

BY KATRINA DANIEL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY OLIVER YU FOTOGRAFIE



FIBRENEW UPSTATE

What if your son's skateboard cuts a hole in the leather seats of your new car?

Do you go back to the dealer to have their repair shop fix the leather tear? Maybe, but that's usually not a warranty item or it'll cost you an arm and a leg.

What do you do if you're a restaurant owner and a customer burns a hole in one of your expensive seats? (That happens a lot, incidentally).

The best answer is Fibrenew, a highly specialized new business just opening in the Upstate and named appropriately, Fibrenew Upstate.

Owners Lynn and Rick Halpin have opened the Greater Greenville area branch of this Canadian-based company, which specializes in the repair and restoration of leather, vinyl and plastic components.

"The major markets we service include automotive, RV, marine, aviation, medical offices and residential commercial furniture," says Lynn Halpin. "We've

restored and repaired furniture for moving companies, car dealerships, vinyl examination tables for medical offices, but the majority of our work is centered around the repair and restoration of leather for private individuals. A good quality of leather can be restored to near original condition with our environmentally friendly, durable process."

Lynn Halpin says her husband Rick's knowledge and experience after working for Milliken & Company for almost 30 years was one of the factors in their relocation to Greenville.

"There was an initial decision for a change of lifestyle from the demands of work-related travel and life in the fast lane, coupled with our desire to return to the Upstate after moving away in 1994. We both still have family in this area and knew this was where we wanted to retire eventually. With the purchase and start up of our own Fibrenew franchise, we saw the opportunity to build a family business for the future and get back to the Upstate prior to retiring."

Marketing to individuals will be one of her goals, says Halpin, "We have found that almost everyone we meet either needs our services or knows someone who does. (But) one of our biggest

challenges is getting the Fibrenew name out there. It's well known in Canada, but not common in the U.S. We hear over and over again, 'I didn't know there was a business like yours that could do this type of work!'"

"We seem to be that sigh of relief for many pet owners, repairing, replacing and re-dyeing chewed and scratched leather, but we also revitalize tired, worn and faded leather, bringing it back to life and like new again."

The advantage of Fibrenew is that the company's repair service comes to you. You don't have to make arrangements to have your leather couch taken to their shop, their "shop" is mobile.

Fibrenew does have a fixed location for larger restorations and they operate in Taylors, Simpsonville, Mauldin, Greer, Travelers Rest, Pickens, Easley, Anderson, Clemson and Seneca, and everywhere in between.

Lynn Halpin is proud of the "greenness" of her business, "We like to emphasize that we are green. As our culture has become one of purchase, use, replace, we are filling up our landfills with usable life goods."

GREENVILLE BEER EXCHANGE

Raise a mug and toast Greenville's newest addition, The Greenville Beer Exchange. Rich Carley and Scott Shor met in college, bonded over beer and become partners, "We became friends in college and passionate



PHOTO BY MARY DOUGLAS HIRSCH

about craft beers shortly thereafter. We opened our first location, The Charleston Beer Exchange, in November 2008. (Now) we chose Greenville because it's a thriving city with a beautiful downtown that we wanted to be a part of. There's a strong beer community here with great bars and breweries and we thought our vision would be a nice addition to the local beer scene."

The Greenville beer Exchange is not a bar. Carley says, "We are similar to a fine wine boutique, but we sell only beer. We have an off-premise license, which means all beer purchased at our location is meant for off-premise consumption. We have over 1,000 bottles and 16 taps where we fill 16 oz. amber glass jugs, called "growlers," to go."

Craft beers are specialty beers — not your basic Bud Lite — crafted by a brewery producing two million barrels or less per year. Recently, those parameters were expanded, with the rapid growth of the Craft Beer movement, now it's six million barrels per year and a brewery still qualifies as a Craft Beer.

Carley adds, "The most

rewarding part of this business is to have people come in the first time who say they don't like beer, or they say they don't like "dark" beers and we get them to expand their horizons and soon they're big-time beer geeks like us! Makes us smile every time!"

ADVANTACLEAN

A fire disaster that cost his grandparents their home created a career for Derik Newton, "The summer after I graduated from Presbyterian College, my grandparents' home burned to the ground, total loss. In the weeks that followed, helping them relocate and beginning to rebuild from disaster, I met several specialized disaster contractors and the field really sparked my interest. Several months later, I was employed as an estimator for a disaster restoration firm in Columbia."



And now, Newton has just launched his own disaster restoration company in the greater Greenville area, Advantaclean.

Initially, Newton thought he would just go to work for Advantaclean, but, "then I found out they

intended to franchise the business in the future. This was the place for me!"

Newton first worked for Advantaclean as a project manager for several years, "This gave me more experience than I could ever have hoped for, including spending several months in New Orleans as part of the Katrina cleanup efforts."

Advantaclean specializes in creating healthy indoor environments for homes and businesses. Newton says, "We are disaster restoration contractors, responding to clean up water- and fire-damaged properties, 24-7, 365. We also perform mold remediation, HVAC system/air duct cleaning and other specialty cleanup projects in homes and businesses."

Newton has also just opened another Advantaclean franchise in the Columbia area, "In five years, I would like for us to be known as one of the preferred companies in the Upstate within our industry. It's a competitive market, and I know that there are a couple of other good companies here who share our values and we intend to be in the same ring." ■

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