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Story of Firebird Studios started with search for perfect purse

By Lee Belote

When Ashton O’Gorman went searching for the perfect purse, she had no idea it would lead her to a career path.

It was about a year after graduating from Virginia Tech, and O’Gorman went to several stores looking for a new leather purse.

“I couldn’t find anything I liked without a bunch of bling or in a funky color,” said O’Gorman. “So, I decided to make one myself.”

O’Gorman then went to a thrift store and bought some leather jackets and vintage belts. She deconstructed them and started designing her first leather purse. Her mom gave her a quick tutorial on the sewing machine, and O’Gorman went to work putting the pieces back together.

There were lots of leather scraps after the purse creation, so O’Gorman decided to design some jewelry with the leftovers. She made earrings and leather cuffs and started giving them away as gifts. She received so much posi-



Ashton O’Gorman recently opened Firebird Studios. She started years ago with an Etsy shop and trunk shows and now has her own boutique located in Chambord Commons. LEE BELOTE/FREELANCE

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Eurasia has been pleasing palettes for almost three decades



Patrick Evans-Hylton
 Peake Eats

I remember, in 1995, when I was in culinary school at the now-closed Norfolk campus of Johnson & Wales University and several other would-be chefs were talking about a new restaurant that opened.

Many of us would go on our own self-guided field trips; on several of these trips was the first time I met such local culinary luminaries as Monroe Duncan, Bobby Huber, Todd Jurich and Sydney Meers.

We met another who was in the process of making a name for himself, having been at such notable restaurants of the day, Big Tomato and Pasta e Pani. His name was Amarin Reelachart, and his restaurant was Eurasia.

The tiny spot in Loehmann’s Plaza was named after the creative mix-match of cuisines that Reelachart had experience in, including American regional, French, Italian, and Thai. Later the chef/owner moved to another Virginia Beach location closer to the Oceanfront.

Eurasia is still there, in Linkhorn Shoppes. The restaurant is no longer owned by Reelachart, and it has since

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