

NEWS

# Retailer touts benefits of bamboo fabric

By Allen Jones

A new retailer in Rice Village sells clothing and other items made from bamboo, which the store claims is 3 degrees cooler than cotton.

Cariloha Bamboo, which opened Nov. 28 at 2446 Times Blvd., offers men's and women's apparel, bedding, bath goods, fitness wear, handbags and other items all made of fabric manufactured out of the plant. The franchise owners say bamboo apparel are a good fit for Houston's semitropical climate.

"Once people actually feel the extraordinary softness and coolness of the bamboo fabric for themselves, they are sold," said Linda Whittington, who owns the store along with longtime friend Tracy Young.

The two were on a week-long girls-only vacation together in Aruba in March 2013 when they first saw Cariloha Bamboo apparel, which is sold in 50 countries. The first Cariloha Bamboo stores were in cruise-ship destinations such as Jamaica, Mexico and the Virgin Islands, according to a press release announcing the new store in Houston.

The Rice Village franchise location is the first Cariloha Bamboo store in Houston. The Utah-based company also has stores in Galveston and San Antonio.

Bamboo fabric is comparable in price to cotton, Whittington said.

Bamboo is a woody grass grown mostly in the tropics. Bamboo canes are harvested and cut to make fabric, then soaked in a chemical and pressed into parchment-like sheets. Those are milled into a soft



Cariloha Bamboo

**Houston Cariloha Bamboo owners Linda Whittington and Tracy Young say their bamboo-fiber clothing and products stay cooler than cotton.**

thread that is woven into fabric, Whittington said.

Bamboo fibers and textiles can be used for products ranging from bath mats to underwear, according to "Textile Learner," a blog edited by Md. Mazharul Islam Kiron, a textile consultant in Bangladesh. His blog, which is at [textilelearner.blogspot.com](http://textilelearner.blogspot.com), is often used as a go-to source for fashion industry students.

According to the blog, the use of bamboo as a textile is growing in popularity, and the fiber is a popular choice for products such as bandages, surgical apparel and bath and hand towels.

The site also states bamboo products will not mold in damp environments.

The co-owners of the Cariloha Bamboo store in Rice Village say bamboo, one of the fastest-growing woody plants, is environmentally friendly plant because it is an easily grown, renewable resource.

"Bamboo, being a grass, has some species that can grow up to 4 feet per day

and replenishes itself naturally," Whittington said. "Bamboo produces oxygen, and because it naturally thwarts pests, has no need for the use of pesticides or fertilizers.

"Bamboo fabric by nature is thermal regulating," she said. "It wicks moisture away from the body; cooling when one is hot and warming when cold."

To learn more about the store, visit [www.cariloha.com](http://www.cariloha.com) or call 832-968-3870. The Houston store is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday.

## Have a pitch for these investors?

A panel of investors will disclose what it takes to get them to write a check during the FundingPost Investor Round Table April 16.

The Houston event will be held from 2-5:30 p.m. at Start Houston, a co-working space for entrepreneurs at 1121 Delano St. During the event, visitors will be introduced to early stage local and out-of-town investors.

"Guests will learn how to pitch to investors," said David Drake, chairman of the New York-based LDJ Capital and founder of The Soho Loft Capital Creation Series, which is hosting the event.

The Soho Loft hosts investor events four times each year in the Houston area.

The panel speakers include Jason Jimenez, managing principal of Redstone Business Holdings; Robert Rhodes, managing member of American Equity Fund; John Frazier, director of investments for Presidio Venture Capital; and Philip Racusin, chief executive officer of Energy Funders.

The panel will discuss the things they want to hear from entrepreneurs approaching them with investment opportunities.

Entrepreneurs also will learn the best and worst things they can do to get a potential investor's attention during a pitch as well as learn some of the best ways to contact investors.

The event also will provide networking opportunities with the panel members.

Participants will be given the chance to market themselves and their products or services.

Tickets are \$45 and can be purchased at [www.thesoholoft.com/upcoming-conferences](http://www.thesoholoft.com/upcoming-conferences).

Eighty entrepreneurs are expected to attend, Drake said.

## Group to host design portfolio review

Junior and senior year college students studying design may receive professional feedback on their work, presentation skills, resume, etiquette and attire during AIGA Houston's Student Portfolio Review 2015.

The event allows emerging designers "to sit down with the biggest names in Houston's design world to receive some tough love and constructive feedback on their work," said Andy Rich, president of AIGA Houston, a professional association for design.

AIGA Houston will host the event from 6-9:30 p.m. April 23 at the Heights Fire Station, 107 W. 12th St. Tickets cost \$15 for AIGA members and \$25 for others. To register, visit [www.houston.aiga.org](http://www.houston.aiga.org). The registration deadline is one hour before check-in unless the event sells out.

AIGA Houston's annual portfolio review is being held for the third year at the fire station, a rental venue.

Most of the professionals reviewing portfolios were trained in graphic design and advertising, Rich said.

"Photography, illustration, and animation are all interconnected pieces of the profession," he added.

Rich said participants will leave the event with stronger portfolios, and some could score job interviews.

"The event also affords an opportunity to see the work of their regional peers, and see how their own work compares," Rich said.

This event is not necessarily a job fair; the priority is to prepare students for the job hunt, Rich said.

Houston's strong economy is creating a diverse job market. A decade ago, Rich said, most designers expected to find a job working in the energy industry. That's no longer so.

"New, smaller, creative agencies are opening their

doors every year," he said.

"Combine that with Houston's booming restaurant and fine arts scene, and suddenly it's a whole new ballgame for graphic designers."

What makes a strong design portfolio? Rich said it depends on the type of work a designer is looking for.

"It may consist of photography, illustration, print, digital, packaging or any other design-related endeavor," he said. "Generally speaking, professionals are looking for strong concepts, creative solutions, and big ideas."

Although esthetics and attention to detail are essential elements in a designer's portfolio, Rich said, "Ultimately each portfolio is judged by the originality and breadth of its content."

*Allen Jones is a freelance writer*

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