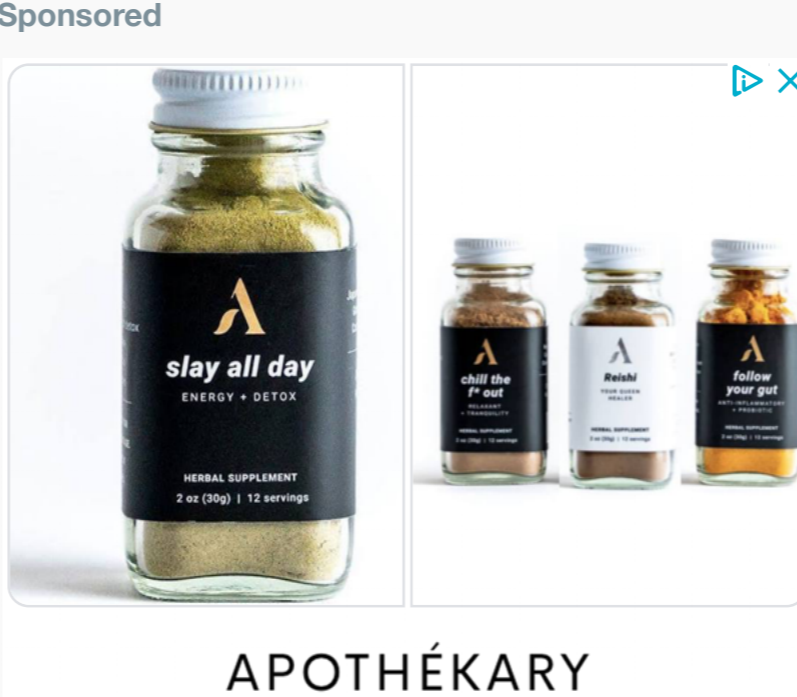
Phone: 541-771-4545

Hours: 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday

Website: www.penelopesoapsandsuch.com

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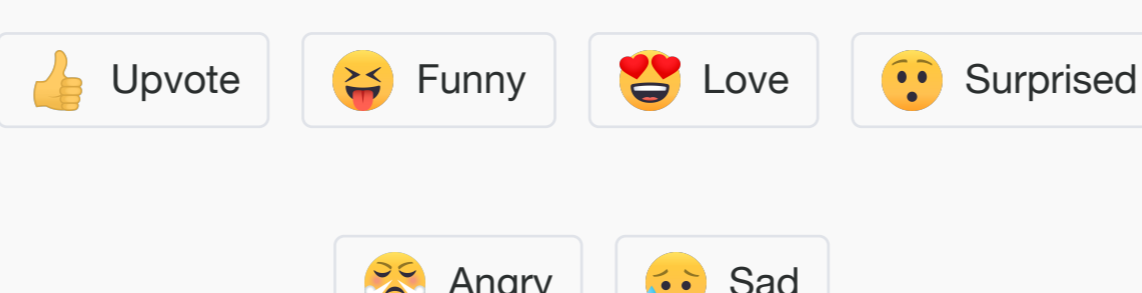
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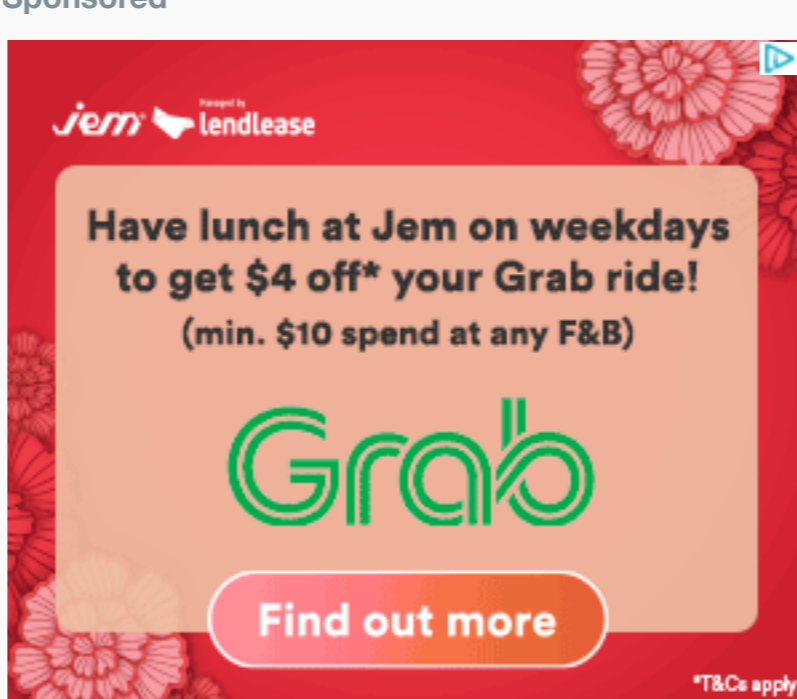
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