



## YARN SALES

Stitch 'n' bitches are near-fanatical about their yarn. Here are a few of their favorite yarn shops, several of which offer lessons.

**ALOHA YARN** has the biggest buzz among local knitters, and offers beginner's knitting and crocheting lessons by appointment for \$20. 46-018 Kamehameha Highway, Suite 209. 234-5865, [www.alohayarn.com](http://www.alohayarn.com).

**BEN FRANKLIN CRAFTS** sells a general selection of yarn and supplies, and holds basic knitting and crocheting workshops. Eight locations on O'ahu, [www.bfcraftclub.com](http://www.bfcraftclub.com).

**ISLE KNIT** is a great place for beginners, who can sign up for individual lessons with Sue, the owner. Cost is \$25 for two sessions. 1188 Bishop St., Suite 1403. 533-0853.

**NEEDLE ARTS BY URSULA FISCHER** is a small but well-outfitted shop, and the proprietress leads one-on-one lessons in knitting, crocheting, embroidery and needlepoint. Hours vary, so call ahead. 1717 Kalākaua Ave., Second floor. 949-8900.

**YARN AND FRIENDS** is one of the larger shops in town. 1010 S. King St. (in the Medical Arts Building). 593-2212.

**YARN & NEEDLECRAFTS** is a friendly shop on the Windward Side with walk-in lessons that are free as long as you buy your materials. 46 Ho'olai St., Kailua. 262-9555.

# A Tight-Knit Group

*The Aloha Knitters isn't your grandmother's knitting circle, though none of its members would mind the comparison.*

**O**N A RECENT THURSDAY NIGHT, the weekly Aloha Knitters (formerly Honolulu Stitch 'n' Bitch) gathering consisted of 10 or so women, several in their 20s, just about everyone younger than 50, all of them knitting and chatting while a few oohed and aahed over a skein of hand-dyed, aqua-and-violet yarn.

Knitting may seem an odd hobby for Islanders, but there are plenty of reasons to craft a sweater in Hawai'i: aggressively air-conditioned offices, microclimates, the hobby's meditative quality and camaraderie. "We wanted to do something as a mother-daughter, so we took a class," says Barbara Ushijima, who sat knitting a shawl beside her daughter, Dayna, herself busy working on a baby blanket, a gift for a friend. Creating original, handmade and affordable gifts for friends and family is another reason people are drawn to knitting, but, as MK Carroll, a fellow Aloha Knitter, points out, if you don't want to give your creations away, you can always donate them to charity. "There are lots of charities that accept handmade items," says Carroll, "such as blankets for chemotherapy patients, senior citizens and preemies."

Beginners looking to learn the ins and outs of yarn, how to choose the right needles, follow a pattern and yarn over, turn a heel or frog (when you mess up and have to take everything apart) will find that the Aloha Knitters are patient folks happy to lend a hand, a skein or a needle. You're even welcome to observe at first, and just take in the lively conversation.

Weekly meetings are held Thursdays from 7 to 9 p.m. at Ward Centre's Mocha Java Café. The group also meets on Mondays, though those gatherings are generally smaller. For more information, visit <http://alohaknitters.wordpress.com> or <http://mkcarroll.com>.

—JENNY QUILL