



BRADLY J. BONER / NEWS&GUIDE

Owner Hillary Rosendahl calls her Gaslight Alley boutique, **Bet the Ranch**, a “pony-size” store specializing in accessories to wear and handmade novelties inspired by the Western lifestyle. Getting into business doesn’t have to cost a fortune, she said. “All it takes is a dollar and a dream.”

SMALL SHOPS

Continued from cover

Bet the Ranch, another boutique gift shop, next door to Made. She too utilizes every inch of her 380-square-foot space. Vintage cowboy boots and nouveau Western home decor line her shelves.

Rosendahl pounded the pavement three and a half years ago to find the perfect space. Other stores were too big, and the rent was above her comfort level, she said.

The Jackson Hole Buffalo Meat Company occupied the space where Bet the Ranch and Made now live when Rosendahl decided to move into half of the meat company’s store. She built a wall between the spaces and opened up shop.

Across the street on North Cache, Tobacco Row, an outfitter of premium cigars and tobacco products owned by Brady Hayek, crams as much as possible into 300 square feet. Fortunately, cigars are small, so it works, Hayek said.

In the back, Tobacco Row’s humidifier is basically a closet with sliding glass doors. One employee perches behind a counter surrounded by thousands of pipes and products as customers shuffle sideways to move by each other.

Town Square Tavern Liquors is another occupant in the small retail sector. Steve and Mike Mattheis, owners of the second-floor Town Square Tavern, use the 250 square feet below the bar as a liquor, soft drink and snack store.

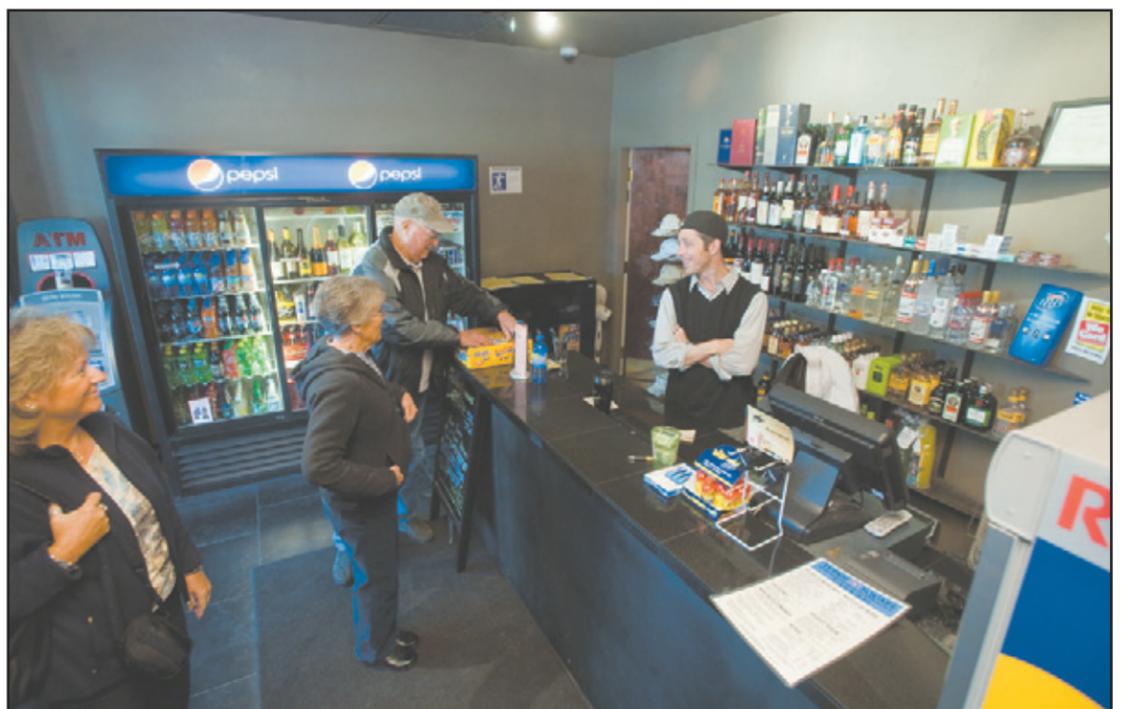
“I’ve got plenty of experience seeing tourists come and look for items on the square,” Mike Mattheis, a lifelong Jackson resident, said. “It filled a need.”

Restaurants are a different animal, but Kim’s Corner, a Korean takeout restaurant, and Down On Glen, known for its spicy breakfast burritos, face many of the same issues.

Only two people work in Down On Glen at a time, serving breakfast and lunch from 6:30 a.m. until 2 p.m. Standing within the confines of approximately 104 square feet, one employee takes orders from behind the Dutch door and another fries, scrambles and dices sausage, eggs and vegetables to roll into flour tortillas.

Kim’s Corner, encapsulated in 70 square feet, can hold only one employee, and that’s chef-owner Kim Degman. Guests order food from a window at the end of Powderhorn Mall then wait patiently as she makes each dish to order.

Serving only three options — spicy pork, spinach-soy-gin-



PRICE CHAMBERS / NEWS&GUIDE

Tim Cannon talks with customers Sunday at **Town Square Tavern Liquors**, the small convenience store below the upstairs bar. Cannon likes meeting the people who come through his doors. “I even get tourists in here that ask crazy questions like, ‘Where’s the Town Square?’”

ger beef patties and vegetable rice bowls — makes it easier on Degman to prepare meals, but space is a major challenge. She is forced to make daily trips to the grocery store, conveniently located in the plaza, because her refrigerators are dorm-size. She buys the smallest amount possible, but it must be enough to feed the lunch crowd the next day. One result is a reputation for freshness and quality.

“I can no longer advertise, because I can’t handle the amount of people” and still uphold high standards, she said.

So far, her model works, and she’s learned a lot about what is expected from her as a restaurateur.

“It’s challenging,” she said. “I need to balance between the customer service, being quick and having good quality. People want it fast, but you really have to put love into your food, and people also want to talk to you.”

Degman wears many hats — chef, server, dishwasher, cashier, bookkeeper — but she

plans to wear only one when she expands as early as next year. She’s waiting for the right opportunity and the right investor to bring her Korean dishes to more people in a sit-down environment.

While Degman dreams of expanding, the owners of Town Square Tavern Liquors, Made, Tobacco Row and Bet the Ranch don’t. In their cases, the teeny spaces add to the ambiance.

“Sometimes, we would love to have more space,” Frechette said, “but on the flip side it keeps our rent as minimal as possible. Independent artists can only produce so much at a time anyway, so this way we can focus on things we love, don’t have to sell out and can be a place that locals are comfortable coming to shop.”

Location also plays a part with businesses’ success. Rosendahl said she has definitely looked at expanding, but making the leap to a larger space comes down to money and location.

“The location here is so epic,” she said. “I get the walk-by traffic, so I don’t have to advertise a lot.”

Foot traffic means community support — something all business owners claimed is exceptional in Jackson.

“Locals really want to help local businesses,” Degman said. “I don’t think I could have this restaurant without their support.”

Breaking into the small business market isn’t easy, but starting small is a way to test the water. Each business owner carved a niche and answered a need, known or unknown, in the community.

Rosendahl’s parents, Joni and Albert Upsher, were entrepreneurs who opened Snake River Brewing Company.

“They told me to start small because you can always grow, and no matter what you’re doing, things always evolve,” she said. “If you have a dream and you want to do something, you should do it. All it takes is a dollar and a dream.”



PRICE CHAMBERS / NEWS&GUIDE FILE PHOTO

Kim Degman owns **Kim’s Corner**, the 70-square-foot takeout Korean restaurant in Powderhorn Plaza.