

Somers

Oldest House in Somers Home to Contemporary Store

By Elyse Littizzio

SOMERS - Who would have thought that a 1746 Saltbox house, at 596 Main St.



Diane and Dan Stoller's appreciation of nature is omni-present in their Somers store. Photo by Elyse Littizzio

in Somers, would have the contemporary, assorted variety of one of a kind handmade crafts? If it wasn't for Paper Reeds opening June 1 of this past year, the option of obtaining a beautiful piece of artwork, eye catching pottery or even a hanging bird bath, would not be present.

Diane and Dan Stoller of Ellington always had a special interest and love for appreciating nature. After being involved

in many birding hobbies, the Stollers decided that they wanted to share these appreciations with others. Their idea arose a few years ago of opening a shop with a large variety of distinctive nature-supporting crafts that would not be found in your regular gift shop. The Stollers are both active members of the American Craft Council and purchase their products from all over the U.S., but especially during

their visits to the Buyers Market of American Crafts, in Atlanta and Minnesota.

While deciding on the appropriate location for Paper Reeds, the Buckland Hills area was first in line. Both Diane and Dan wanted to keep their "contemporary" feel, however their options did not strike their

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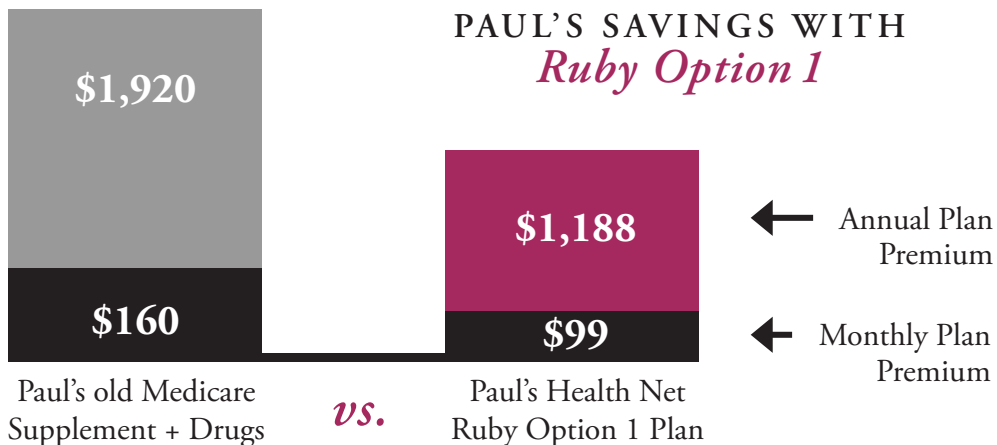
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Somers

Paper Reeds Offers One-of-a-Kind Contemporary Crafts

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attention, as they had hoped. They knew Paper Reeds could not be in a normal store setting because people would lose the full character of the store's appeal. However, they realized that the 1746 Saltbox house was for sale in Somers which they figured they would give a try, even though they were skeptical of it clashing with their contemporary theme.

When touring this location on Main Street, they realized some remodeling and fixing would have to take place, seeing it is the oldest house in Somers. However what caught Diane's attention was an antique bible that was placed on the ledge of a shelf next to the mantle, in one of the rooms. Realizing that the bible was randomly sitting here, unplanned, it was taken as a sign that this was where the Stollers' were supposed to start their Paper Reeds business.

Upon entering the store you may be attracted to the noise of the indoor rainfall that stands between the register and the greenhouse room. There are multiple rooms in the house, which all consist of their own theme of crafts ranging from indoor to outdoor décor, and targeting a

vast amount of designing taste as well.

The "dining" room consists of mostly contemporary glass pieces. A large glass table is displayed in the middle of the room to show how certain pieces of artwork can add a contemporary feel to your country home.

A large amount of one-of-a-kind, blown glass paperweights are displayed also. These sphere-shaped pieces of glass all take on a unique color scheme and are named mostly after planets. Some even have planet designs and shapes shown inside the interior of the circle. Teaposo, a special type of tea that is a bulb at first, then blossoms once added to the steamed water is here, along with options of beautifully scented crystals used to embrace your home.

Another room in the house holds a large selection of children's items which all relate to nature and enjoying the simplicity of the outdoors. Exposing children to nature and the diversity that revolves around it is something the Stollers wanted to demonstrate in the store. Also multiple gardening tools, along with handcrafted pottery are displayed in this area as well. Isabel Blume is another line that's carried by Paper Reeds. They are natural stone



Some of the crafts available at Paper Reeds.

Photo by Elyse Littizzio

statues that can be displayed throughout your house or in the garden as well.

The "lodge" room is used to promote a rocky mountain, wilderness theme. A variety of candles are displayed in the lodge, along with oversized wax covered pinecones that play a unique role in helping to scent a room of your home. Wooden birds are another emphasis of Paper Reeds which are also displayed in the lodge. In addition to these wooden birds, multiple lamps and vases made out of real Aspen trees sit along the mantle, which also grabs your attention as well.

The last room is considered to be the birding/greenhouse room. Here you will find multiple bird houses, bird feeders and bird baths that you can coordinate to match each other, just like you would with the décor you have inside your house. The room also shows custom made mobiles

hung overhead that can be ordered according to personal preference (color, size, etc).

Paper Reeds is a place where you not only find a rare, unique gift, while supporting nature and the American crafters, but you also gain a larger appreciation for nature and simplicity of everyday life. The calm therapeutic atmosphere that's created when entering Paper Reeds is something you may not get at a regular gift shop.

Eventually the Stollers would like Paper Reeds to hold food tastings, organize community nature walks, and night sky observations. These events will be announced at the store, or put on the store's website, Paperreeds.com. They are opened Tuesday through Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Through the holidays, Mondays will be added to the schedule.

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