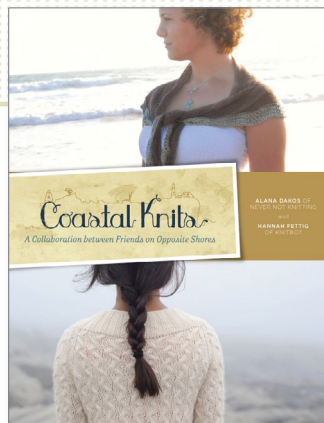




A Shore Thing

Knitting friends from opposite coasts come together for a nature-themed book.

BY LEEANNE JONES



Hannah Fetting and Alana Dakos in a rare get-together.

California and Maine are 3,000 miles apart. But for two knitwear designers who call these states home, the distance did not impede their friendship—and in fact, it helped inspire a successful collaboration.

In their self-published *Coastal Knits*, Alana Dakos and Hannah Fetting showcase 10 patterns that evoke the distinctive landscapes of their opposite shores. Among the instructions are essays and photos of their favorite beaches, forests, and neighborhoods.

The ancient, contorted trees in California's Los Osos Oaks State Natural Reserve, which 29-year-old Alana often visited as a child, inspired her Gnarled Oak Cardigan. Embossed leaves circle the yoke and the buttons are made from oak branches. "I'm really attached to that specific location," she says, "and I love the way the design turned out. It's

exactly what I envisioned." Similarly woody is her Rustling Leaves Beret, evoking the eucalyptus trees in Montaña de Oro State Park.

Hannah's Rocky Coast Cardigan is a classic cable knit with a wide collar—a cozy shield against the cool Atlantic breeze off a rocky shelf at Two Lights State Park, near the 34-year-old's New England home. "It especially reads 'Maine,'" she says, "and it reminds me of my grandma's era in a modern way."

Her grandmother first taught Hannah how to knit when she was young. While working at a yarn shop a few years ago, Hannah took some of her designs to a trade show and scored a book deal. It was while promoting that book, *Closely Knit* (North Light Books, 2008), that she met Alana, a self-taught knitter from a creative and entrepreneurial family. Alana, too, was working at a yarn shop, and she contacted Hannah to interview her for a podcast. When Hannah scheduled a California stop on a book tour, Alana hosted her at her home.

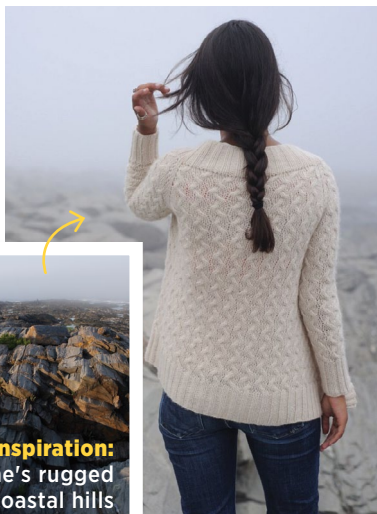
They became fast friends and continued to keep in touch online, even helping each other with their pattern businesses, Hannah's Knitbot and Alana's Never Not Knitting. In early 2011, they decided to collaborate on a self-published book. Despite the time difference and their differing styles—Alana's intricate and feminine details; Hannah's simple, classic aesthetic—the project came together quickly and

smoothly. They took on every aspect, from photography to marketing. And with some design and technical assistance—along with their kids' babysitters posing as models—*Coastal Knits* was released at the end of October.

The response has been overwhelming: The first print run sold out within two weeks, so the quantity was doubled for the second. A 2,100-member fan group on Ravelry enthusiastically shares photos of projects from the book. And four child-sized patterns, called *Coastal Kids*, were released digitally at the end of April 2012. "People have resonated with the stories and even have personal connections to some of the locations," says Hannah. "It has exceeded our expectations." ❁



Inspiration: Ancient trees in a California forest



Inspiration: Maine's rugged coastal hills



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