



# Crafted QC

BY LESLIE KLIPSCH

**B**efore working as a successful graphic designer in cities like London, Chicago, and Des Moines, Mary Talbert was a high school student who made jewelry and sold it at her waitress job at Cracker Barrel in Davenport.

“I’ve always liked making things,” Ms. Talbert explains. “My mom and grandmothers were crafters and I’ve always spent time creating, drawing and painting.” Though she pursued a career in graphic design, she says that it is not uncommon for designers to moonlight as “makers” in their spare time. “We all have this need to get off the computer and make things with our hands,” the talented Ms. Talbert explains. “A lot of graphic designers also have an entrepreneurial sort of mind about them, too.”

After moving back to the Quad-Cities

several years ago, this combination of artistic talent and a venturesome spirit prompted Ms. Talbert to open Crafted QC in January, fulfilling a goal she’d kept for the last decade. “I’ve always liked eclectic shops with a vintage, fun feel to them. I wanted a shop to include items I make and the work of others. After talking to other makers in the area, it became a natural step,” she said.

Now five months old, Crafted QC is a sunny Davenport store filled with Ms. Talbert’s lovely artistry and the work of nearly 30 other local artists. The front portion of the vibrant space is used for retail and the back half is Ms. Talbert’s studio, a cozy alcove where she creates, sews and operates her graphic design business.

In every nook, shoppers will find fabulously creative items. Stationary sits on the shelves, prints line the walls, and jewelry



Submitted

sparkles in the windows. Crafted QC also has unique, handmade items for men that you don't often see, like skillfully hand-carved razor handles and beautifully crafted trout nets — both made by local craftsmen.

Ms. Talbert, who said she feels like a curator of sorts, has found a deep connection in her collaboration with local artists and with the creative process itself. "Making for me has become very meditative and very

calming," she said. "It has taught me a lot of patience that I needed to learn."

"I love the stories behind the creation," Ms. Talbert continued. "It's not just stuff to look at. Everything in the shop has a piece of someone's soul in it."

## My favorites

Over the years I've admired Ms. Talbert's work at the Freighthouse Farmers'

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Market and Handmade City, and have prized her beautiful coil wrapped, handmade fabric bowls and funny cat toys. Ms. Talbert uses a collage of vintage and new cotton prints on many of her creations — her pillows (made from vintage quilts), modern color block quilts (bright and uniquely patterned), and bowls all cheer up a room. Now that Ms. Talbert has opened a retail space and filled it with a variety of jewelry, decor, stationary and personal-care products made by other artists, it's clear that I adore not just Ms. Talbert's creations, but also her good taste in general. On a recent visit, I walked out with two handmade notebooks from Might Max Mini-Books and all-natural peppermint lip balm from Whoa Nelli for myself, and a pair of earrings for my sister-in-law — all this

and I was tempted to keep shopping.

### Ms. Talbert's favorites

There is no question that Ms. Talbert has a tremendous eye for color and whimsy. "I love it when people walk in here in look happy," she smiled in an unsurprising declaration considering Ms. Talbert's own endlessly kind disposition. As a graphic designer, Ms. Talbert says she is especially fond of letterpress work. (Red Door Press is among her favorites.) She also loves the vintage graphic pieces her artists deliver. Overall, the store is filled with items Ms. Talbert enjoys and appreciates. "Crafted refers to craftsmanship. I look for pieces that are well crafted and well put together," she explains. "I love great use of color, pattern



and texture, and I like things that have a whimsical nature to them. I love things that prompt an emotion from the viewer.”

## Why you should visit Crafted QC

The tremendous variety of goods carried in the small space is remarkable and makes Crafted QC a great destination. Also appealing, Crafted QC is a delightful shop in the midst of a developing QC corridor. Within walking distance is The Barrel House, Front Street Brewery, Abernathy’s, Chocolate Manor, SIS International, Major Art and Hobby, Bucktown Center for the Arts, Great River Brewery, Woodfire Grill, the Figge, and more. “There is a lot happening here,” says Ms. Talbert. “My neighbors are great. We hope even more businesses come to 2nd

Street and that downtown becomes a destination again.”

## The details

You can learn more about Crafted QC on the shop’s Facebook page ([facebook.com/craftedqc](https://facebook.com/craftedqc)) or website ([craftedqc.com](https://craftedqc.com)). Crafted QC is located at 217 E. 2nd St., Davenport, and is open from 10:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday.

Each month in The Gold Standard, Leslie Klipsch, a freelance writer and editor based in Davenport, shines a spotlight on the gems of the Quad-Cities area — for Gold Book readers. She enjoys reading, cooking, spending time with her husband and three young children and exploring all that the Quad-Cities has to offer. Read more of Leslie at [leslieklipsch.com](https://leslieklipsch.com).

