



Deb Bosworth is our Beach Farmgirl blogger (<http://bfgblog.maryjanesfarm.org>). Deb is passionate about living a creative life and encouraging others to “make each day their masterpiece.” She brings us this series celebrating like-minded “girl geniuses.”

“GENIUSES ARE THE LUCKIEST OF MORTALS BECAUSE WHAT THEY MUST DO IS THE SAME AS WHAT THEY MOST WANT TO DO.”

– W. H. Auden

SNAPDRAGON

What do quirky, nostalgic, and vintage add up to for girl genius Jane Lindsey? A profitable embroidery craft business grown with love and a lot of free spirit!

With a background in art history and some retraining in horticulture, Jane said goodbye to her job as Curator of British Art at the University of Glasgow and moved to the Scottish countryside with her hubby to raise their two young daughters and start a flower farm. But that was just the beginning for this girl genius. All was well and good in the growing months, but once winter came, she needed something else to keep her hands busy. That’s when Jane turned to her teenage love of embroidery and began experimenting with freehand machine embroidery, making good use of the vintage fabrics she had been lugging from house to house for 10 years.



Jane started out selling her embroideries at local craft fairs, but she was also incredibly lucky to be given a free showcase stand at the *Country Living Magazine* Fair in Glasgow in 2005. It was there she caught the eye of some of the first customers who ordered from her website (snapdragongarden.co.uk). Jane’s embroideries were so well received that she soon had to move out of her kitchen studio into a reclaimed Airstream purchased from eBay. It was stripped out, making it not only affordable, but the perfect canvas for Jane to create her budding line of quirky embroidered crafts. With a new floor and a little paint, it was good as new. Jane managed her growing business from her Airstream office for a few years until it was bursting at the seams and a larger workspace became necessary.



Jane’s flower farm has blossomed into a full-fledged craft business called Snapdragon, inspired by the grounds surrounding her home located within Scotland’s Loch Lomond National Park. The view from her new studio brims with flowers and a rough meadow teeming with wildlife. Jane keeps a small flock of hens and Indian runner ducks as well as dogs and cats. From the workshop windows, she and her team of five can watch buzzards, herons, hares, deer, and woodpeckers. Jane combines all of these with her love of classic vehicles and vintage fabrics for inspiration.

Currently, Jane sells her homegrown designs wholesale to over 300 shops in the U.K. and on her website. What’s next for Snapdragon? Jane and her team are in the process of creating a new range of personalized mugs and prints which will combine her sewing with customers’ own photographs and drawings. “There isn’t anything else like this on the market, and initial feedback has been brilliant,” says Jane.

I asked Jane how she has grown since planting that first Snapdragon seed. “What having the business has shown me is that it is possible to have great skills in areas which have been untapped. I was very academic and took no art or design subjects at school or university, yet I found that when I gave flower arranging and then freehand embroidery a go, they were things that I found easy and also enjoyed. (There are many other things that I have tried along the way and found that I was terrible at!) Not having had formal training has been paradoxically very freeing—and that allows for great creativity.”

With growth come challenges. In order to expand without having to physically produce everything or outsource, Jane and her team are developing a range of items that are printed from her original designs.

What surprises Jane the most about where she is today? “I am constantly amazed that the schoolgirl who was so bad at sewing that she was banned

from the school machines has grown up into someone who has a flourishing textile business!”

Here’s what one customer had to say: “I bought a personalized herb cushion for my daughter to give to her pre-school leader on her last day. The cushion was beautiful. The packaging was so wonderful, along with the handwritten note and the stickers. The cushion arrived very quickly and I had confirmation beforehand of the words to be sewn. I would recommend Snapdragon to everyone ... in fact, I already have! Thank you.”

You can find Jane’s products on her website (snapdragongarden.co.uk) and Facebook (www.facebook.com/snapdragonjane).



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