

Historic Folsom Small Business Stories – All in the Family

When it comes to chasing your dream, there's no one else better to have alongside you than your family.

In Historic Folsom, you'll find a wide variety of family-owned businesses, many of which have been serving our community for 40, 50 and even 60 years. These aren't just mom and pop shops...they're multi-faceted, multi-generational and born out of love.

Here are some of the stories of family-owned businesses here in the heart of Historic Folsom.

Carrying on a Legacy

Scott's Seafood Roundhouse owner, Suzanne Cook, carries on her late husband John's legacy each and every day.

When in the span of one year three key members of the Scott's team passed away – John, their General Manager of 15 years, and one of their investors—Suzanne knew she wanted to honor him. John always dreamt of owning his own restaurant and loved being around customers and creating a strong sense of community. He'd cultivated something really special at Scott's – a place people loved coming to.

After John passed away, Suzanne kept his dream alive. She credits the inpouring of support from family and friends, customers, staff, and the entire Folsom community for giving her the strength to keep going. And the fact that Scott's is such a beloved restaurant here, filled with warmth, laughter and love, is a testament to Suzanne's beautiful love story.

For Roman and Alla Oleynik, owners of Romans Jewelry, their family business not only keeps a time-honored tradition and family legacy alive, but it also allows their entire family to work together.

After Roman's family immigrated to the US from Ukraine in 1991, his dad opened up the jewelry store on Sutter Street in 1995. He worked with his father, learning the art of jewelry making from the young age of 12.

When Roman and Alla got married in 2002, they took over the family business to honor Roman's father and together they have been a treasured part of the district for nearly 25 years.

Today, they get to work alongside their children, which is one of their favorite things about having a family business. Their other favorite? Seeing families come into the store to find treasured jewelry pieces that can be passed down to the next generation.

Scotty Litteral, owner of Pizzeria Classico, has been working in his family's business since he was 13 years old.

Together with his wife Renee and his parents, Scott and Mary, Scotty and his family bring mouthwatering pizzas and pastas to the table every night. They've opened a whopping 15 restaurants over the years (wow!!!), with Pizzeria Classico being right here in Historic Folsom for 40 years.

Part of the magic of a family-owned business is the love people instantly feel when they walk through the door. Pizzeria Classico isn't just a place you go to grab a slice of pizza. It's a place where generations of families have been coming to celebrate birthdays, your kid's big soccer game win, or have Friday night family dinner.

It's where time slows down a little bit. It's where you can have a meal that feels like a home away from home.

There's no place that feels more quintessentially Historic Folsom than Snooks Chocolate Factory, owned by the delightful Snook family.

Originally opened in 1963 by John and Jeannine Snook, their son Jim and his wife, Renee, took over the family-business. Now alongside their eldest son, Eric, they keep the magic and family legacy alive.

But it's not just these three who create the magic of Snooks. Eric's brothers, Daniel and Alex, cousins Michael, Blaiklee, and Brody, and the entire Snooks team (who all feel like family) have assisted with the creation of every wonderfully delicious treat made!

You'll even find Jim and Renee's grandkids at the shop too, so it's always filled with love, laughter, and family. And if you want to know the secret ingredient in their recipe for success, here it is.

Each piece of candy and chocolate has at least one cup of love!

Dynamic Duos

When Jim Metzker and his wife, Sherri, were on a date one night in Historic Folsom, they discovered this charming shop at the corner of Sutter and Wool Streets.

Filled with ornate Christmas ornaments and decorations, Sherri had never seen anything quite like it before. Christmas...year-round! She was in love. And Jim happened to notice a “For Sale” sign behind the counter.

Behind the scenes, Jim, an entrepreneur most of his career, worked out a deal and bought his lovely wife Dorothea’s Shoppe, one of Historic Folsom’s most beloved stores. You couldn’t write a cuter Hallmark movie than their love story and buying a Christmas shop!

And over 10 years after buying Dorothea’s, Jim is still so glad he surprised Sherri because they’ve loved every minute of owning the store. He loves how the store brings in families from all over, including his own (you’ll find their kids and grandchildren often visiting and helping out), and serves up holiday cheer year-round.

For Sutter Street Theatre owners, Mike Jimena and Connie Mockenhaupt, their unconventional love story started when Mike first met Connie while she was teaching drama, music and dance at a Sacramento area high school, and he was helping with fundraising for the department.

Their friendship blossomed and one Christmas, Connie asked her kids if it’d be ok for Mike to join their holiday celebration as his family was out of town. As Connie jokes, *“Mike came over for dinner and never left.”* They’ve been married almost 27 years.

They opened Sutter Street Theatre in 2006 with the goal of making great theatre accessible to everyone. From Off Broadway shows to family-friendly series, Mike and Connie love bringing a diversity of shows to Historic Folsom.

From hosting acting workshops and giving young people the chance to shine on stage, Mike and Connie have crafted an award-winning live theatre experience that people of all ages can enjoy.

Husband and wife duo, Ken and Joan Masegian, owners of More Than Olives, have been married for over 40 years and they’ve got a whole lot of love for their beautiful kids, grandkids, and great-grandkids!

After working in the real estate industry for many years, they craved something they could do together that they felt truly passionate about. A magazine ad, promoting owning a

franchise focused on California olive oil and specialty foods, caught Joan's eye, so she brought the idea to Ken.

Since their favorite place to be is cooking in the kitchen, trying new recipes, it was the perfect fit! Joan and Ken first opened up shop in 2008 and moved to Historic Folsom in 2014.

Joan and Ken have created something pretty special at More Than Olives. Their incredible team feels like family, the store inspires you to cook flavorful dishes, and everyone working behind the counter is ready to pour you a taste and help you find the perfect pairing of fresh olive oil and artisan balsamic vinegar.

Plus, they're a lot of fun to be around!

Another fun husband and wife duo you've got to meet? Mike and Melissa Owen, owners of Crystal Basin Station!

They've got a lot of love for each other and for pouring up some delicious wine. First introduced to the art of winemaking when he was a kid, Mike watched his dad make wine in their cellar and eventually started helping him.

Even though Mike's career started in accounting, he always kept a foot in the door while winemaking at home. In the mid-1990s, Mike and Melissa moved to Europe for a few years, where they had their first child. They loved everything about Europe – the food, the beautiful landscape, the wine!

So, when they moved back to the US, they decided to take the leap and go into commercial winemaking.

You could say they've really crushed it! Crystal Basin Cellars opened in Camino back in 2000 and they've been making award-winning wines with grapes from El Dorado County for the past 25 years.

They opened the tasting room here in Historic Folsom in 2020, and besides great wine, they serve up a lot of laughter and love!

Quality family time

One of Historic Folsom's newer family-owned and operated businesses is Ben & Jerry's, owned by Amy and Justin Pierce.

You might recognize Amy's name as she also is a co-owner of Folsom Café alongside her mother-in-law, Susie, and sister-in-law, Ashley. This close-knit family works together, laughs together, and even gets in on some fantasy football together!

Amy and Justin were high school sweethearts, got married, and have beautiful twin daughters. They decided they wanted to open a business that would allow them to spend quality time with their girls, especially as they're getting older.

There's nothing more quintessentially wholesome and family like an ice cream shop, which is what was so appealing to them about opening one of the only Ben & Jerry's locations in Northern California.

Amy and Justin love seeing all the families who come in for a special treat and creating sweet memories, because as any parent will understand, those little moments, days, months and years pass by so quickly.

For proud father Brian Knadle, his eyes light up when he talks about his daughter, Macy.

That's why he decided to open Italian-inspired restaurant, Bella Maci, alongside his daughter and her mom, Brooke. There is such incredible love there, and you can feel it when you walk through the restaurant door.

Brian's been a successful chef and restaurateur here in Historic Folsom for many years, opening both Sutter Street Steakhouse and Marly & Moo. When Macy was little, she was right by his side helping out.

And as all kids do, they grow up. Brian knew in his heart he wanted to open up a restaurant where he could work with Macy and Brooke and do something special with (and for) his family.

The intimate dining experience at Bella Maci enables them to interact with customers, and their warm and welcoming nature invites everyone in. Between mouthwatering food and amazing company, Brian, Macy and Brooke make you feel you're the only people in the room.

A district built on family

If you've not yet had a chance to support these family-owned businesses, along with the many others here in Historic Folsom, this is your invitation to check them out!

The district is filled with unique shops, restaurants and experiences, so whatever you're looking for, you'll find it right here.