

Alterations Shop Sows Big Goal

Stitch sees silver lining in becoming national chain for tailoring services.

What's the name of your local tailoring and alterations shop?

If you can't name one, **Alexander Harden** wants to change that. He's the owner of new Hollywood alterations shop **Stitch**, which opened last month.

For now, Harden has a single storefront and a small business-to-business service that provides tailors for commercial, film and fashion shoots. But he has grand ambitions, hoping to turn both the retail and business offerings into a national brand — the **McDonald's** of alterations.

"I realized the industry didn't really have a brand," he said. "No one had institutionalized it and I saw an opportunity to create **Stitch**."

Harden, who used to work at a private equity firm, often got his suits altered at a small shop, but he was frustrated with the experience.

"They weren't as private as you would like," he said. "The curtains wouldn't close properly and a modern fit wasn't at the forefront of their mind."

But with **Stitch**, the décor is modern, with hardwood floors, marble, white walls and large dressing rooms. Prices range from \$18 for



RINGO H.W. CHIU/LABJ

Sewn Up: Owner Alexander Harden at Stitch in Hollywood.

simple hem jobs to several hundred for alterations such as custom work on a bridal dress. Basic design work can take up to two days with more extensive alterations taking as long as four days.

Stitch tailors can also travel to meet clients and customers can get text messages to notify them when a garment is ready.

Harden said the plan is to concentrate on expanding the retail business on the West Coast then go nationwide.

But in addition to its storefronts, **Stitch** runs an agency that works

with about 15 tailors who are hired by production companies and fashion stylists that want a tailor on the set of film and photo shoots. That side of the business is already taking off, Harden said. Since he started **Stitch** last month, the company has already worked on shoots with music artists such as **Florence** and **the Machine** and **Common**, and auto manufacturer **Chrysler**.

"What I found is that they were sourcing tailors by word of mouth or **Craigslist**, and that looked inefficient to me," he said.

— *Subrina Hudson*

Horse-Race Vets Dial In on Phones

YouBet.com co-founders roll dice on offering bettors mobile gambling platform.

The team of entrepreneurs that brought live horse-race betting to the Internet is at it again, this time turning to the world of mobile gambling.

David Marshall and **Russell Fine**, who co-founded **YouBet.com** Inc. and sold it to **Louisville, Ken's Churchill Downs Inc.** in 2009 for \$127 million in cash and stock, formed **Brentwood's b Spot** and have launched a mobile gambling platform of the same name.

"We are the **PayPal** for online gambling," said Marshall, **b Spot's** chief executive. The company, which has raised about \$17 million from a group of outside investors, is

authorized to conduct online horse wagering in accordance with state laws and the federal Interstate Horseracing Act. Only residents of California and Oregon can wager on **b Spot**, although the company expects to add states.

The mobile betting system has been in beta release for the past six months and officially launched late last month. The technology is being used in 43 games that have either been released or are in development.

After opening up a cash account, players wager on the results of as many as 150,000 horse races around the world with **b Spot's** app or Web portal. Mobile games can then be used



Ringin' In: B Spot co-founder David Marshall.

as a fun way to show bettors how much they've won. The game play has no effect on how much they won.

Meanwhile, **b Spot** takes a cut of every dollar wagered; game publishers are paid when players reveal winnings as part of gameplay.

"For the game publishers, it's a very easy monetization engine," Marshall said.

— *Omar Shamout*

Needing Break From Vacation



On Road: Pollard Bayme.

For years, **Nicole Pollard Bayme** has taken vacation advice from a close friend. But a recent trip to **Nicaragua** was enough to make her reconsider.

The friend recommended a resort that she said would be perfect for **Bayme's** first anniversary with her husband, **Ari Bayme**. She investigated the resort on **Instagram**, finding photos of fashionable people lounging near monkeys in trees and promptly booked a week's stay.

But **Bayme** and her husband arrived at the resort covered in dust after a two-and-a-half-hour truck ride from the airport over dirt roads. Then there was a long hike to check in.

"My husband almost divorced me after carrying my 300-pound suitcase," said **Bayme**, 34, a stylist who owns **LalaLuxe** in **Santa Monica**. True to stylist form, she had packed every sundress she owned — about 50.

Their shelter, advertised as a "casita," was "more like a tree-

house," **Bayme** said, a bamboo structure without hot water. Wind gusts later blew the sheets off the bed and scattered their luggage around the room.

The winds worsened throughout the week. **Bayme** and her husband became accustomed to eating sand-covered tacos from a beachside stand.

"I thought I was laid back until I went on this jungle retreat and realized that I do, in fact, like the **Four Seasons**," she said.

Dog Has Day

While high-end stores are always pleased to see rich socialite **Paris Hilton** on their premises, not all of them are so keen on her ever-present companion, **Chihuahua Peter Pan**.

The dog, a huge favorite with **Hilton's** 4 million **Instagram** followers, has been known to run off leash once inside, and even, on occasion, to relieve himself.

Luxury **West Hollywood** design showroom **Christopher Guy**

recently laid out the welcome mat for **Paris** and **Peter Pan**, only for the pooch to pee on it.

Hilton was there doing a photo shoot for fashion magazine **Runway** when the pup

wandered off and took a tinkle on the designer doormat.

Paris, 34, has numerous animals whom she keeps in the lap



Ruff Life: Peter Pan.

of luxury, but **Peter Pan** appears to be her current favorite as he's the one she takes along to exercise class, fashion shows and shopping trips. Stores be warned!

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