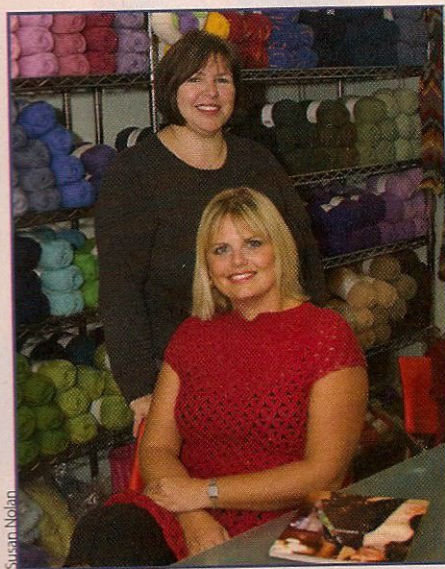


Kristin Omdahl



South Florida

Here in South Florida, my favorite place to crochet, we have several gorgeous yarn shops with fabulous yarn, hooks, and accessories. Then, once you have everything, we have an abundance of beautiful locations where you can soak in the views and crochet to your heart's content.

On Sanibel Island is a charming little shop called **Geez Leweez** (www.geezleweez.com). Owned by a mother-daughter team, this one-of-a-kind place has a great variety of yarns and accessories and very knowledgeable staff. The shop is only a short walk from the island's sublime beaches. Known as the seashell capital of the world, Sanibel has soft, sandy beaches and many friendly dolphins just offshore. Bring your beach chair and umbrella for a relaxing day of crocheting on the beach!

If you head farther south to Naples, you have your choice of shops. In North Naples, you'll find that **Gabriella's Yarn Shop** (above left, www.ready2knit.com) is full of luxury yarns and all the accessories you may need while you are here. Stop in for yarn, books, patterns, needles, and expert advice from Gabriella Bittner, the friendly owner.

Then, yarn in hand, you are only a few miles from some of my favorite crochet-friendly cafés with outdoor seating, perfect for crocheting the day away!

The Survey Café (www.thesurveycafe.com) features organic coffee and teas, as well as a healthy, creative menu that includes flaxseed, fruit, and nut bars for breakfast; vegetarian brown rice sushi for lunch; homemade soups; delicious salads; and a Southern flair throughout. The building is a historic home that has been renovated for the café.

It has original hardwood floors throughout and stained-glass windows in the bathroom. Across the street is a beautiful cypress tree well over 200 feet tall. I love to sit outside and crochet with the cypress tree. Many of the projects from my upcoming book, *Crochet So Fine* (Interweave, July 2010), including the Shimmer Cape, were crocheted at Survey Café.

The Coffee Mill (www.coffeemillatpromenade.com) is in an outdoor mall called The Promenade at Bonita Bay. The outdoor seating is next to a waterfall! Although it is a bit loud, the rushing water is surprisingly soothing and helps me focus. I have designed many sweaters and shawls here, including the Golightly Tunic (*Interweave Crochet* Spring 2008) and the Sprout Shawlette from *Crochet So Fine*.

Heading south to the other end of Naples is another fine yarn shop: **Knitting With Nancy**. This one-stop shop has anything you might want or need to crochet in paradise: an extensive yarn selection, accessories, and knowledgeable staff.

For the next stop, we travel east to the other coast, cross the Everglades along Alligator Alley, and head into Miami for the lovely **Anneke's Needleworks** (www.annekesneedleworks.blogspot.com). This shop is bursting with bright, cheerful color and friendly, warm greetings from the moment you enter. The first time I went to

Anneke's shop was for a book signing and workshop for *Wrapped in Crochet*. I was greeted by Anneke feeding bread to baby ducks at the front door. (I got to feed the babies, too!) Once inside, there were two resident cats who were excited to meet me and followed me for the remainder of the day. The experienced staff is sweet and welcoming.

From Miami you can head south to the end of the state and travel through the gorgeous Florida Keys, where you will find the adorable **Knit Wits in Key West** (www.knitwitskeywest.com). The only yarn shop in the Keys, Knit Wits is a short walk from shopping, restaurants and cafés, and the cruise-ship dock. They are stocked with a great variety of beautiful yarns and accessories and are very welcoming.

Crocheters in South Florida are fortunate to have a great selection of shops from which to purchase yarn and supplies, but I am most grateful for all the crochet-friendly locations in which to crochet in paradise.

If you're here for a visit, keep in mind that South Florida is seasonal. Store hours vary from summer to winter, so it's best to call ahead.

Happy crocheting! ☺

KRISTIN OMDAHL crochets, knits, and runs in South Florida. Read more about her work on page 20.