

Elizabeth and Robin Wooten Tied to the Ocracoke Shore

BY MONICA YOUNG

Elizabeth Wooten has such a strong bond with the South and its rituals that her business is called The South's Best, Inc. and includes the men's tie line, Ties to the South, as well as the cleverly named boys' line, The Knottie Boys.

When the interior designer/mother/men's apparel entrepreneur isn't turning out designs for her hand-woven, hand-sewn silk ties or dealing with the many facets of starting a small business from scratch, she is either whisking 14-year-old Olivia or her 10-year-old sister, Carrington, to horseback riding, ball or some other activity.

However, the Kinston family's favorite place to be is at their cottage on Ocracoke. While Robin Wooten prefers his 23-foot Kencraft center-console Challenger (dubbed *Trader's Release* – a tribute to his job as a stockbroker), Elizabeth has her own boat – a 13-foot Boston Whaler named *Just Right*.

"Robin's really just a first mate in a suit. The water is something we love so much; it's just a part of us," says Elizabeth.

That's how Ties to the South came about, really.

Robin would ask Elizabeth to help him choose a tie each morning, but none displayed the juxtaposition of Robin's conservative job, his seafaring nature and his preppy style. Elizabeth started visiting a warehouse to buy ties that were seconds for her husband and had an eye for color and pattern.

After Robin was asked so many times where he had gotten his ties, Elizabeth began selling ties online. The venture turned out to be the learning curve for her own designs and future company.

She realized that she could create a line of ties that combined both the preppy, banker stripe with the icons that her husband and other men love so well. Her sister-in-law, an international flight attendant, jumped onboard and helped Elizabeth find a reasonable manufacturer.

"I had no clue what I was doing, but knew I was supposed to be doing it. The ties are things all about eastern North Carolina but relate to

Elizabeth Wooten's Knottie Boys tie line has made a big splash with fashion-forward young men.



Elizabeth and good pal Robin Turner (not to be confused with Elizabeth's hubby Robin Wooten) ride bikes around Ocracoke.

David Wilson

all over the coast and other places, as well. For example, the reception in Richmond has been incredible," says Elizabeth.

The ties she has designed are whimsically named. There is the yellow tuna "Charlie" necktie. The orange sailfish tie is named "Get-er-done." There are king mackerel, mermaids, deer and marlin. They come in men's sizes, boys' and in bowties.

"You do what you know. This is what I know. We spend so much time on the water," says Elizabeth.

Robin's favorite tie is the green version of the trademarked marlins leaping between stripes. He looks at the marlin, and it soothes him to

think about being on the water when he is having a particularly hectic day. His wife's ties anchor him to what he loves.

The sensation of being in tune with the coast is what ties the Wooten clan to Ocracoke and provides the inspiration for Elizabeth's growing apparel business.

"Our life is such that when you live in eastern North Carolina, everything revolves around tradition and water. The thing about Ocracoke is that you either get it or you don't. I think it is the only place I've ever been when coming in off the boat you don't see anything. You don't see cars; you don't see people, just nature," says Elizabeth contently.

Elizabeth Wooten, President/CEO
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The South's Best, Inc.

"Ties To The South" "The Knottie Boys"

Our 100% Woven Silk Neckwear is Southern inspired, hand designed, and hand finished with the conservative gentleman and young master in mind.

"Crabby Al," "Marlin Darlin," "Git-R-Done," & "The Charlie."

Traditional neckties and bowties for men and boys...
with just the right mix of fun and flare!

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