

Historic Folsom Stories – Follow Your Dreams

When asked the question, “Why did you start your business?” most of the merchants here in Historic Folsom shared it was a dream to own their own business someday and be their own boss. Many owners worked corporate jobs early in their careers, while others have been serial entrepreneurs.

But the one thing they all have in common?

A passion for what they do.

Get ready to be inspired by these stories of Historic Folsom merchants who have followed their dreams!

They say that what you loved as a kid is often what you’ll do later in life.

For Rich Veale, owner of Sutter Street Steakhouse, he discovered his love of cooking as a young child. Growing up in a large Italian family, everything centered around food – whether you were cooking or gathered round the table, talking, laughing, and enjoying delicious meals together.

It was in college when Rich got his first job working in a restaurant. As he says, “*You don’t find the industry. The industry finds you.*” He was hooked. So, when the opportunity to become a partner and open the steakhouse here in Historic Folsom, he went all in to pursue his dream.

He brings his love of cooking delectable food, creating a one-of-a-kind experience, and cultivating a community each and every day to Sutter Street!

Ron Peterson, owner of The Game Getaway, loves games. Board games, card games, strategy games...whatever the game, he’s your guy. And it’s been his passion ever since he could remember.

As a young boy, he enjoyed playing games with his family and friends. As a teenager he and his buddies would play Dungeons & Dragons and other strategy-based board games like Catan. What Ron loves the most, though, is how games bring people together.

They’re something that foster community. They make us laugh, they bring out the fierce competitors, they make us think outside the box.

Eric Rushing, owner of Folsom Hotel and Yager Lodge, has loved music since he was a kid. He realized he didn't want to be a musician, but he knew he wanted to work in the industry.

From building a music management company and record label to creating some of the Sacramento region's most iconic bars and nightlife venues, he's always followed his dream. Along with music, he's also got a big passion for history and loves old buildings. In fact, his main office is in one of the buildings in Old Sacramento.

So, he always knew he wanted to open something in Historic Folsom because he loves the charm and the rich history rooted in the Gold Rush. When Eric had the opportunity to buy the Folsom Hotel and the old Yager's and revive them, he went all in and created two iconic venues here in Historic Folsom!

Sharing your passion is best done with others.

For Mike Sanson, owner of Riley's on Sutter, he's got a big heart – for creating the best experience for his customers and sharing his love of dogs.

After college, he discovered a passion for hospitality, while working for various restaurants, bars, resorts, and nightclubs. He learned from the best of the best and takes that knowledge and experience to craft something truly special for everyone who walks through the doors of Riley's.

But more than anything, he has a passion for his pups – past and present – that have stolen his heart. Riley's is named in memory of his first dog, a beautiful black Labrador Retriever named Riley. When she passed away from cancer, he poured his heart into rescuing Labs, giving senior pups a second chance, and honoring Riley's memory each and every day.

Kyle Stillman, owner of Sociology Coffee Bar, started his career as a graphic designer working as a freelancer and on in-house teams.

Most days, he'd work from cafes and coffee shops when he lived in Portland and that's where he discovered a passion for coffee. It wasn't just for the drink itself. It was for the community and culture. He found many cafes had a vibe where you just felt unwelcome, like you weren't cool enough to be there. And then there were others where you felt at home.

When he decided to follow his passion and open his very own coffee bar, he was intentional about cultivating a welcoming community. It's not just a place to grab a cup of coffee and leave. It's a place to linger. It's a place that feels like home away from home.

Zhuo Dan Ting (aka Ms. Ting) always loved art – drawing, painting, calligraphy – so when she discovered tattoo artistry it's like everything in her world fell into place.

In 2003, she opened her first tattoo shop in Shanghai and was one of the first women to do so in China. She became known as China's First Lady of Tattoos and her shop, Shanghai Tattoo, was (and still is) world-famous.

After getting married to Joshua Thompson, she and Joshua decided to move to the U.S. and open a tattoo shop. Ms. Ting's Shanghai Tattoo has been wildly successful here in Historic Folsom, bringing in people from across the country and internationally.

Ms. Ting and Joshua share their passion with everyone who comes in, creating an atmosphere that's warm, welcoming, makes you feel at ease, and where you just want to hang out with some pretty epic people!

Following your heart doesn't always follow a straight path.

For many of us, the path we think we're going to take in life greatly differs from what calls our hearts.

Mark Dascallos, owner of Gaslight Co., always loved working in the restaurant industry when he was in high school and college. There was something so special about interacting with customers and creating memorable experiences for them.

But after graduating from college, he got a job working as a corporate trainer for a bank. After doing that for several years, Mark realized his heart just wasn't in it. He decided to make the switch back into working in the restaurant world and by the time he was 36 he was a partner in a successful restaurant group.

Naturally the next step for him was to open his own place! In 2016 he opened Gaslight Co., with a vision of creating something even bigger over the next several years. Since then, he's expanded to include The Backroom, Folsom's first speakeasy (since the Prohibition!) and The Venue, a beautiful event space.

For Jim Kelly, owner of Rainbow Bridge Jewelers, he also took a turn from what he was studying in college. While in art school, Jim had several friends who designed jewelry and sold it on the streets of San Francisco.

He saw how successful they were and decided to learn how to create beautiful, unique jewelry pieces. It was love at first design!

His talented co-owner, partner and fellow artist, **Dorothy Cormack,** also loves what she does. While she still creates art (check out some of her acrylic and metal works), she primarily focuses on curating an incredible wearable art gallery featuring Jim's jewelry.

Dorothy discovers unique local and international jewelry artists who use similar materials like sterling silver, alternative metals and gemstones and features their pieces alongside Jim's. Together, they're a powerhouse duo who have created something truly magical!

It's more than a business — it's a calling.

And while the paths each of these merchants took were different, one thing they can all say is that they don't consider their businesses to be a job.

It's their passion. It's their true calling.