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by BECKY NEEMS on NOVEMBER 5, 2013 7:00 PM · NO COMMENTS

"This is the room with all the treasures in it," Courtney Bartolacci says of her craft room. From playing in her mom's closet as a little girl to creating a craft studio from a pink bedroom as an adult, Bartolacci has kept her imagination alive. She is the owner of [Bartolacci Designs](#) on [Etsy](#). Bartolacci gives jewelry a unique twist by using clay beads, Scrabble tiles and vintage items. In this week's [MidMo Etsy](#) we asked her about her shop and its variety of items.



Photo by Becky Neems

VoxTalk: How did you get started creating jewelry?

Bartolacci: I've always loved jewelry, shoes and clothes. My sisters and I would play in my mom's closet. She had a room-sized closet. We would go in there and play shoe store and pile on the jewelry. Then as an adult I would look through magazines and think: "I really want that necklace," but it would be so expensive. I thought, "I can make this." Do you remember a store called [Cool Stuff](#)? They were down on Ninth Street. They had this really funky store. I would go in there and watch them and learned to put

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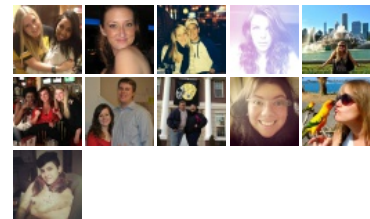
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the clasps together. I would have a friend come over and we started making jewelry. My friends said, "You really need to sell this stuff." A woman at our church had a little bookstore downtown called Heart to Heart. She was the one who encouraged me to start selling things about 15 years ago. She has the bookstore by our church at [Woodcrest Chapel](#).

VT: When did you start listing on Etsy?

Bartolacci: I went to a couple of (craft) shows and someone said, "Have you ever heard of Etsy? Your things look like they'd fit really well in that community." I started taking pictures and put the shop together in February 2011 during the Snowpocalypse. I remember taking things out in the snow and photographing them. I had my daughter help me with the (design of the) banner.

VT: How would you describe the style of your work?

Bartolacci: Very eclectic. I like kind of a vintage feel but modern. I'm all over the place. I really love turquoise and pearls. I love finding things that are broken and old and reworking them. My mom had sent me an earring and I made a necklace out of it. I have a box that's just old jewelry and garage sale stuff, and I'll take it out and take it all apart and remake something. I have a necklace that I found in a store and took off the charms and put my own spin on it. The fun thing about jewelry is if I make something and I don't like it or it doesn't sell I can just take it apart and remake it. It's not like it's set in stone.



Photo by Becky Neems

VT: You have unique items like marble-styled beads and Scrabble bracelets. How do you make them?

Bartolacci: I have beads with polymer clay. It was that winter we got snowed in and I started. I just would get the clay and roll it into a ball and take these colors add them and bake it in the toaster oven. My friend also makes Scrabble tiles and I'll add to them.

VT: Why do you continue to create pieces?

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Bartolacci: It started as a hobby. It's my therapy. It's how I relax. If I can create something I feel really good. That's what energizes me. I also work part time at a clothing store at the mall and get inspiration there.

VT: Where do you sell everything you don't list on Etsy?

Bartolacci: Word of mouth, lots of friends, birthdays, wedding wishlists. There's a new consignment shop opening up on Route K on November 1. I'm going to sell some bracelets there. It's called Something Plume. It's going to be open Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays.



Photo by Becky Neems

VT: Does Etsy work well to sell your items?

Bartolacci: The nice thing about Etsy is that I can look at my shop stats and see what people have viewed so I can see what's popular. Then that will help me when I go to make the next piece. I've found that if I make something for myself then it sells. But if I make it to sell it's not as successful.

VT: How many hours do you put into it a week?

Bartolacci: My goal is to come in here (the craft studio) half an hour a day. Whether it's just puttering, organizing or making something. Once I get in here, I end up staying longer.

VT: Do you have any craft shows soon?

Bartolacci: I have one coming up at Woodcrest. It's November 16th from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. There will be all sorts of neat things there. I'm going to do an open house with a friend who sells [Mary Kay](#) and one who sells [Pampered Chef](#).

See [Bartolacci Designs](#) on Etsy.

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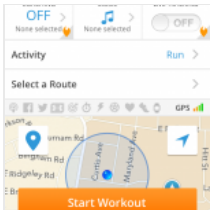
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