

'Our toys encourage children's play and creativity'

Danielle Lett talks to the founder of Pocket in Woodbridge, who makes her own eco-friendly toys



When Kerry Ferrar made the move to Suffolk from London, never did she imagine she'd become a fully-fledged businesswoman.

But that's exactly what happened, as the mum-of-three took the plunge and opened Pocket, a shop that focuses on design-led and sustainable toys for children.

Born out of what was originally intended to be a two-week pop-up shop before Christmas, Pocket was so successful that she decided to take a gamble and make it her full-time gig. And things have been going from strength-to-strength for the entrepreneur.

Explaining what drew her to Suffolk, she says: "We bought a tiny cottage and were up and down the A12 most weekends, so we decided to make the move and leave London. It was one of those quite odd things, as we didn't have any connections with Suffolk, but we just loved the feel of it, and it

was the perfect location to get us out of the city."

Kerry, who is a graphic designer, struggled to find design-led, well-made soft toys for her children, so started designing and making her own.

"When my kids were young, I decided to make toys for them, as I couldn't find the sort of thing I was looking for. I had no intention of setting up my own shop," she says.

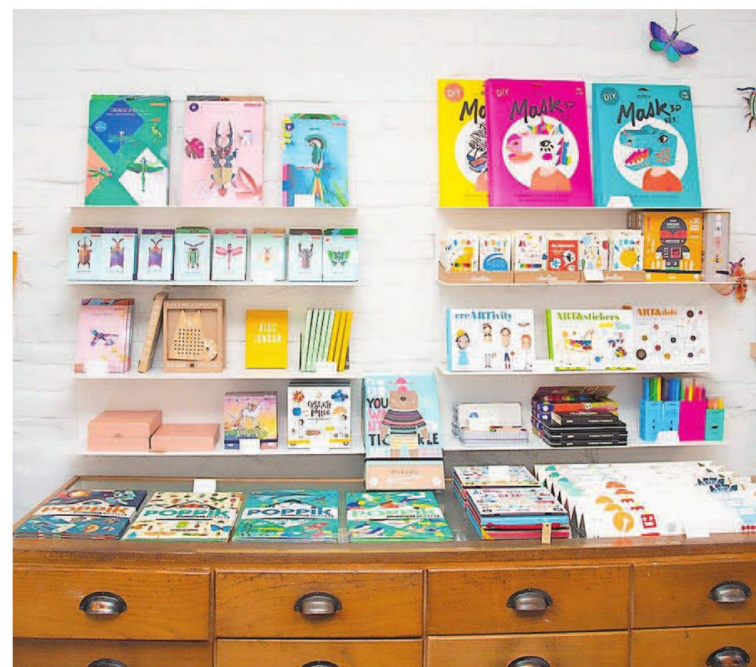
But her husband, who she says loves browsing Rightmove, happened to stumble upon a property that would make the perfect shop – 26 Church Street.

"We had one of those moments, and thought we should just do it. It seemed like an exciting opportunity, and a good place to set up shop with so many independents already here."

"For the pop-up I started selling my own products, alongside a small, carefully-curated selection of other brands that I felt complimented my own work, and



Pocket owner Kerry Ferrar at her Woodbridge shop



Inside Pocket in Woodbridge



Pictures: CHARLOTTE BOND

we were over the moon with how it went. We were testing the waters, but we realised there's definitely a market for that sort of thing here in Woodbridge."

Explaining the three fundamental principles behind her shop, she says: "Firstly, because I'm a graphic designer, I'm very design-aware for everything I choose for the shop is well-designed. Secondly, there are so many kids on screens nowadays, so I'm trying to encourage open-ended play for children, being creative, and enjoying being a kid without being on a screen all the time. And thirdly, sustainability. When choosing brands and products, I make sure they share the Pocket ethos by being aware of provenance, and using sustainable materials wherever possible, such as organic fabrics, recycled paper, or even recycled plastic."

"As a family, sustainability is really important to us. I think based on what's going on in the world right now, it's key that we don't buy and throw things away. It's difficult, but equally if you buy something sustainable and well-made, it will last longer."

"When I first started out, I used to make my own products, but as things started to grow, I needed more help. Some of the brands I sell include Freckle, a company based in Wales set up by two mums a couple of years ago. They design and make beautiful products which encourage kids to get outside and explore, like leaf identifiers. They use wood to make their magnifying glasses, and they'll tell you what tree the

wood comes from, and I find that sort of story fascinating.

"I also work with FabricWorks, an East London social enterprise. It's a team of women who have various disadvantages who have found employment difficult but are then trained up to work. It's an amazing initiative, and we pay them the London Living Wage for what they do."

With one successful year under her belt, Kerry is thankful for all she's achieved – and has big dreams for the future of Pocket.

"If you told me that a couple of years ago I'd be celebrating a year running a shop, I wouldn't have believed you. It's a big cliché but it's been a huge learning curve, as I've never done anything like this before. But having people return to the shop is a huge compliment, because you know you're doing something right, and we've been getting so much support from people around us."

"I've gone from having a small selection of products and growing that, so over the next year I want to continue doing that. My own products have taken a backseat, but I'd like to refocus on my range – perhaps create making kits for kids. I'd also love to do some workshops with kids and get them outside, as a lot of our products celebrate nature. And in January we're going to be a collection point for Acre Bakery. I've known Emily for a while and she asked if we'd be interested in doing that. For me, it encourages that community feel, and it will be nice for people to grab their bread and have a mooch around the shop."



we need a new home...



Phoebe and Regina

Picture: RSPCA SUFFOLK CENTRAL

Phoebe and Regina, 11-month-old female Lionhead rabbits

These lovely ladies were brought into our care from a very young age and as a result they are both confident and cheeky. They'll happily hop over to be hand fed and they also tolerate grooming well, as this is part of their regular care due to being Lionhead Angoras and will need to be continued.

Although they can be a little shy, we're hoping these girls will find their "happily ever after" soon!

If you think you can offer Phoebe and Regina a home or any other pet in our care, then please get in contact with our reception team by emailing martlesham@rspca-suffolkcentral.org.uk or by calling 0300 999 7321 between 9am and 4pm and we will be happy to help.

ask the vet

Nina Downing, PDSA veterinary nurse



My cat, Minx, seems to be coughing every evening. He never brings anything up and it doesn't affect him during the day. Should we be concerned?

If Minx is not coughing during the day, it's worth thinking about whether anything happens in the evenings that could be irritating his airways, such as lighting the fire or a scented candle, or even plumping cushions before you sit. However, as this is a recurrent cough, it's also important to book Minx in to see your vet to rule out any underlying illnesses. Cats can suffer with viral and bacterial respiratory infections, as well as allergies, so watch out for other signs such as discharge from the eyes, noisy breathing, low energy, or sneezing. When Minx is relaxing or asleep, count his breaths per minute, keep a record and let your vet know as this could help with a diagnosis.

I really want to get a pet but know I can't afford a dog. Would a hamster be better suited for a lower budget?

Hamsters do cost significantly less than dogs to buy and feed, however, although small, they are still a big responsibility and require plenty of care and attention. Be sure to do your research as the expenses can mount up over their lifetime – remember to take into account

any veterinary care costs they may need if they fall ill. It's really important for hamsters to have a large enclosure, that gives them space to run, explore, climb and dig. Providing an enriched environment with toys, things to gnaw, quality food and hay to forage amongst supports their physical and mental health, which in turn should help them to stay away from the vet! For more advice on what pet is best for you, visit pdsa.org.uk/choosing-a-pet

After being hit by a car, my terrier, Rex, had to have his leg amputated. How can I help him get the most out of life after his recovery?

I'm sorry to hear about Rex's accident – I hope he is recovering well. Many pets cope very well with three legs and continue to have an active and fulfilled life. Take things slowly at first – Rex will need to develop the muscles in his other legs and they can take a little time to compensate. Choose short walks while he masters balance and gains confidence; he may tire quickly to start with so bear with him. He may also be confused at first and try to use his missing leg, which could make him unsteady or more prone to falling. He may also need you to guide him through doorways so he doesn't fall as they can be difficult to climb up into and down from.

Nina Downing is a veterinary nurse at the PDSA, answering questions on pet-related concerns

pdsa
PET SURANCE

