



She Ain't Heavy, She's My Mother by Bryan Batt, Crown Publishing, ©2010; crownpublishing.com.

Cause for Relief

From Katrina to the oil spill, “Mad Men” star Bryan Batt finds a way to give back to his hometown, New Orleans.

BY JUSTINE LOPEZ
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KERRI McCAFFETY

BRYAN BATT IS MOST RECOGNIZABLE FROM HIS role as Salvatore Romano from AMC’s hit series “Mad Men,” in addition to his numerous stints on Broadway and the recent release of his memoirs. However, in 2003, the actor and author cast himself into a new role—the proprietor of the New Orleans shop, Hazelnut.

“Hazelnut is an eclectic gift/home furnishings shop uptown on trendy Magazine Street,” he says. “I love New Orleans—was born and raised in this magical, unique and soulful city. There is a great aesthetic and eclectic design sense that is indigenous to New Orleans, just like her cuisine, music, architecture and way of life.”

At its location on Magazine Street—a five-mile stretch famous for its restaurants, galleries and shops—Hazelnut specializes in accessories for the home, such as art, dinnerware and furniture.

However, the shop and its owners, Bryan and Tom Cianfichi, are also in the business of giving back to their community. Along with many other local businesses, Hazelnut suffered the devastation of Hurricane Katrina and, more recently, the Gulf oil spill. In 2005, following Katrina, the entire city closed down for nearly a month. But as the city slowly started to reopen and reestablish itself, Bryan decided to be proactive, taking steps to use his celebrity, and his store, to help.

“We started Magazine Street Retail Relief—a day of shopping that benefited victims of Katrina and promoted much-needed retail commerce on the street and in the city,” Bryan explains. “We’ve done it every year since, and this year it will be better than before.”

After its first year, the event proved to be a success, bringing music, commerce and hope back to Magazine Street. However, with the Gulf oil spill disaster, the annual November event will have a different focus. But Bryan’s cause will remain the same: to help the city and community of New Orleans.

It is fitting that Bryan uses his New Orleans-inspired fabrics to give back to the city. He created New Orleans Toile, inspired by the architecture and historic buildings of New Orleans. It is also



Opposite: Proceeds from Bryan’s fabrics, New Orleans Toile and Pontchartrain Beach, are donated to help the community of New Orleans.

Below: Hazelnut specializes in gifts and household items, from linens to dishware to decorative elements.



used to adorn household items sold at Hazelnut, such as napkins, lacquered trays and bedding. His second design is called Pontchartrain Beach, which celebrates the colorful nature of the Gulf Coast.

“A percentage of all sales go to benefit Second Harvest of Greater New Orleans and Acadiana,” he says. “This great organization gets food directly to the families in need whose livelihoods have been compromised by the oil spill.”

While Bryan may be best known for his roles on screen and on stage, he has continually managed to use his numerous talents to help his community in times of need.

“I have done countless PSA commercials and performances to raise awareness, and our shop is raising funds through sales,” Bryan says. “I’m virtually useless with a hammer, but I do know how to entertain.”

To learn more about Bryan Batt, visit bryanbatt.com. For more information on Hazelnut and Magazine Street Retail Relief, visit hazelnutneworleans.com.

