

Fairies and Feathers for Halloween

By Sophie Braccini



Nicole Jarotzky in front of her home where costumes are displayed.

Photo Sophie Braccini

Nicole Jarotzky is a cross between a ballerina and a businesswoman. Using the creativity and the poetic streak of the artist in her, and applying her years of luxury fashion marketing experience, she launched her own company, Fairies and Feathers, less than a year ago. For Halloween, the mother of three has designed adorable costumes based on the tutus she makes. Coming in all sizes, from many inspirations, and in a myriad of colors, these costumes are unique and custom-made for girls of all ages. Jarotzky makes them in her Burton Valley Lafayette home and ships them all over the world.

A U.C. Berkeley graduate, the young woman attended France's number one business school, HEC Paris, to earn her MBA. She married a Frenchman, but sadly, lost him.

"His parents are still like family to me," she says. "Genevieve Billard, my first husband's mother, was a seamstress and she came here to help me launch the tutu business a year ago."

Since the beginning of her career, she worked in marketing for luxury fashion and cosmetic companies such as Chanel and Paco Rabanne, then in the U.S. for Reflect Cosmetics. "Unfortunately, that company had a terrible time when the economy went down and I found myself without a job," she says. She had also started to raise a family with her new husband, so it was clear it was time for a new path.

"I have been a ballerina since I was a little girl," she says. "When I saw models of tutus, I realized that I could do it too, just better." About a year before the tutus, Jarotzky started a hair feather extension business with a partner. The two purchased long feathers that were braided into hair. "We worked at fairs and farmers' markets," says Jarotzky. "The product was so hot, it was an immediate success." But the young mother wanted to diversify her offerings and distribution channels, hence, the tutus.

Stretchy lace fabric in different colors creates the bodice of the tutu. Then Jarotzky attaches to the bodice bands of tulle that form the skirt. The concept is quite simple; what makes the tutus unique are the colors, the length, and the multiple additions – flowers, buttons, ribbons, feathers – Jarotzky uses to customize them.

This year, using the tutus as a base, she made Halloween costumes of all kinds, from pirates, to witches, to vampires, all with a charming feminine touch, attention to detail, and a high-end look. "The imagination is the limit," says Jarotzky.

She continues to sell her tutus at fairs – including the recent Lafayette Art and Wine Festival where she did very well – but she also developed a website where potential customers can choose their own models. "I like people to call me so we can discuss



what they want," says Jarotzky. "I do everything myself anyway; I might as well make it completely custom."

The woman who ran marketing programs to launch perfumes worldwide says that what she does today brings her more satisfaction. "Even if I have to work very hard, seven days a week and often into the night, I am home with the children that I now raise alone," she says. "I love the contact with the customers, the look on the faces of little girls when they put on the tutus, and I am my own boss."

Jarotzky's business has grown so nicely since she started that she's hired an employee. "I am giving myself another year to see how the business develops and will decide what direction to go. A woman who owns three stores asked me to work with her, but I'm not ready to go wholesale yet."

Costumes cost between \$20 and \$50. For more information visit www.fairiesandfeatherstutus.com.

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business briefs

Healthy Lifestyle Fair at Oakwood
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(925) 283-4000

Oakwood Athletic Club is hosting a free Health Fair from 5 to 7 p.m. Monday, November 5 which will include 20 health and wellness providers who will be available to discuss health concerns with local residents. The fair is presented by Oakwood and the Lafayette Chamber of Commerce, LamorindaWeb and Behymer & Steel Family Chiropractic; sponsors are Lafayette Physical Therapy, Cobain Orthodontics, Care Indeed, and HCR Manor Care.

News from the three Chambers of Commerce

Lafayette

Ribbon cutting at the new Lafayette business, The Bloom Space, Thursday, October 11 at 5 p.m., 3391 Mt. Diablo Boulevard.

Entrepreneur's Club meets 8:30 a.m. Thursday, October 18 in the Chamber Conference Room.

Ribbon Cutting at Cobain Orthodontics, 5 p.m. Thursday, October 18 at 905-A Moraga Road.

Green Committee Meeting at noon Tuesday, October 23 in the Chamber Conference Room.

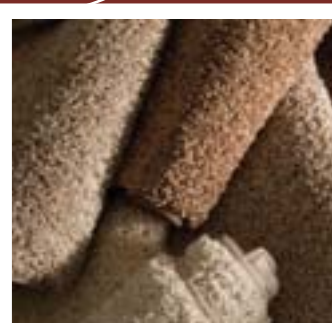
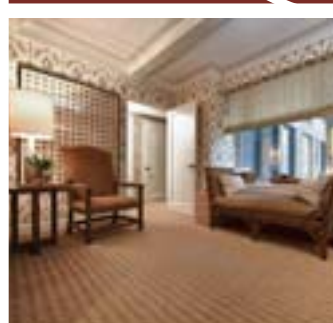
Moraga

Chamber Mixer at the Moraga Art Gallery from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. October 30, 522 Center Street in the Rheem Valley Shopping Center.

Orinda

Networking mixer from 5:30 to 7 p.m. October 18 at Orinda Motors, 63 Orinda Way.

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