

HON. RICARDO S. MARTINEZ

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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON
AT SEATTLE

CASCADE YARNS, INC., a Washington Corporation,

Plaintiff,

vs.

KNITTING FEVER, INC., a New York Corporation, DESIGNER YARNS, LTD., a corporation of England, FILATURA PETTINATA V.V.G. DI STEFANO VACCARI & C. (S.A.S.), and entity organized or existing under the laws of Italy, SION ELALOUF, an individual, DIANE ELALOUF, an individual, JAY OPPERMAN, an individual, DEBBIE BLISS, an individual, DAVID WATT, an individual and DOES 1-50

Defendants.

CASE NO. 2:10-cv-00861 RSM

DECLARATION OF ROBERT J. GUTE IN SUPPORT OF CASCADE YARNS, INC.’S RESPONSE TO DEFENDANT FILATURA PETTINATA V.V.G. DI STEFANO VACCARI & C. (S.A.S.)’S MOTION TO DISMISS FOR LACK OF PERSONAL JURISDICTION

**Note On Motion Calendar:
November 26, 2010**

I, Robert J. Gute, declare as follows:

1. I am an attorney, admitted to practice before all of the courts of the State of Washington and this court, and am Of Counsel at Squire, Sanders & Dempsey L.L.P., counsel of record for Plaintiff Cascade Yarns, Inc. (“Cascade”) in this action. This declaration is based on my personal knowledge and, if called on to do so, I would and could testify competently as to the matters set forth herein.

1 2. Attached hereto as Exhibit A are true and correct copies of search results yielded
2 on KFI's website, www.knittingfever.com, for the week of November 15, 2010. I searched for
3 stores carrying Debbie Bliss *Cashmerino* yarns in Washington. I found that KFI distributes the
4 Debbie Bliss *Cashmerino* brand to at least 18 unique stores in Washington where, according to
5 KFI, it is available for sale.

6 3. Attached hereto as Exhibit B is a true and correct copy of a letter to me from Roy
7 Klein on behalf of Defendants enclosing certain test reports of the subject yarns obtained in Italy.
8 VVG sent these test reports to Mr. Klein so that he would provide the reports to Cascade and
9 other customers inquiring about the lack of cashmere.

10 4. Attached hereto as Exhibit C is a true and correct copy of an article from *Knitch*
11 *Magazine*, available at [www.knitchmagazine.com/archives/fallwinter-200910/features/interview-](http://www.knitchmagazine.com/archives/fallwinter-200910/features/interview-thomas-ascough.html)
12 [thomas-ascough.html](http://www.knitchmagazine.com/archives/fallwinter-200910/features/interview-thomas-ascough.html), wherein Jay Opperman is identified as KFI's National Sales Manager.

13 I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America and the
14 laws of the State of Washington and the State of California that the forgoing is true and correct.

15 Executed this 22nd day of November, 2010 at San Francisco, California.

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/s/ Robert J. Guite
Robert J. Guite

EXHIBIT A

Showing only stores selling Cashmerino Aran (Debbie Bliss). Show all nearby stores.

Brands a store has stocked recently are [highlighted](#).



stores near you

Pacific Fabrics & Crafts (1 mile)

2230 4th Ave S, Ste B
Seattle WA, 98134
206-628-6222
Fax: 206-628-6234
E-mail: jennifer@pacificfabrics.com
Sells [15 brands \(details\)](#)

Pacific Fabrics & Crafts (1 mile)

2230-4th Ave S
Seattle WA, 98134
206-628-6222
E-mail: jennifer@pacificfabrics.com
Sells [15 brands \(details\)](#)

Tricoter (2 miles)

3121 E Madison St
Suite 104
Seattle WA, 98112-4257
206-328-6505
Fax: 206-328-0635
E-mail: lindy@tricoter.com
Web: <http://tricoter.com/>
Sells [13 brands \(details\)](#)

Little Knits (3 miles)

3221 California Ave SW
Seattle WA, 98116
206-935-4072
Fax: 206-260-2440
E-mail: littleknits@comcast.net
Sells [16 brands \(details\)](#)

Weaving Works~The (4 miles)

4717 Brooklyn Ave NE
Seattle WA, 98105-4410
206-524-1221
Fax: 206-524-0250
E-mail: weavingworks@speakeasy.net
Web: <http://weavingworks.com/>
Sells [16 brands \(details\)](#)

Acorn Street Shop (4 miles)

2818 NE 55th St
Seattle WA, 98105
206-525-1726
Fax: 206-525-2960
E-mail: acornstreet@msn.com
Web: <http://acornstreet.com/>
Sells [15 brands \(details\)](#)

Pacific Fabrics & Crafts (7 miles)

838 N.E. Northgate Way
Seattle WA, 98125
206-628-6222
E-mail: jennifer@pacificfabrics.com
Sells [15 brands \(details\)](#)

Pacific Fabrics & Crafts (8 miles)

1645 140th Av, N.E.
Bellevue WA, 98005
206-628-6222
E-mail: jennifer@pacificfabrics.com
Sells [15 brands \(details\)](#)

shop online

Jimmy Bean's Wool (NV) in Reno, NV

Sells [15 brands \(details\)](#)

Imagiknit (CA) in San Francisco, CA

Sells [18 brands \(details\)](#)

Hugga Bugga Yarns & More in Farmington, MN

Sells [eight brands \(details\)](#)

YarnMarket.Com in Pickerington, OH

Sells [12 brands \(details\)](#)

Yarns Unlimited (PA) in Sewickley, PA

Sells [10 brands \(details\)](#)

Yarn Paradise in Asheville, NC

Sells [17 brands \(details\)](#)

Royal Yarns in Rockville, MD

Sells [13 brands \(details\)](#)

So Original in Olney, MD

Sells [15 brands \(details\)](#)

Kaleidoscope Yarns in Essex Junction, VT

Sells [15 brands \(details\)](#)

Got Yarn in Richmond, VA

Sells [14 brands \(details\)](#)

Knit One Needlepoint Too in Monticello, NY

Sells [15 brands \(details\)](#)

Webs in Northampton, MA

Sells [17 brands \(details\)](#)

Infinite Yarns Inc in Farmingdale, NY

Sells [16 brands \(details\)](#)

Yarn Barn of Woodbridge(CT) in Woodbridge, CT

Sells [15 brands \(details\)](#)

Seaport Yarn Online in Kennebunk, ME

Sells [15 brands \(details\)](#)

Coveted Yarn in Gloucester, MA

Sells [18 brands \(details\)](#)

Churchmouse Yarns & Teas (8 miles)

118 Madrone Lane
Bainbridge Island WA, 98110
206-780-2686
Fax: 206-780-0202
E-mail: pamw@churchmouseyarns.com
Web: <http://churchmouseyarns.com/>
Sells [13 brands \(details\)](#)

Pacific Fabrics & Crafts (11 miles)

19240 Des Moines Memorial Dr S
Ste 550
Seatac WA, 98148
206-628-6222
Fax: 206-628-6234
E-mail: jennifer@pacificfabrics.com
Sells [15 brands \(details\)](#)

Pacific Fabrics & Crafts (13 miles)

4214 Wheaton Way
Bremerton WA, 98310
206-628-6222
E-mail: jennifer@pacificfabrics.com
Sells [15 brands \(details\)](#)

Pacific Fabrics & Crafts (13 miles)

6000 E Lake Sammamish Pkwy SE
Issaquah WA, 98029
206-628-6222
E-mail: jennifer@pacificfabrics.com
Sells [15 brands \(details\)](#)

Showing only stores selling **Cashmerino Baby (Debbie Bliss)**. Show all nearby stores.

Brands a store has stocked recently are **highlighted**.



stores near you

Pacific Fabrics & Crafts (1 mile)

2230 4th Ave S, Ste B
Seattle WA, 98134
206-628-6222
Fax: 206-628-6234
E-mail: jennifer@pacificfabrics.com
Sells 15 brands (details)

Pacific Fabrics & Crafts (1 mile)

2230-4th Ave S
Seattle WA, 98134
206-628-6222
E-mail: jennifer@pacificfabrics.com
Sells 15 brands (details)

Tricoter (2 miles)

3121 E Madison St
Suite 104
Seattle WA, 98112-4257
206-328-6505
Fax: 206-328-0635
E-mail: lindy@tricoter.com
Web: <http://tricoter.com/>
Sells 13 brands (details)

Little Knits (3 miles)

3221 California Ave SW
Seattle WA, 98116
206-935-4072
Fax: 206-260-2440
E-mail: littleknits@comcast.net
Sells 16 brands (details)

Weaving Works~The (4 miles)

4717 Brooklyn Ave NE
Seattle WA, 98105-4410
206-524-1221
Fax: 206-524-0250
E-mail: weavingworks@speakeasy.net
Web: <http://weavingworks.com/>
Sells 16 brands (details)

Seattle Yarn Gallery (4 miles)

5633 California Ave SW
Seattle WA, 98136
206-935-2010
Fax: 206-932-5251
E-mail: lia@seattleyarn.com
Sells 15 brands (details)

Alice in Stitches (4 miles)

330 NW 50th St
Seattle WA, 98107
206-782-1361
E-mail: info@aliceinstitches.com
Sells 12 brands (details)

Acorn Street Shop (4 miles)

2818 NE 55th St
Seattle WA, 98105
206-525-1726
Fax: 206-525-2960
E-mail: acornstreet@msn.com
Web: <http://acornstreet.com/>

shop online

Ewe Knit LLC in Mill Creek, WA

Sells seven brands (details)

For Yarns Sake LLC in Beaverton, OR

Sells five brands (details)

Jimmy Bean's Wool (NV) in Reno, NV

Sells 15 brands (details)

Imagiknit (CA) in San Francisco, CA

Sells 18 brands (details)

La Knitterie Parisienne in Studio City, CA

Sells 16 brands (details)

Tucson Yarn Co~The in Tucson, AZ

Sells 14 brands (details)

Hugga Bugga Yarns & More in Farmington, MN

Sells eight brands (details)

Beyond Yarn (IA) in Cedar Rapids, IA

Sells 13 brands (details)

Nimble Fingers in Houston, TX

Sells 10 brands (details)

YarnMarket.Com in Pickerington, OH

Sells 12 brands (details)

Market Street Yarn & Crafts in Parkersburg, WV

Sells 17 brands (details)

Yarns Unlimited (PA) in Sewickley, PA

Sells 10 brands (details)

Yarn Paradise in Asheville, NC

Sells 17 brands (details)

Royal Yarns in Rockville, MD

Sells 13 brands (details)

So Original in Olney, MD

Sells 15 brands (details)

Kaleidoscope Yarns in Essex Junction, VT

Sells 15 brands (details)

Northeast Fiber Arts Center in Williston, VT

Sells 17 brands (details)

Got Yarn in Richmond, VA

Sells 14 brands (details)

Sells [15 brands \(details\)](#)

Fiber Gallery~The (5 miles)

7000 Greenwood Ave N

Seattle WA, 98103

206-706-4197

E-mail: fibergallery@comcast.net

Sells [10 brands \(details\)](#)

Pacific Fabrics & Crafts (7 miles)

838 N.E. Northgate Way

Seattle WA, 98125

206-628-6222

E-mail: jennifer@pacificfabrics.com

Sells [15 brands \(details\)](#)

Serial Knitters Yarn Shop (8 miles)

8427-122nd Ave NE

Kirkland WA, 98033

425-242-0086

E-mail: serialknitter@live.com

Sells [seven brands \(details\)](#)

Pacific Fabrics & Crafts (8 miles)

1645 140th Av, N.E.

Bellevue WA, 98005

206-628-6222

E-mail: jennifer@pacificfabrics.com

Sells [15 brands \(details\)](#)

Showing only stores selling Cashmerino DK (Debbie Bliss). Show all nearby stores.

Brands a store has stocked recently are **highlighted**.



stores near you

Serial Knitters Yarn Shop (8 miles)

8427-122nd Ave NE
Kirkland WA, 98033
425-242-0086
E-mail: serialknitter@live.com
Sells [seven brands \(details\)](#)

Cultured Purls (14 miles)

317 NW Gilman Blvd
Suite 5
Issaquah WA, 98027
425-392-5648
E-mail: info@cultured-purls.com
Sells [15 brands \(details\)](#)

Canvas Works (47 miles)

525 Columbia St SW
Olympia WA, 98501-1227
360-352-4481
E-mail: canvasworks@aol.com
Web: <http://canvasworks.net/>
Sells [16 brands \(details\)](#)

Close Knit (OR) (142 miles)

NE 2140 Alberta St
Portland OR, 97211
503-288-4568
Fax: 503-288-4560
E-mail: spalin@iinet.com
Sells [14 brands \(details\)](#)

Twisted LLC (143 miles)

2310 NE Broadway St
Portland OR, 97232
503-922-1150
Fax: 503-488-5540
E-mail: info@twistedpdx.com
Web: <http://www.twistedpdx.com/>
Sells [13 brands \(details\)](#)

Yarn Garden (OR) (145 miles)

1413 SE Hawthorne Blvd
Portland OR, 97214
503-239-7950
Fax: 503-239-7945
E-mail: linda@yarn garden.net
Web: <http://yarn garden.net/>
Sells [13 brands \(details\)](#)

Fiber Nooks & Crannys (214 miles)

530 SW 4th St
Corvallis OR, 97333
541-754-8637
Fax: 541-754-7152
E-mail: michele@fncyarn.com
Web: <http://fncyarn.com/>
Sells [14 brands \(details\)](#)

Stitchin Post(OR)~The (231 miles)

311 W Cascade St
Sisters OR, 97759
541-549-6061
Fax: 541-549-1922
E-mail: vjwells@stitchinpost.com

shop online

Jimmy Bean's Wool (NV) in Reno, NV

Sells [15 brands \(details\)](#)

Imagiknit (CA) in San Francisco, CA

Sells [18 brands \(details\)](#)

YarnMarket.Com in Pickerington, OH

Sells [12 brands \(details\)](#)

Yarns Unlimited (PA) in Sewickley, PA

Sells [10 brands \(details\)](#)

Yarn Paradise in Asheville, NC

Sells [17 brands \(details\)](#)

Royal Yarns in Rockville, MD

Sells [13 brands \(details\)](#)

So Original in Olney, MD

Sells [15 brands \(details\)](#)

Webs in Northampton, MA

Sells [17 brands \(details\)](#)

Infinite Yarns Inc in Farmingdale, NY

Sells [16 brands \(details\)](#)

Yarn Barn of Woodbridge(CT) in Woodbridge, CT

Sells [15 brands \(details\)](#)

Coveted Yarn in Gloucester, MA

Sells [18 brands \(details\)](#)

Web: <http://stitchinpost.com/>
Sells [12 brands \(details\)](#)

Gossamer Knitting LLC (250 miles)
550 SW Industrial Way
Suite 105
Bend OR, 97702
541-383-2204
E-mail: info@gossamerknitting.com
Web: <http://www.gossamerknitting.com/>
Sells [three brands \(details\)](#)

Web-sters Inc~The (373 miles)
11 N Main St
Ashland OR, 97520-2725
800-482-9801
Fax: 541-488-8318
E-mail: websters@mind.net
Sells [13 brands \(details\)](#)

Twisted Ewe (ID)~The (404 miles)
1738 W State St
Boise ID, 83702
208-287-3693
E-mail: twistedewe@cableone.net
Sells [nine brands \(details\)](#)

Jimmy Bean's Wool (NV) (575 miles)
5000 Smithridge Rd
Suite A11
Reno NV, 89502
775-827-9276
Fax: 801-740-7563
E-mail: info@jimmybeanswool.com
Web: <http://JimmyBeansWool.com/>
Sells [15 brands \(details\)](#)

EXHIBIT B

LAW OFFICES
ROY A. KLEIN
532 BROAD HOLLOW ROAD
SUITE 144
MELVILLE, NEW YORK 11747
(631) 777-1313
FAX (631) 777-1919

ALFRED S. WALENDOWSKI
OF COUNSEL

July 11, 2006

Via Fax

Robert J. Guite, Esq.
Lane Powell
1420 Fifth Avenue, Suite 4100
Seattle, WA 98101-2338

Dear Mr. Guite:

Now that my client has returned from Europe, I am writing in response to your June 28 letter, in which you replied to my June 27 letter to your client, Cascade.

As you requested, I am attaching four lab reports (KFI is in the process of obtaining additional reports, as well) confirming the existence of cashmere in a number of Debbie Bliss' Cashmerino yarn samples tested. While these reports amply refute Cascade's allegations, the practice of preparing and publishing such reports can be damaging to the industry. I therefore suggest that our clients' respective principals directly contact each other as soon as possible to put the matter to rest as quickly as possible.

As noted in our June 27 letter, it is difficult for labs to precisely separate very similar animal fibers in samples of products such as Cashmerino yarn. This can lead to discrepancies in cashmere/wool content from lab to lab, sample to sample and even within particular samples. It is for this reason that Cascade's report was inherently unreliable and why, therefore, it was particularly inappropriate for Cascade to publicize the results of the report without first having the courtesy to discuss its "findings" with KFI or its supplier and give them the opportunity to respond.

Indeed, if everyone in the industry began testing each other's products and publishing the results, it would lead to a major war, with each company relying on its own different and conflicting lab reports, to the confusion of our clients' customers and to the detriment of the entire industry.

In any case, Filatura Pettinata VVG, the spinner for the Cashmerino yarn, just informed us that Cascade had advised it during last week's trade show in Florence that: (1) Cascade had not intended to publish the results of its lab report on Cashmerino; one of its reps. had discussed the report with some people, which inadvertently resulted in the story being circulated; (2) Cascade is sorry about what happened; and (3) Cascade has no doubts about the integrity and reliability of Filatura Pettinata VVG.

We ask that Cascade put these points in a letter to the manufacturer, Designer Yarns, Debbie Bliss and KFI, so that we all can put this unfortunate episode behind us and move forward with more productive activities.

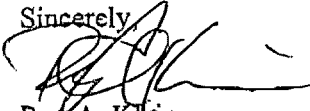
Robert J. Guite
July 11, 2006
page 2

In short, while it remains my clients' position that Cascade's publication of statements at the TNNA trade show and elsewhere regarding the cashmere content of Debbie Bliss' Cashmerino yarn constitutes trade libel and, possibly, other tortious conduct, for the good of the industry they are willing to drop the matter upon receipt of an appropriate letter of apology from Cascade setting forth the three statements summarized above.

This letter is without waiver of or prejudice to any of KFI's, Debbie Bliss' or Designer Yarns' rights, all of which they expressly reserve.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,


Roy A. Klein

Enclosures



COPIA

**LABORATORIO
DI ANALISI
PROVE E RICERCHE
TESSILI**

Via Fondi di Mazzano, 81/L
69100 Prato Italia
Tel. 0574 581343
Fax 0574 583975
E-mail: laboratorio@bracchi.it
http://www.bracchi.it

RAPPORTO DI PROVA N° 0000007106

Pag. 1 di 1

DITTA PRESENTATRICE: MARCOPOLO SRL - VIA G. BOVIO, 57, ROSSO - GENOVA

CAMPIONE: Campioni di fibre (testi) colore bianco denominato LOTTO 477. Vedi allegato.

CAMPIONAMENTO: A cura del cliente

DATA RICEVIMENTO: 09 Gennaio 2006

DATA ESECUZIONE PROVE: Dalla data di ricevimento alla data di emissione

OGGETTO: Analisi quali-quantitative

RISULTATI DI LABORATORIO

*** COMPOSIZIONE QUALI-QUANTITATIVA**

Modalità:

Norma: Secondo Legge 489.

Risultati:

FIBRE PROTEICHE 100%

La voce "Fibre Proteiche" è stata differenziata microscopicamente sulla base di n° 1074 testate secondo la norma ASTM D225. Considerato il metodo di analisi eseguito e la notevole affinità microscopica delle fibre in media, il risultato può solo essere considerato come un'indicazione, se può essere soggetto anche a notevoli variazioni.

XASHMIR 55,11%

LANA E FIBRE ASSIMILABILI PER ASPETTO MICROSCOPICO 45,0%

FINE DEL RAPPORTO DI PROVA

Il presente rapporto di prova ha valore di certificazione e non può essere considerato un giudizio di merito. Il cliente è responsabile della correttezza delle informazioni fornite. Il presente rapporto di prova è valido per il solo campione analizzato.

Prato, 09 gennaio 2006

IL DIRETTORE
G.L. Primo Bracchi



0000007106
04

RECYCLED PAPER

RAPPORTO DI PROVA n. 050583	M.S.10 Rev. 1 Foglio n.2 di 2
---------------------------------------	--

1410 Determinazione quantitativa di mischie di lana - kashmir (due fibre)

Modalità di prova
 Norma Procedura interna
 Apparecchiatura Microscopio ottico e software di misura ed elaborazione
 CV9000
 Ingrandimento ottico = 500 X
 Fibra miscelata 199

Articolo	Toppe parte lana	Toppe parte kashmir
Fibre misurate	156	43
Diametro medio	18.8 micron	16.5 micron
Scarto tipo μ	3.83	2.88
Coefficiente di variazione %	20.6	18.6
Composizione	83.98%	16.02%

1403 Analisi quantitativa di mischie binarie di fibre tessili

Modalità di prova
 Norma DM 31/01/74, direttiva CEE del 16/12/86 (96-73/Ce), D.L. n°194 del 22/05/99 e Legge 569 del 04/10/86.
 Pre-trattamento: no
 Solventi utilizzati: ipoclorito di sodio
 Numero prove: 1

Risultati		Toppe
Fibra animali	%	61.7
Acrilico	%	38.3

Note:

- Le percentuali sono riferite, alla massa secca di ciascuna componente, moltiplicate per gli eventuali fattori di correzione ed aumentate della massa corrispondente al tasso di ripresa commerciale.

Composizione finale:

Risultati		Toppe
Lana	%	51.8
Acrilico	%	38.3
Kashmir	%	9.9

LABORATORIO ACCREDITATO N° 0331 ITS
 Debenhams Retail plc Arcadia Group plc

FROM : DESIGNER YARNS FAX NO. : 01535654333 07 Jul. 2006 02:57PM P2
FROM : TFT FAX NO. : 01756797525 07 Jul. 2006 13:33 P1

TFT (Ilkley) Ltd.	The Stables, Royal Oak Yard, Balkas Road, SKIPTON, North Yorkshire, BD23 1NP Phone or Fax 01756 797525
	<small>Office 30 Alexandra Crescent, ILKLEY, West Yorkshire, LS29 9ER. Phone or Fax 01743 670459 Reg. No. 3108606, VAT No. 659 9804 77</small>

Designer Yarns
Units 8 - 10,
Newbridge Industrial Estate,
Pitt Street,
Keighley,
BD21 4PQ

07 July 2006

Dear Sirs

I have examined samples of "Debbie Bliss Cashmerino Aran" yarn in a range of six shades.

I carried out a qualitative analysis using a projection microscope on each of the samples and found a quantity of cashmere in all the samples.

TFT is a CCMI accredited laboratory.

Yours faithfully



Mary Lunn
BSc, Dip.Stats

FROM : DESIGNER YARNS

FAX NO. : 01535664333

26 Jun. 2006 07:49AM P2

Quality Control Laboratory

Contact: Julie Smith
38 Birchwood Rd.
Utley
Keighley
West Yorks.
BD20 6BX

Mobile No. 07976 538730
Fax: 01274 747009

TEST CERTIFICATE

Customer: Designer Yarns Ltd., Keighley

Ref: JM292 3 x Yarn Samples

Test Date: 20/06/06

Test Results

Fibre Composition (1000 fibres examined):

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 1. Brown 300008 | 284 Wool (52.4%) 21 microns approx.
625 Microfibre (35.0%) 13 microns approx.
91 Cashmere (12.6%) 19 microns approx. |
| 2. Blue 300005 | 305 Wool (53.4%) 21 microns approx.
606 Microfibre (34.8%) 13 microns approx.
89 Cashmere (11.9%) 18.3 microns approx. |
| 3. Pink 300603 | 295 Wool (50.4%) 21 microns approx.
615 Microfibre (36.3%) 13 microns approx.
90 Cashmere (13.3%) 19 microns approx. |

EXHIBIT C

KNITCHMAGAZINE.COM | FALL 2010



search...

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Interview With Thomas Ascough



Written by Deborah Knight



Thomas Ascough is young, energetic and enthusiastic about the yarn industry, so it was a real delight to catch up with him at the TNNA Conference in Columbus, Ohio where he was working in one of the booths. Thomas is a representative for Euro Yarns, and travels the country presenting yarn shops with an extensive array of yarns from six different companies.

KnitchMagazine was interested to learn about Thomas, how he ended up in this industry and what he enjoys about it.

Photo left: Thomas' fiancée Stephanie is lucky to find a man who can knit for her.

Knitch: We couldn't help noticing that you're a dude. Do you tell your friends what you do for a living? And, if so, how many times have they beaten you up?

Thomas: They're too busy beating themselves up for thinking that being a stock-broker or an investment guy was the right move. Knitting is a craft. Just like men will play golf, or fish, or play tennis, knitters will knit. If the world is great, knitters are knitting. If money is tight, knitters give up fancy date nights and \$10 movie tickets. I'm knocking on wood, but as it stands, knitters are not giving up knitting. So, I like my job and people in my circle respect it. Besides, knitting makes their moms, sisters, wives and grandmas happy -- and happy women mean happy men.


[Browse Fall/Winter](#)

Knitch: *You're right about that! Tell us about the companies you represent.*

Thomas: I rep for six companies. Louisa Harding is one of my brands. It's easy to appreciate her as a designer because she knows what her niche is and runs full speed in whatever direction she takes on each season. Her main story is designer knitting for women, although she does also continue to give her fans a wonderful representation of children and baby knitting. She's very diverse and really enjoys what she does. The line is fitting to an industry that is becoming more and more design oriented every day and her yarns are easy to marvel at.

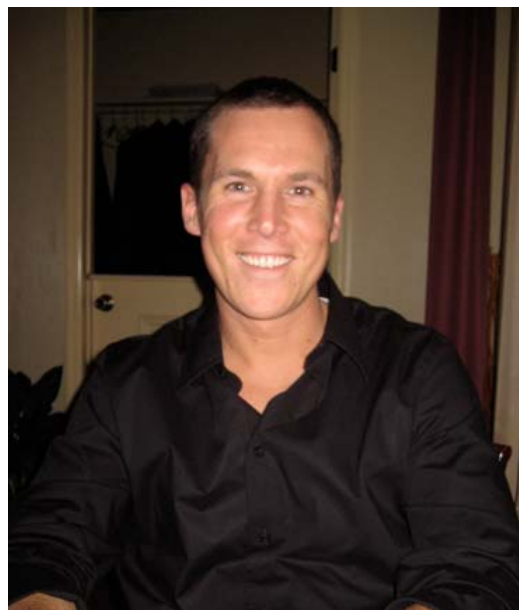
I also work with the Mirasol Project, which helps support communities in Peru. This is one of our newest lines. Jane Ellison pilots the brand with brilliance and expertise, but maintains a humble openness for really giving knitters what they're looking for. The brand supports a boarding school in the Munani region of Puno, Peru while offering some of the most luxurious and pattern driven fibers. This is an "everybody" kind of line, and its quick popularity shows that.

Elsebeth Lavold is in my portfolio of designers, too, and her rich history sort of speaks for itself. She has a Nordic appeal to knitters, and sends that out to her audience through some of the most brilliant classic designs. Her theme "Viking Knits" put her on the map with her cornerstone yarn Silky Wool, and since then, the line has blossomed into many fibers and 19 great books.

Queensland Collection, our house brand, is one of my favorite brands. The ideas for the line tend to come from our customers. Feedback is always being presented as to where the industry is, what the industry is lacking in fibers, and where the industry would best be served as far as pattern support goes. We put that all together to give our stores a choice in unique items, supported by some of the best designer knitting teams: Jenny Watson, Jane Ellison, and Ella Rae's design team. Kathmandu Aran is the cornerstone of this brand.

Online Yarns is a German company with the rich history of delivering a great sock yarn and some of the yarn business' most unique project yarns. Online delivers beautiful mercerized cottons in every gauge, and they offer a unique fall line.

Esther Bitran Hand Dyes is something I really enjoy showing my customers. It's easy to like. Esther works out of a town just outside of Santiago, Chile



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where she and her dye team put together some of the yarn world's most affordable hand paints. The colors are magnificent. There are yarns for every gauge, and Jenny Watson does pattern leaflets.

I really like the yarns I carry.

Knitch: *Your fondness for the yarns is undeniable. Was it an appreciation for the fibers that brought you to the industry?*

Thomas: I fell down a well in New York and was told that I had to work hard in the yarn business for the rest of my life or they would leave me there. (He laughs.) Honestly, I was thinking about law school, politics, or a business of my own while I was finishing college and working at a beautiful New Jersey restaurant. One of our patrons was Jay Opperman, the national sales manager for Knitting Fever Inc. I got to know his family pretty well, and when I went out looking for my first career, Jay put the idea on the table. I'm glad he did because this industry is a good one.



Knitch: *So it wasn't originally part of your career path. Have you spent time to learn the craft?*

Thomas: I was taught to cast on, knit, purl, and cast off by another rep in the industry who used to work with me and who was training me at the time. I knit but I really cannot call myself a knitter. Knitters have multiple projects, they rejoice in the art of knitting from every angle. They'll knit for rows even if something doesn't quite look right because they know when they find the problem, they can rip out and fix it. I would rip my hair out before I would rip out hours of hard work.

Knitch: *Yes...the feeling is universal. But it's great to know that no mistake is permanent. If only the rest of life were that way! You're exposed to a lot of information from a lot of sources. Who do you think is setting the trends right now?*

Thomas: I know that knitters will knit what they like because they like what they see. They don't pick their colors based upon what a color group in LA thinks and they will not change their style to go with what a designer from Europe thinks. They will let designers lead them, though, and I hope that they continue to be comfortable in letting the designers that I work with inspire them to try new things.

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Knitch: *Do you see any regional differences?*

Thomas: No. That's so funny because I've covered 24 different states in the country between my prior territories and where I am now and everyone always thinks their trends are a year behind someone else or vice-versa. It's really not the case. Wisconsin or Ohio think they are a year behind Chicago or Philly, while the big cities think they are a year behind New York or LA. It boils down to the fact that every yarn company is showing the same yarns everywhere they go. One store in town might love something eclectic and in a wild color while their neighbor store thinks that kind of yarn or color won't go within 500 miles of where they are. The one thing I've figured out is that yarn needs are not state to state, or city to city. They are store to store, and the store owner paves the way for her knitters with her interests.

Knitch: *So the important thing for knitters is to have a yarn store that reflects their style. As a rep who is often on the road to visit yarn stores, how do you keep up with the trends?*

Thomas: I listen. While I give the stores our designers' ideas for products, I also pay attention to the creative ideas that store owners give me for my yarns. I have to admit that it's easy for me to stay on top of the market because our designers give us everything we need to do just that. They go all over the world attending fashion shows so they can return with a well thought portfolio that I can believe in.

Knitch: *Where do you look for inspiration?*

Thomas: Inspiration takes on a different meaning for me. It comes from the success of the stores that I have my relationships with. I want to see them succeed, so for me, inspiration comes from relaying the yarn stores' suggestions to our designers and coming back with one of their ideas the next season. I'm really inspired when one of my stores' knitters uses a new yarn that we pushed to get for them.

Knitch: *What changes have you noticed in the industry -- amongst shop owners and knitters -- in the past few years?*

Thomas: Shop owners have taken on a more active role in teaching knitters and making them better and happier people in their craft. Knitters are diligently looking for yarn stores that fit their needs and welcomes a community of knitters into a friendly environment. Everyone has choices, and businesses all around the world are appreciating their customers more than ever.

Knitch: *Yes, we agree. Knitters have a right to demand excellent service. Do you see any exciting new trends for our knitters in the autumn 2009 season?*

Thomas: I think it's an attitude rather than one particular kind of yarn or style. Naturally, people are finding comfort in classic designs with natural fibers, but knitting's hottest trend is a "moving forward" sort of attitude where shops are teaching their knitters how to go from scarves and socks to sweaters and lace. Each knitter is on a journey, and what's "in"

is moving to the next level.

Knitch: Which of your yarns do you think will be the most sought after in autumn 2009?

Thomas: It's hard to say because each brand I work with has its star yarn or yarns. I'm seeing a good deal of tweed in the industry, and I have all different kinds of tweeds. I know Silky Wool and Kathmandu will always be great. Kathmandu has a Chunky that I am really excited about. Louisa Harding has a terrific, very focused book called "Little Cake" that presents two yarns. Willow Tweed and Thistle are great. Everyone should check out Mirasol's new yarns, too. You'll be happy you did. Jane Ellison just created 48 new patterns for them.

Knitch: What would be the biggest misconception people have about your job?

Thomas: "I would love to have your job.... Play with yarn all day, travel to beautiful places, and relax in all these yarn shops." That's the biggest misconception. I'm never home, and when I'm on the road, which is a lot, the travel is far from a vacation. I was in Charleston, SC not too long ago. I was there for 3 hours. I visited a yarn shop to show our new product, and then I was back on 95N. It was a good time and I liked the ladies there, but it was not a "trip" to Charleston.

Knitch: What would be your closing advice for yarn enthusiasts?

Thomas: Keep doing what you love. Take interest in your inspiration and passions. And...please buy my yarns.

KnitchMagazine thanks Thomas for telling our readers about himself. We assured him you'd be buying his yarns.



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