



Outdoor Woman

Red Ants Pants



DID YOU KNOW? IN RED ANT COLONIES THE FEMALE ANTS DO ALL THE WORK.

It's a bit of trivia that became the inspiration for Montana entrepreneur Sarah Calhoun's White Sulphur Springs-based apparel company. Her Red Ants Pants brand of sturdy, high-end women's work pants is designed to fit a woman's frame. Whether bucking bales, gardening, hiking, building trail tread, hauling or remodeling, Montana women do it all. Surrounded by hard-working hard-playing Montana women, Calhoun recognized a void in the women-specific work apparel market. Thus began her journey as a small business owner catering to women.

As Calhoun sought to fill the void in this untapped market, she began producing bomber pants designed by women, for women and focused on comfort, function and flattery.

"You can't fit curves into square pants," recalls Calhoun. "So I thought it was about time to provide another option." Founded in 2006, Red Ants Pants boast durability made from socially responsible cotton canvas duck material, double reinforced seat and front and 35 different sizes in two cuts; curvy and straight.

KEEP IT REAL, KEEP IT LOCAL

In the beginning stages, Calhoun made decisions about the business's core values that have not wavered today. Calhoun is committed to producing her pants

100% in the USA.

"I think that creating and supporting jobs on our soil, with good working conditions is part of my responsibility as a business owner. Yes, I could be making a heck of a lot more money if I chose to manufacture our pants in China, but looking at the big picture, who is that truly benefiting?" Calhoun explains. Despite urges from some industry peers to abandon her "keep it local" company vow, Calhoun maintains a productive relationship with a mother/daughter manufacturing company out of Seattle. "They have 23 employees who are treated well, paid well and enjoy good working conditions," Sarah states.

WORKIN' WOMAN'S HEADQUARTERS

The sleepy south-central ranching town of White Sulphur Springs, Montana is an authentic location for Red Ants Pants Headquarters. After reading Ivan Doig's *This House of Sky*, Calhoun says she had to see for herself the book's setting. She immediately fell in love and relocated from Bozeman. With a population of fewer than 1000, Red Ants Pants' storefront sits in an historic old-west style building on Main Street. The downtown location has served Calhoun well. "White Sulphur Springs is the perfect spot for me and the business. I wouldn't have it any other way," Calhoun says.

TOUR DE PANTS

Fully fessing up to her slim business background,

Calhoun embraces her innate creativity to drive her business. In her words she is able to “think outside the box because I don’t know what the box is!” For her small business, Calhoun relies on social marketing, word of mouth and 1964 Airstream trailer to spread the word of Red Ants Pants. “Tour de Pants” is the term Calhoun coined for her grassroots marketing road-trip. Calhoun, Maggie Doherty (her pal and sidekick for Pants journeys), the “Anthill” (the pet name for the trailer) and Border collie, Nellie, have made three extended trips across most of the western United States. The traveling pants team



visits women’s homes for private pants parties, hosts fashion shows and attends trades shows. Private pants parties are a bit like the ultimate new-school Tupperware party. They offer an opportunity for the community to come together to connect and celebrate their hard-working friends.

“We have no idea what to expect when we arrive at house parties,” says Maggie Doherty. “We don’t usually know our hosts. And for all of our doubts and slight insecurities, we’ve always been more than welcomed into the homes of women across the country. It’s amazing what this small company has done to bring together and celebrate working women. Sometimes I laugh and think, ‘all this support, energy, enthusiasm and sometimes tears all for a pair of pants?’ This is a true sisterhood of traveling pants. We get emails from people who followed us for miles on the highway to find out more about us. It’s surreal at times.”

Hitting the road in the Anthill has given Calhoun insight into who her customer is and what they love about Red Ants Pants. “Tour de Pants” is headed out again

this spring down the west coast to Sacramento. Red Ants Pants will revisit the “Women in Trades” tradeshow for women union workers in Sacramento. Last year Calhoun found this show to be a great representation of Red Ants Pant’s core customer. She and Doherty met women working in trades as pile drivers, welders, electricians and construction workers. These women have been succeeding in a man’s world their entire lives, and wearing men’s pants. So, Calhoun says, they were overjoyed to find pants made for them by people who understood their efforts and lifestyle.

“The women we met in Sacramento became huge fans of Red Ants Pants! They almost got emotional over our story and product—fully knowing that Red Ants Pants represent far more than a pair of pants,” Calhoun recalls. “I feel as if we owe it to these amazing women to return.”

BECOMING QUEEN OF YOUR COLONY

Calhoun invites every women who has ever felt frustrated with ill-fitting men’s pants that ride too high to be their colony’s leader and track the Anthill to its nearest tour stop. Or, call Sarah Calhoun and host a pants party in your community. You’ll be the queen of the anthill.

For more information about Red Ants Pants and its story check out www.redantspants.com.

Follow the Red Ants Pants blog to track their adventures in the Anthill. Pants, belts, t-shirts and other accessories can be purchased on the website or at the storefront. Call 406-547-

3781 to order or arrange a pants party.

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