

The Coastal Succulent Studio is Your One-Stop-Shop for Unique Arrangements and Plant Styling

BY BETH A. KLAHR, PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE COASTAL SUCCULENT



Thurston Pope and Brandon McKeown, co-founders of The Coastal Succulent, never intended to open a shop selling succulents.

“It just organically grew into a shop,” Pope says. “Both of us have always been business-minded and I come from a family of entrepreneurs. We never set out to be succulent experts or to be a nursery or greenhouse, so our knowledge came after working with many succulent varieties on a daily basis. We learned as we went.”

All of that hands-on experience has paid off. This past July, after working out of a residence for the past nine years, Pope and McKeown opened The Coastal Succulent, a curated design studio specializing in unique succulent and floral creations. The studio offers one of a kind, exceptionally handcrafted plant designs, faux and live succulent arrangements, plants, planters and home accessories, and custom design services for residential and commercial customers. The designs at Coastal Succulent join elements from nature like sand, river rock and driftwood into modern designs with inspiration from the coast, all customized to each client. McKeown is the creative director while Pope is the visionary responsible for business affairs.

What are Succulents?

Succulents may just be the superstar of the plant world. They are a group of plants that store water in their leaves and grow easily both indoors and out. Succulents tend to thrive in dry climates and don't like a lot of humidity. They can endure extended periods of drought, relying on the stored water and nutrients in their leaves.

According to Pope, awareness (as well as sales) of succulents are on an upward trajectory. “People realize they are a good investment,” he says. “Succulents are long lasting, extremely low maintenance, and offer the most bang for your buck. Flower arrangements are beautiful but offer a short lifespan and most houseplants require frequent watering. Succulents rarely need water and simply need bright light to thrive. Who doesn't want long lasting, beautiful, low maintenance plants?”

Pope and McKeown first learned about succulent plants in 2013 while visiting friends in Los Angeles and a little florist on Sunset Boulevard called Clementine that sold succulents. “We loved how cool they looked



Thurston Pope (R) and Brandon McKeown (L), co-founders/owners of The Coastal Succulent, are surrounded by some of their arrangements in their new studio.

and learned how easy they were to care for,” Pope says, “Succulents have always been popular on the west coast, but in 2013 they hadn't caught on in popularity on the east coast like now.”

Starting out small, they sold potted live succulent arrangements and terrariums. They went on to develop a wholesale division to supply Whole Foods Market stores in the southeast. That grew into offering creative potting workshops and plant maintenance services and then expanded to include full custom designs for both residential and commercial spaces. Now, The Coastal Succulent offers succulent and floral options for events including decor installations and table runners. The Coastal Succulent



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Succulents, the superstars of the plant world, can be arranged by The Coastal Succulent into beautiful, affordable housewarming and office gifts.

has provided table arrangements for the Girls Leadership Academy of Wilmington (GLOW) fundraisers and for Welcome Home Angel, Power of the Purse and Pink Ribbon Project.

The majority of The Coastal Succulent's current business is sourcing, installing and styling plants paired with unique planters. Many of the clients are purchasing for second homes, yachts or commercial spaces, so most designs are high-end faux. Much of the business comes from referrals from interior designers. Many clients have been local while others have been as far south as Miami, Florida.

Studio is One-Stop-Shop

The new public design studio is a game changer for The Coastal Succulent. The location was strategically chosen for its proximity to Landfall, Wrightsville Beach and Figure Eight Island. "Homeowners here have great attention to detail, love unique customized items, and enjoy white glove service," Pope says. "That is exactly what we offer. Many of the homes are vacation homes and owners often opt for high-end faux plant installations. When owners and guests arrive, they are greeted with plants looking vibrant and lush."

The studio is a one-stop location for meeting with clients, storing inventory and assembling designs. Samples of their work are also displayed for people to shop the flagship succulent arrangements. The shop also hosts workshops on topics like planting succulents and making floral bouquets.

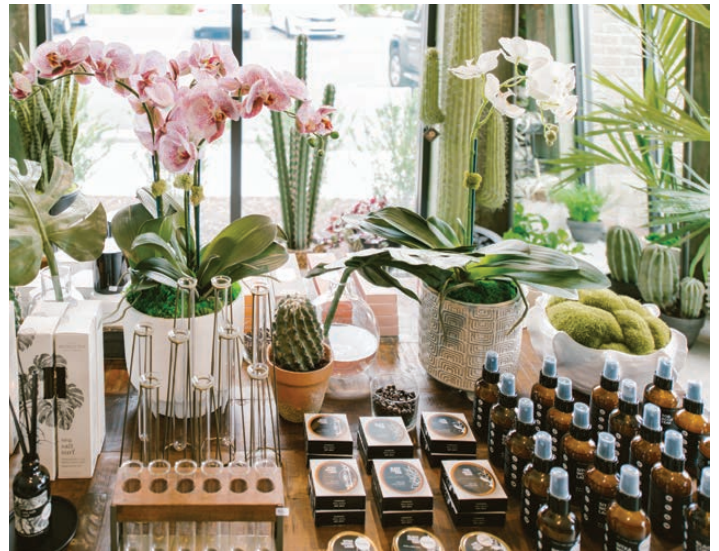
Pope describes the studio vibe as calm and inspiring. Even the name was carefully chosen to fuse the relaxed coastal Carolina lifestyle with western plant life. "Everything was thoughtfully designed from the floors, to the venetian finish on the walls, to each piece of furniture, all chosen by Lindsey Cheek at Gathered," he says. "Even the scents and the music we play are carefully chosen to evoke a feeling of calm. Clients and customers can shop our designs and meet in our lounge to discuss projects."

Over the years, the company growth has been supported by business coaches, bookkeepers, IT professionals, contractors and assistants. Today, The Coastal Succulent employs two full time employees and three part time assistants, in addition to Pope and McKeown.

"The Coastal Succulent offers a service that can completely transform a living or working space," Pope says. "Incorporating plants, especially when carefully sourced and placed proportionately, has an incredibly positive effect on the human psyche, not to mention the benefit of live plants purifying the air."

What's next for The Coastal Succulent? Pope and McKeown will constantly evolve their business to meet the needs of clients as projects continue to get larger. "Our team is growing and we've discussed opening a Los Angeles location at some point in the future."

The Coastal Succulent is conveniently located at 3528 Adirondack Way, #130 in Wilmington.



The Coastal Succulent offers faux and live succulent arrangements, plants, planters and home accessories.

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