



# Sum total

Don't fence in Needle in the Hay, okay?  
There are many, many strings to its bow.

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*INTRODUCING ONE OF HAMILTON'S coolest kids on the block, Needle in the Hay, and its co-owner, Kate Woodcock. Hankering after a new record store and unable to convince anyone else to open one, she and her husband Glen decided to do it themselves, while realising their dream of creating a print workshop. But once the ball was rolling, this rad retail space took on a life of its own.*

**How did Needle in the Hay come about?** Glen and I found the old warehouse and it was too good to leave empty, so we thought we'd put the printing presses in, print a few posters and postcards, make coffee on Saturdays – Glen is co-owner of Rocket Coffee – and sell some records we love, a few books, second-hand finds, enamelware...

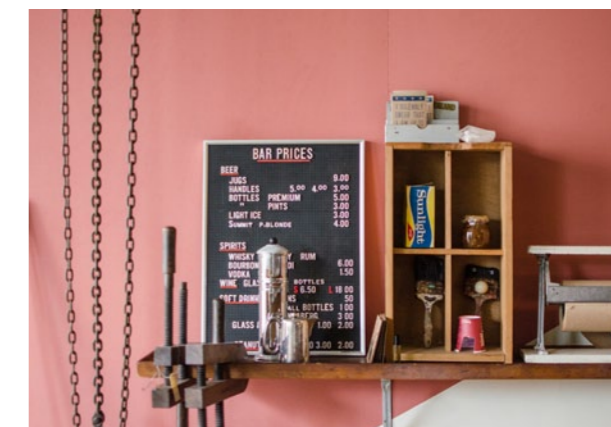
At the same time we noticed that people were driving up from Hamilton to my mum's Pukekohe shop, Ella Raik & Co, to buy the Annie Sloan decorative chalk paint she sells, so we thought we'd bring it to them, adding to the mix of things we already had. Ella Raik & Co now rents a space within our store.

People often walk in and ask, "What

kind of shop is this?," and we don't really have an answer. We just want to stock timeless designs that are well made and will only get better with age, and to be a place where people can come to find and touch these things, rather than using the internet. And since I'd been a stay-at-home mum for 10 years – Glen and I have two daughters, a dog, a kitten, two guinea pigs, five chooks, a rabbit and a couple of beehives, which is why we only open

three days a week – interacting with adults seemed like it'd be a nice change.

**Do you champion local artists and makers?** Yes – there are so many skilled people out there. We're excited that we'll soon be stocking Taus Ceramic – maker Tim Grocott is based in Auckland but has Hamilton roots; we have Better Butter, who have Cambridge connections and make crazy-delicious nut butters; and >



**GOT THE GOODS** Open Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, Needle in the Hay's speciality is "good stuff, especially stuff with an interesting story surrounding it, and a history". Of their growing clientele, Kate says, "It's always a surprise to see who makes it down our alleyway, and now we also have lots of regulars. It gets to Friday and I'll think, 'I didn't see so and so yesterday', and then he'll walk through the door."



also Rosewood Wool, who have an amazing range of naturally dyed yarn. We've found a cool guy here who makes leather bags, a couple of talented Waldorf doll makers bring us dolls, and the local legend craftspeople who make wooden dollhouses and woodland creatures will be adding things to the shop soon too.

**What type of records do you like?**

The store is named after an Elliott Smith song and that's attracted a few Elliott

Smith fans, which is nice. I also adore Kurt Vile, Dead Moon and Cat Power, and Kiwi Aldous Harding. Glen loves William Tyler and Itasca and anything on the Numero Group label.

In the store, we play it all: indie, pop, country, rap, folk. Angel Olsen, Lando Chill, Bombino, PRO and The Black Angels are on high rotation.

**So tell us about the printing press.**

It's a 1965 Asbern flatbed cylinder press,

one of only 60 known in the world; there are three in New Zealand. Glen started collecting presses and type 15 years ago and I thought he was a bit mad. But later I realised Hamilton's best asset is space, so why not hoard type? It also turns out that reading letters backwards is easy for me!

**What's so great about owning Needle in the Hay?**

Having access to all the records I could want – although I'm actually yet to take one home; I even sold one of my favourites that I've dreamed of owning on vinyl since I was 18.

**Have you always been a collector and where do you hunt for special pieces?**

Glen has. He and his brother Cameron of Flotsam and Jetsam have a knack for sourcing amazing things. I just find stuff – sometimes on Trade Me – or sometimes it's items we've had stored away for years.

**How do you manage to not overfill your home with all your cool finds?**

Too late. With a household of collectors, it's filled to the brim. 🏠  
fb.com/needleinthehayshop

**WATCH THIS SPACE**

"There seem to be a lot of like-minded people in Hamilton right now, which has kind of given us all confidence to be ourselves and show the town what we're made of – let your freak flag fly and all that. There's so much potential here at the moment, it feels like we're at a place where we can change things – take over the city."

