

Justa Alpaca Farm opens store to sell knit goods, yarn, other gifts

Ben
Hanstein



Alpacas graze at Justa Alpaca Farm on the Farmington Falls Road.

FARMINGTON - Those traveling the Farmington Falls Road might take notice of a herd of unusual animals out their window.

It's Justa Alpaca Farm and those woolly critters the farm is raising are 31 huacayas and two suris. Native to South America, alpacas have been specifically bred for their wool, rather than the larger llamas which saw more use historically as beasts of burden. Owners Brenda Simoneau and Fulton Butler have raised them here since January 2012.

Simoneau said that she wanted to learn how to spin her own yarn and visited a farm raising alpacas. One of the animals, named Durango, "stole my heart," Simoneau said. "I was addicted."

Butler bought Simoneau her first alpaca on Mother's Day and the others followed. Justa Alpaca Farm has expanded to 33 animals, with another four babies, or cria, on the way. They are sheared once a year, each producing between 3 and 10 pounds of wool.

Simoneau has the fiber processed in-state, either in Monmouth or Waldoboro, and uses it to knit scarves, hats and

other knitted goods. She also produces skeins of yarn for other craftspeople, as well as working with mohair, produced from goats, and fibers produced by angora goats and rabbits. Any dyed products are created in-house by Simoneau herself.

Justa Alpaca Farm has expanded over the summer to add a small store, which sells Simoneau's own products. Opening just last month, the store also carries products from Back 40, a New Sharon farm that raises Finnsheep, goats and angora rabbits, as well as jewelry products by Many Moody Creations, owned by Brandy Mills of Belgrade. Mills is working to create Alpaca-themed jewelry, which Simoneau stocks her store with alongside other products produced in Peru.



Brenda Simoneau with a cria and its mother.



Brenda Simoneau is busy knitting in her store.

"I didn't think it would go this far," Simoneau admitted as she sat in her store. "I just love these animals."

Between the knit goods, skeins of yarn, jewelry and Peruvian socks and toys, Simoneau is hoping to position her store as a place to buy gifts. The store's hours are Wednesday, 2 to 7 p.m., and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., or by appointment. Simoneau accepts all major credit cards.

Two specials her store will be running through Christmas include \$3 off the purchase of three skeins of yarn as well as a 10 percent discount to accompany the use of a \$100 gift card.

Simoneau is also using the space to host a resource gathering for local craftspeople on the second Tuesday of each month from 6:30 p.m. until 10 p.m. Those interested in spinning, knitting or crocheting are welcome to come and work and share ideas. Simoneau provides some light refreshments and there is no charge.

Justa Alpaca Farm is located at 998 Farmington Falls Road, just across from the Route 41 intersection. They can be found online at justaalpacas.com. Simoneau can be contacted at info@justaalpacas.com or by calling 207-860-2783 or 207-491-9916.



Sylvia, one of 33 alpacas at Justa Alpaca Farm in Farmington.