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RENO  
MAGAZINE

MICANO HOME  
AND GARDEN'S  
SAM SPRAGUE

*One of Midtown's  
original movers and  
shakers*

## THE *NEW* MIDTOWN

From Liberty Street to Plumb Lane,  
Midtown provides an eclectic mix of boutiques,  
bars, galleries and restaurants

## ↓ SAM SPRAGUE

Micano Home  
and Garden

*Upcycling art and  
neighborhoods*



PHOTOS BY DAVID CALVERT

BY BRANDI SCHLOSSBERG

**FROM THE SIDE PATIO AT MICANO HOME AND GARDEN**, the sounds of world music spill onto Virginia Street, creating the perfect soundtrack for metal cacti made of horseshoes, and the colorful pots, outdoor clocks and painted faces of suns and moons that hang from the patio walls.

Following the drum beats, Midtown shoppers will find the person responsible for all this Wild West and world rustic art, much of which has been made by hand from “upcycled”

materials, such as barnwood and metal. His name is Sam Sprague, and he opened Micano Home and Garden a decade ago — long before Midtown was hip.

“I think intuitively I knew sooner or later this area would be hot,” Sprague says. “If you look at Reno like a body, the main artery is Virginia Street, and I thought if there’s going to be a movement to have a store like mine, it’s got to be in this area.”

Perhaps Sprague’s eye for upcycling made it easier for him to envision a

thriving future for the then-barren buildings and crumbling businesses, similar to how he sees the potential for art where others might simply see the rough wood of a torn-down barn.

“That’s kind of what we’re doing with Midtown — we’re upcycling the area,” Sprague says. “Like taking this building that was nothing and was probably on its last leg and turning it into a place where people can come to see and purchase handmade art.”

Several years ago, he and a few other like-minded business owners on the same strip of Virginia Street began discussing ways to improve and promote this central section of Reno. The group grew, and more and more local business owners decided to join forces to create and brand what is now known as the MidTown District.

“We’re constantly advertising and branding Midtown in the paper and on commercials — not just one business but the area as a whole,” Sprague says. “We all benefit from moving forward together.”

As the membership coordinator for the MidTown District, Sprague aims to make sure each of the region’s business owners feel confident about their own role in the Midtown revival. The mission to grow Midtown goes hand-in-hand with improving the surrounding community as well, Sprague says. He believes supporting the area’s local business owners is a leap that needs to be taken.

“So far, we’ve been Walmart shoppers,” Sprague says. “When people start thinking about buying locally, it will help Reno out so much — that’s when the sidewalks will change, the economy will change, the money will be going back into our community.”

As for the future of Midtown, getting those better sidewalks is one of the keys to completing Sprague’s vision of a Berkeley-esque area where people come to walk, shop, dine, and drink at locally owned establishments.

“We’re trying to change the fiber of the culture here in Reno,” Sprague adds, “to make the shift toward caring about handmade products, caring about local businesses, caring about being sustainable.”