

Guest Column: The Faces of Hospitality

Most of us who live here start as visitors but then are captivated by the Islands' magic, inspired to create an island life. This series of columns will help put faces to small businesses – restaurateurs, innkeepers, shopkeepers, artists, tour captains, and other entrepreneurs who make our communities so unique and vibrant.

Skarpari is the Icelandic word for sharper. For Krista Stovall and her husband Chris, what's sharp is their vision to create a space that blends craftsmanship, artistry, and utility—where people can find something handmade, useful, and inspiring. Their shop in Lopez Village is dedicated to the art of knife making and sharpening along with a curated selection of gifts and freshly toll-roasted organic coffee. The Islands attract people who appreciate quality and authenticity, and she and Chris felt there was room for a business that reflected that. As Krista says, “The Islands have a rhythm—something slower and more intentional. I love the connection to nature, the sense of community, and how the seasons shape our daily lives. There's something special about knowing your neighbors' names, watching the tides shift, and being part of a place that values sustainability and creativity.”

Running a small business anywhere is a challenge, but it's a whole different game on an island. Ferries are unpredictable, costs are higher, and owners have to plan ahead—way ahead. There have been moments where the Stovalls wondered if it would all work out, but the community's support and a willingness to adapt has kept them going. Krista loves seeing people light up when they discover something unexpected—a handcrafted knife that fits perfectly in their hand, a piece of art that speaks to them, or perfectly roasted coffee beans. She adds, “visitors bring fresh perspectives. Their appreciation for the Islands reminds me never to take this place for granted.”

How does tourism benefit the Islands?

Krista remarked, “When balanced and sustainable, tourism helps preserve the culture, history, and natural beauty of the Islands. Visitors who come with respect and curiosity often leave with a deeper appreciation for conservation efforts, local craftsmanship, and the simple joys of island life. They become advocates for this place, and that's invaluable. When done thoughtfully, tourism supports the small businesses that make our community unique. I joined the Visitors Bureau because I believe in responsible tourism—helping visitors connect with the Islands in a way that respects the land, the wildlife, and the people who call this place home.”

The Stovalls are launching a line of laser-engraved knives, combining craftsmanship with intricate designs that tell a story. At the same time, they are preparing for their first show of Krista's original paintings and Chris' gel prints, which is both exciting and deeply personal.

This show will debut in April during Lopez' First Saturday Art Walk. Krista added, "We're also moving to a larger space that will allow us to showcase more work from local artists. This expansion means a lot because it strengthens our commitment to supporting creativity in the Islands and providing a space where functional art, fine art, and community come together." Creativity and community are, after all, what make island life so special.