

# SGN *Style*

ROSSARIO  
GEORGE

## MISS ISLAND GODDESS PAGEANT

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## Rossario George's collections empower wearers, prepares them to take on the world

BY HANNAH SAUNDERS  
SGN EDITOR

TONY VINCENTE  
COURTESY SHOUTOUT COLORADO

Tony Vincente first fell in love with fashion when his mother took him to the Versace store as a child: the garments, their quality, and the ambiance of the store stuck with him. Decades later, Vincente now has his very own high-end brand, Rossario George, named after the father of his partner of 27 years.

Before that, Vincente designed home and household accessories for Vincente Living, until Shop Vida reached out. "I became

a top designer for them, and here we are seven years later, and Rossario George has become a brand to watch," Vincente told the SGN.

Rossario George is an online store. Vincente said he tried to collaborate with a larger retailer, but that it wasn't a good fit: during the first month, all of his garments were stolen. Not to mention, the compensation the retailer proposed for 100% silk garments was laughable.

"Unless it's our store, I do not want to be in a giant retailer. We are fine doing wholesale," Vincente added.

Product design ideas sprout when Vincente listens to music or dreams, and he said there have been times when he's woken up and immediately grabbed his sketchbook, like for his most recent collection, Uccello. When it comes to sourcing product materials, Vincente's team helps by reaching out to specific people.

"Rossario George is made around the world... I look for the highest of qualities of ethical responsibility for these companies and sustainability itself," Vincente said. "There's so much beauty and so many different ways of doing things all around the world—I am just floored when my designs are fully made... I feel like the world is a true bizarre, and it's our duty to enjoy it and bring it to the masses."

Vincente said he is extraordinarily proud of his Uccello collection, as he's never seen anything like it. "The reception of it has been phenomenal," Vincente said. "I have a number of high-end clients now, and it is all because of my Uccello collection."

When wearing Rossario George, Vincente wants people to feel empowered, free, strong, and ready to take on the world, no matter what comes their way. He said that in today's society, people can wear clothing that's reflective of who they are and full of light.

"We're a brand that people can actually wear anywhere," Vincente said. "You can wear a honey suit to work—just put a nice little shirt underneath and you're good to go. If you want to stand out and be a little extra, that's what honey is for."

Vincente loves that Rossario George is all-encompassing: from ball gowns and regular day-to-day wear to skincare and beauty lines (every clothing collection has a matching eye color palette). In March, Vincente will launch a Honey Peach collection, which will include a new shoe.

"My whole goal is to make people happy," Vincente said. "I want them to feel strong, and I want them to feel confident. When I was younger, I didn't have that. I want to empower people now. I want to give them something I wasn't having when I was younger."

With the Uccello and Honey Peach collections dropping this month, Vincente is focused on getting them out to the faces, eyes, and bodies of whoever wants them.

"There's always something for somebody at Rossario George," Vincente said.

Visit <https://rossariogeorge.com> to view his work.



COURTESY ROSSARIO GEORGE





## Culture, empowerment, and beauty Looking ahead to the 2025 Miss Island Goddess Pageant

BY AUDREY OSCARSON

MEL PONDER PHOTOGRAPHY



MEL PONDER PHOTOGRAPHY

The Miss Island Goddess Pageant, hosted by UTOPIA Washington, is back for its 15th year, at Muckleshoot Casino Resort on Saturday, April 5. A night to honor and celebrate Queer and Trans Pacific Islander (QTPI) people, the pageant holds a deep significance for participants, organizers, and community members alike.

Contestants are encouraged to bring aspects of their identity and culture to the pageant, in which they are judged in five categories: Island Goddess wear, swimwear, evening wear, talent, and a question-and-answer portion, focusing on issues pertaining to 2SLGBTQIA+ and Indigenous people. The winner, crowned Miss Island Goddess, will win money and a title, as well as have responsibilities throughout the year, such as community volunteer work, participation in Pride parades, and promotion of the pageant for the upcoming year.

As the executive director at UTOPIA Washington, Taffy Johnson has seen the deep impact that the pageant has had. "The Miss Island Goddess Pageant is a reclamation of our heritage, a reminder that our ancestors embraced fluidity and gender expansiveness long before colonial structures imposed binary norms," Johnson told the *SGN*. "It is a space where we celebrate our identities on our own terms, centering our joy, beauty, and resilience."

While the pageant is a fun event, it also focuses on activism and community work, giving QTPI people a chance to use their voice and the recognition they receive from the pageant to effect change.

"Many of our past Miss Island Goddess winners describe the experience as life-changing," Johnson said. "It's an opportunity to step into their power, embrace their heritage, and become ambassadors for their community. The Miss Island Goddess

beauty pageant is truly a launching pad for leadership."

UTOPIA Washington offers many services for QTPI people, including its food access network, sex worker empowerment, peer support, and the Mapu Maia Clinic, where it offers gender-affirming care, mental health care, and many other services.

The 2025 show promises a beautiful night of celebration, culture, and empowerment. Johnson told the *SGN* that while she can't reveal too many details, it is expected there will be many amazing Queer and Trans performers who use their platforms for change. Applications are open until March 14.

"The Miss Island Goddess Pageant is not just an event, it's a movement," Johnson said. "It reflects the strength, resilience, and vibrancy of LGBTQIA+ communities. UTOPIA Washington is committed to creating spaces where our people can thrive, whether that's through cultural celebrations, healthcare advocacy, or policy work. We invite everyone to come witness this night of glitz and glam, support our contestants, and stand in solidarity with the Transgender and gender-diverse community."

To purchase tickets for the 2025 Miss Island Goddess Pageant, please visit <https://utopiawa.sjoinme.org/UTOPIA-MIG25Tickets>.



# Hatch, South Seattle's new all-inclusive hair salon

BY NOVA BERGER

NOVA BERGER

You're probably familiar with the red-and-white "candy cane" barbershop pole — reminiscent of the primary genders that the colors represent and a staple of the business.

For generations, haircuts have been decided by barbers and stylists, and prices have varied by sex. Women's haircuts can range from \$50 to \$70, with prices in high-end salons going well above \$100. Men's haircuts typically cost between \$20 and \$40 and only include a couple of options.

The new South Seattle salon Hatch is introducing a different concept: besides not setting prices based on gender, barbers experiment with whichever styles call to them, offering cuts based on clientele preferences.

"We can really cater to more clients that are looking for more gender-affirming haircuts. You know, people that don't necessar-

ily feel like they fit into the barbershop vibe or the salon vibe," Mickelle Yeates, the owner, told the SGN.

The unfortunate nature of the hair-cutting business is the distinct separation in styles. "It's very separated still," Yeates said. "So we're trying to create a space where people can get their hair done, whether it's more masculine or feminine. And each of our stylists have different expertise."

"Everybody that works there is Queer [or] Nonbinary of some sort," they added.

## Team of unique stylists

Hatch isn't like other typical barber-shops. It's just a black-and-white storefront, further challenging typical hair salon norms. The space is divided into booths, each with a different style.

Booth renters get to run their own business, set their own pricing, choose their

schedule, etc. Many choose to feature local art and products at their stands. Hatch provides the space and coaching for them to thrive. Harnessing the power of social media, Yeates has collected a dream team of stylists.

"No one at Hatch is an employee," Yeates said. "Each of the six of us are our own business. I was able to find our current team through social media and word of mouth. I've been cultivating relationships with other stylists for years and was thrilled when so many of them wanted to join us when we opened."

One barber, Savannah Rosa, sang Hatch's praises. "I haven't found this creative freedom with any other salon," she said. "Micki takes care of us, gives us a week off for holiday, anything we need."

Rosa also said Yeates uses social media to support all of her barbers. "Within [a] day, our work goes out on Instagram."

## Wave of the future

Yeates said the most popular haircut right now is "business in the front, party in the back."

"Definitely from my chair, I'm seeing a lot of mullets, a lot of, like, subtle mohawks," Yeates said. "We're kind of moving away from really close clipper cuts and having a little bit more hair on the sides, a little bit more texture.... Something that you can just mess up, have a little bed head, put some product on it."

Savannah agreed, though she thinks that mod haircuts are more the wave of the future.

*Hatch, at 4527 Rainier Ave., is open 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily. Appointments are recommended. Visit <https://www.hatchhairandcompany.com> for more information.*



HAIR BY SAVANNAH ROSA AT HATCH  
COURTESY INSTAGRAM



NOVA BERGER



## Gothic Pride Seattle unites goth and Queer communities

BY ARUL GNANASIVAM

COURTESY GOTHIC PRIDE SEATTLE

Now in their 24th year, Gothic Pride Seattle has been uniting the Goth and Queer community through events such as the Dark Delights Bazaar and the Consent 101 Workshop, ever since its humble start at Mercury nightclub in Capitol Hill. Newly appointed President Chuckie Bear is excited to continue the old traditions while ringing in new and compelling additions.

A big priority of Gothic Pride Seattle is safety and education. One of its most popular events is a quarterly consent workshop. “The consent workshops basically teach people what yes means and no means, and what boundaries are,” Bear told the *SGN*.

These values are part of what makes the group so important for its members. When it started at the Mercury, the club provided an environment that allowed for members to freely express themselves without judgment

— one of the most unifying aspects of both the goth and Queer communities, and a big part of what makes Gothic Pride so special.

“They dress the way they want to dress and show their emotions through dance and movement,” Bear said.

Gothic Pride provides opportunities for members old and new to up their fashion and find pieces that speak to them. In the Dark Delights Bazaar, vendors sell goth goods such as clothing, jewelry, and other accessories. Everyone wears black, but each person can mix their style with genres like fetish, steampunk, industrial, and many more.

“Personally, it’s really about what music scene you’re into,” Bear said. “It really shows your aesthetic.”

For those looking to dip their toes into

the world of goth clothing, Bear recommends New York Exchange on Capitol Hill, known for its clubbing attire — and perfect for anyone looking to express themselves on a night out.

### The importance of music in gothic culture

Music is another big part of Gothic Pride’s events and the experience as a whole. This year the organization is bringing the Mechanismus Festival to Seattle, featuring a wide range of rock, industrial, and experimental music. Some board members will also serve as DJs, bringing the influence of the Mercury to the big stage; they will also play at Gothic Pride’s headline event: the Gothic Beauty Pageant.

The pageant on June 2 will spotlight the artistry of contestants as they strut their

fashion, showcase their dancing prowess, and answer questions from a panel of judges that will include public figures, community members, and previous winners. The newly crowned titleholder will join the city’s Pride Parade, where Gothic Pride Seattle will debut a new addition.

“Last year we had a brand-new float built,” Bear said. “We have our royals march in the parade with us, and we have a DJ inside the float.”

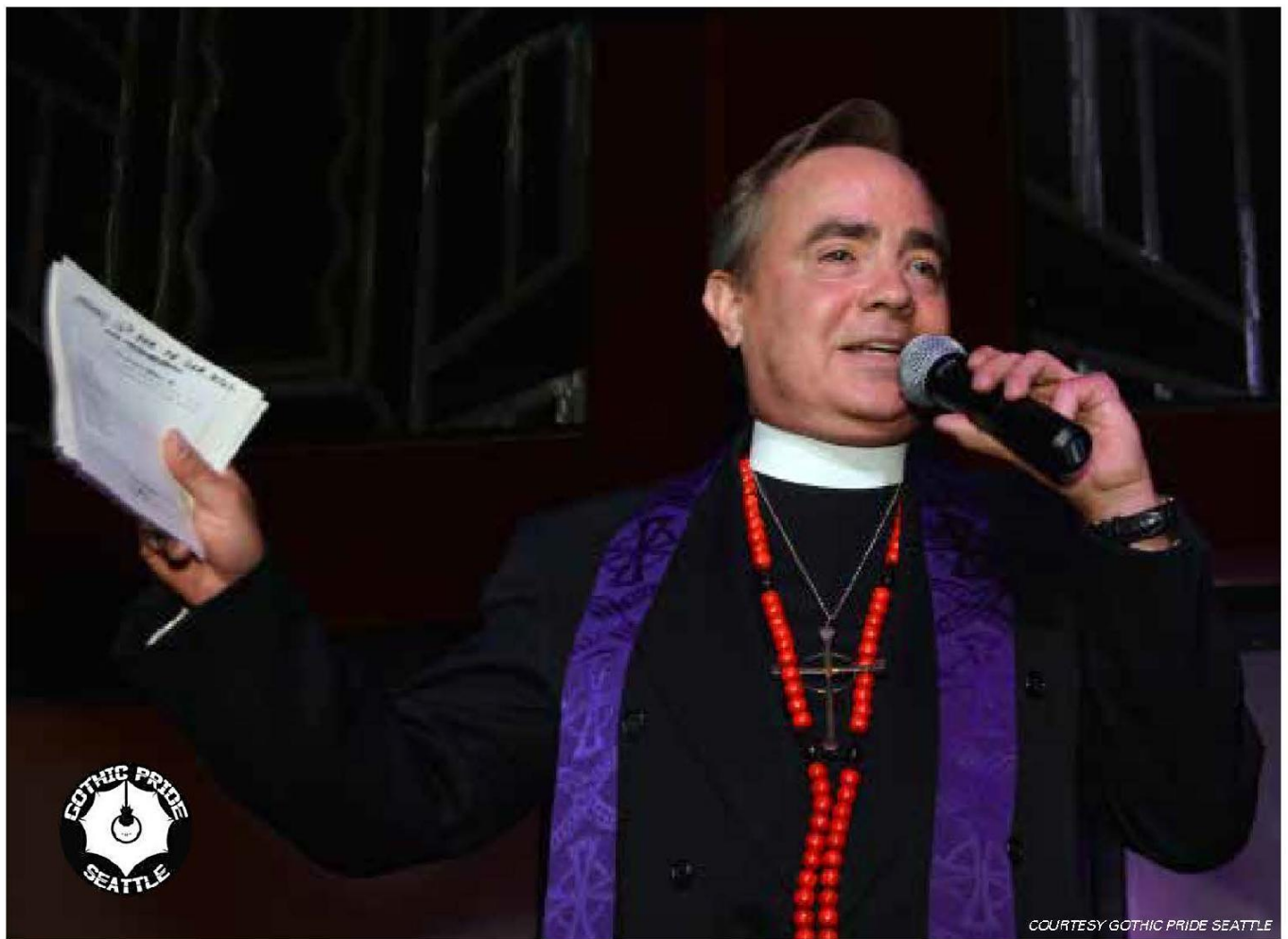
With plenty of events coming up in the spring and summer, Gothic Pride Seattle is staying busy in its mission to bring goth expression to everyone and create a community where members can feel valued and safe to express themselves.



COURTESY GOTHIC PRIDE SEATTLE



COURTESY GOTHIC PRIDE SEATTLE



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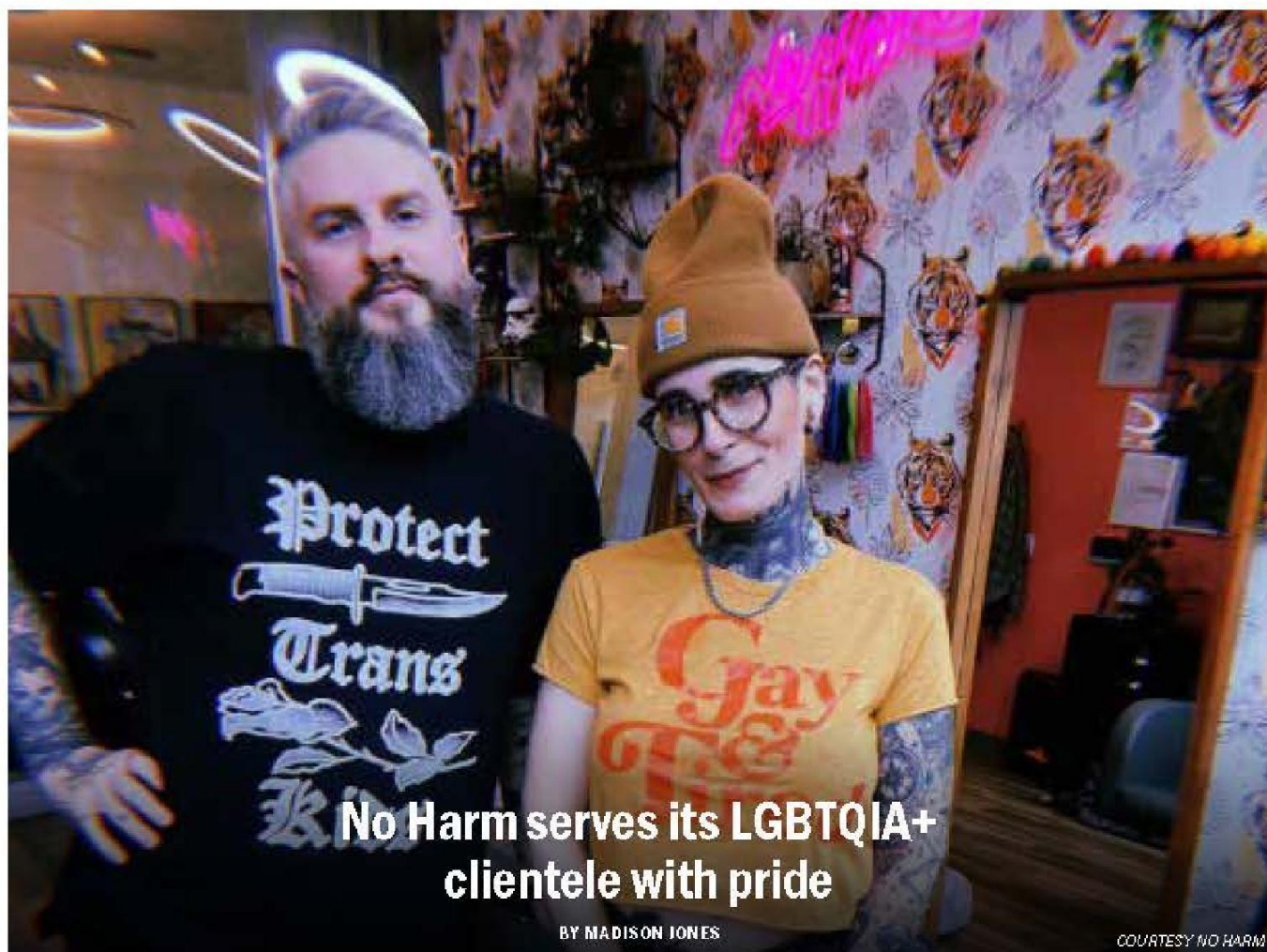


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## No Harm serves its LGBTQIA+ clientele with pride

BY MADISON JONES

COURTESY NO HARM

Anita Hulitza and Andy Coleman, partners in life as well as business, are the joint owners of No Harm, a Ballard-based hair salon that has operated since 2020. The duo works together as stylists specializing in Queer-affirming cuts.

Their relationship and hairstyling journey began when Hulitza, having finished beauty school, met Coleman after moving to Seattle to work in a salon on Capitol Hill, where they started out as coworkers. Even though both were married to other people at the time, they quickly became best friends. Hulitza recalled the kindness that Coleman showed her in her career's early years, and the skills she learned from him. The two also found out how similar they were in terms of personalities, the things they enjoyed, and how they viewed the world.

The nature of their relationship changed in 2018 as they both went through divorces. Hulitza talked about that time as "an expe-

rience that, while challenging, ultimately changed our lives for the better," as they both realized there was something more than platonic friendship between them. In time, they fell in love.

### No Harm is founded

Hulitza and Coleman were inspired to create No Harm in 2020 after leaving their previous relationships and coming out as Queer, which was a huge milestone for both. Unable to be their authentic selves in their marriages, now things completely changed. "That feeling was incredible," Hulitza said.

Another factor was the pandemic. The couple had been working in separate spaces when the hit, and they realized things needed to change. Hulitza admits that opening No Harm during that time was not an easy feat; however, she said it was still the best decision, as "we finally were able to have a space that was truly ours, a

space where we could be our true, authentic selves."

Hulitza said that people ask all the time whether it is difficult being both business owners and romantic partners. "Honestly, we do a damn good job being romantic business partners!" she said, with the key to their success being so similar, and having worked so much together in the past, which allows them to elevate each other creatively, strengthen their relationship, and grow as individuals.

### Styling with pride

The pair recognizes hair as a powerful tool of self-expression that LGBTQIA+ people use in their daily lives, and the huge role it plays in affirming Queer and Trans people's identities.

"Our Queer identities play a huge role in what we do," Hulitza said. "I think the biggest thing for us is creating a safe space."

Setting themselves apart from other

spaces, Hulitza asserted that "No Harm is always challenging industry norms, constantly pushing back on rigid beauty standards and traditional practices that don't serve diverse clients." She highlighted serving the needs of Trans and Nonbinary clients, as well as how in the last decade they both have constantly pushed themselves to work with people of all hair types and textures.

"Queerness often embraces individuality and fluidity, [which is] why gender-affirming haircuts are so important to us," Hulitza said.

*No Harm is open Wednesday to Saturday at 1416 NW 45th St. #301, Seattle, with online appointment booking at <https://www.noharmsaattle.com>.*



ANDY COLEMAN, COURTESY NO HARM



ANITA HULITZA, COURTESY NO HARM



## What's rainbow thrifting without a little rain: Sunny days at Out of the Closet

BY NOVA BERGER

COURTESY OUT OF THE CLOSET

If you're from Capitol Hill, odds are you are a rainbow aficionado, a lover of Dickies, and a thrifter. The district's staple thrift shop for some of the best deals on gender-affirming clothing, Lifelong Thrift, is closing its current location later this month and rebranding under a new nonprofit. But just a few blocks away rests Out of the Closet and its plethora of colorful products.

Most of the inventory at Out of the Closet is between three and six dollars, and it's a place where people can find some wacky wonders.

"I think, especially in Capitol Hill, you don't have a lot of places like this, like, all the other stores are super expensive," Kent Renda, a Seattle University student, told the *SGN*.

Yet it's a unique sort of business. While it still serves the neighborhood's passion for fashion, it does so with a purpose.

Out of the Closet works with the nonprofit AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF)

to provide free services, including pharmacy products for people living with HIV or testing for those who want it.

"That's really what's most important, because if they don't get that medication, they're at risk of their life," Dylan, an employee, told the *SGN*. On Capitol Hill, Dylan says he sees 15 to 18 people per day.

The AHF is a global nonprofit that provides comprehensive HIV/AIDS care worldwide. In addition, it focuses on affordable housing and has expanded its global reach to over 45 countries, through over 22 Out of the Closet locations.

The prices for antiretroviral HIV medication without assistance are also egregious, ranging from \$1,000 to \$3,000 per month.

"Lemme tell you this: It ain't cheap. Without those programs it's like \$14,000 [annually]," said Marcus of Changes Bar in Wallingford, who has lost many friends to the disease. "I've been to over a hundred

funerals... It's been 34 years. It's easy to get care, but you have to be willing to do it."

HIV is a part of Capitol Hill life. A stroll to some of the most popular businesses, like Elliott Bay Book Company and Cafe Ladro, will lead you along the AIDS Memorial Pathway. Cal Anderson Park, the heart of the neighborhood, is crowned by an AIDS memorial.

"You had a death sentence then. People were dropping off like flies. I can't even tell you how many friends I lost," said Marcus.

Recent news threatens a return to that scary place. The 60-day freeze on US foreign aid, including funding for the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), has created significant uncertainty in the fight against HIV/AIDS globally. While a temporary waiver from the State Department allows for continued distribution of HIV medications, it remains unclear if other essential services are fully covered.

There's also the fear for the truth. Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. is known to think that recreational drug use, particularly amyl nitrite (poppers), is the primary cause of AIDS, rather than HIV.

Out of the Closet is doing its best to remain faithful to medically accurate resources.

"You know, spreading awareness about what's going on... Regular TV doesn't always cover everything," said Dylan, who added that they are preparing for an influx of new donations. (Visitors can continue to donate, as well as schedule times to drop off at <https://outofthecloset.org/donate>.)

*Lifelong Thrift is at 312 Broadway E. and is open noon to 7 p.m. daily (5 p.m. on Sunday and Monday). Out of the Closet is at 1016 E. Pike St. and is open 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily (6 p.m. on Sunday).*



NOVA BERGER



NOVA BERGER



COURTESY OUT OF THE CLOSET



NOVA BERGER



COURTESY LIFELONG THRIFT

## Lifelong Thrift plans to close – but store will reopen under new nonprofit

BY HANNAH SAUNDERS  
SGN EDITOR

In January the *SGN* reported that Lifelong's Capitol Hill thrift store at 312 Broadway E. would forever shutter its doors on March 31st. But now, the following day, the store will actually stage a revival under a new nonprofit organization.

"We are closing as Lifelong Thrift on March 31st, that is true, but will transition with the same staff but a different nonprofit and have a soft opening April 1st," Tamara Asakawa, executive director of Lifelong Thrift Stores, told the *SGN*.

During the first month of the new year, CEO Erica Sessle announced that Lifelong is closing its Lucile Street location to move into a new and larger facility in Georgetown.

Part of that move previously included shuttering Lifelong Thrift, which has long

been dedicated to serving the LGBTQIA+ community, including through a \$25 voucher program for people living with HIV to be connected to services and needed items.

The transfer of the thrift store to a new nonprofit will allow Lifelong to continue to prioritize its core services, like food and nutrition, housing access, and dental care, among others.

Lifelong has spent over 40 years fighting for and serving marginalized communities through food and nutrition access, HIV support, and housing services.




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COURTESY TIFFANIE DARKE

## How to be stylish and sustainable

BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

**WHAT TO WEAR AND WHY: YOUR GUILT-FREE GUIDE TO SUSTAINABLE FASHION**

TIFFANIE DARKE  
© 2024 Broadleaf Books  
\$27.99  
262 pages

So what are you wearing? Right now, take a good look, and then think about where you got it. How long have you had it? Where was it made? Those are important things to know, said Tiffanie Darke, because fashion has gotten out of hand.

The average closet has “around 150 items,” and most of those shirts, skirts, pants, and shorts will be worn just 7–10 times before they’re thrown away. “Americans,” she said, “buy an average of fifty-two items of clothes a year,” and most are inexpensive — and inexpensively made. This is bad for the consumer, workers in other countries, and the environment.

In times past, clothing was made of organic materials: mostly linen, flax, and silk for the wealthy and wool for everyone else. The Industrial Revolution changed everything with cheaper manufacturing. In the 1940s, everything changed again when synthetic fabric became available. Problem is, those textiles leach plastics into the air, earth, and water, and there’s no safe way to recycle them — which means that tons of discarded clothing ends up in landfills, “secondhand markets,” or a pile in a desert overseas.

So what can you do about this?

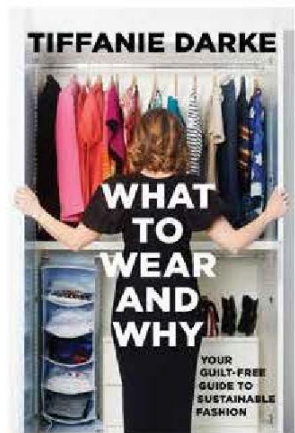
Shop your own closet before you buy, and keep only a small number of basic essentials. Don’t purchase more than five new pieces of clothing per year — and when you do, buy quality items or thrift what you need and resell what you don’t want anymore. Consider renting. Learn the art of

repair, and forget about “fashion.”

Instead, “take inspiration from what is around” and “develop your own style.”

Wanting to do better won’t be difficult after you’ve read some of the frightening statistics Darke offers, ones that will resonate. All but the most indifferent person will ask themselves if they *really* need four black tees. It helps that this is an easy book to understand and embrace, especially if you’re concerned with the environment and your wallet. The hard part will be actually following through with so much advice. Still, what Darke advocates is empowering and, let’s admit it, a fun challenge that will make you feel better about how you look and what you grab each morning.

Fashionistas, the financially challenged, and new style-makers will find something to think about in something to think about in *What to Wear and Why*.



## Dare to dream of creating your ideal living space

BY TERRI SCHLICHENMEYER

**FOR THE LOVE OF RENOVATING: TIPS, TRICKS & INSPIRATION FOR CREATING YOUR DREAM HOME**

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Your humble abode is much more than a big box to put your things in, say Barry Bordelon and Jordan Slocum. In fact, “you deserve to create a truly special place to call home.”

When you tour a new home to buy or rent, you naturally dream about a reading nook, a cozy fireplace, holiday dinners, and movie night with the family. So how do you make those dreams into a home? How do you get motivated to tackle a reno job? You start with *For the Love of Renovating*.

Its authors know what they’re talking about: together, they bought and remodeled a beautiful old Brooklyn brownstone years ago. When it came to renovations, they noticed a definite lack of direction for how to do it right. Blogs helped, though, as did magazines. For you, so will this book.

Their first advice: spend some time figuring out what you want. Would a fixer-upper make you happy, or is move-in-ready mandatory? There are pros and cons to both.

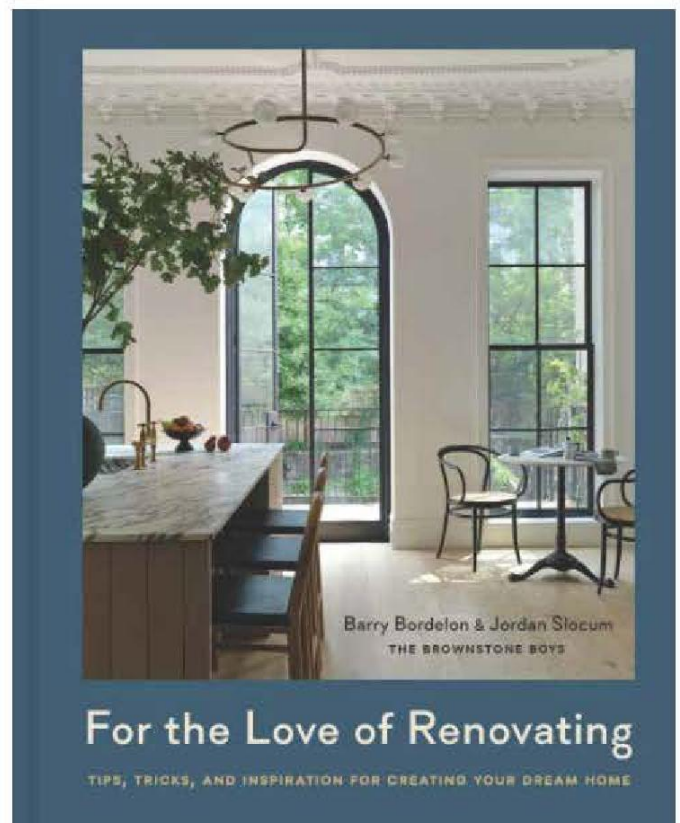
Next, “really start thinking about the B-word.” Budgeting is essential and should be top-of-list for anyone who’s thinking about renovating. Educate yourself on financial terminology, and know ahead of time how you’re going to pay for any proj-

ect, no matter the size. Build a “team” to do the job right — and don’t even think about skimping on your workers.

Dare to dream of design at this point. Think about how you cook if you’re renovating your kitchen, and learn about various kinds of cabinets and counters. If the bathroom’s first, determine how much space you’ll have and what fixtures you require. And if you’re thinking about a reno that doesn’t involve tear-downs, you might be in luck: furniture you already have may be able to be refurbished. New window treatments can be inexpensive. The do-it-yourself tips here can help you save money, spending it instead on nicer floors, upgraded windows, even new doors.

For sure, it’s going to be work, and Bordelon and Slocum don’t hide that fact. Instead, they instruct readers how to make a reno a little less painful, with how-to tips and advice on nearly every homeownership aspect, from finding financing to determining what the outside of your home should look like. Readers will like being forearmed with no-nonsense, no-frills hints. You’ll also relish the many, many full-color photos that drip with inspiration.

*For the Love of Renovating* is a book you’ll page through often, whether you just finished a reno or are planning another. And it’s one most homeowners will want to make room for.





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