

# BUSINESS FIRST

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## HEADY times

Louisville hat designer's creations to be displayed at Ritz-Carlton in Phoenix

BY SARAH JEFFORDS  
BUSINESS FIRST STAFF WRITER

Some people feel naked without their watch, favorite ring or other piece of jewelry.

For Angie Schultz, 55, that must-have accessory is a hat. Whether at home in her bathrobe or out running errands, she is guaranteed to have one perched atop her dark, shoulder-length hair.

Wearing a hat, she said, boosts her energy level and confidence. She feels empowered. But not just any hat will do.

Schultz converts baseball caps into a picture of femininity with flowers and glitter. Or, she dresses up an everyday straw hat with feathers, ribbons and velvet.

While each one is unique, embellished with its own mix of accent materials, color scheme and style, all of Schultz's creations convey her flair for life and love of the craft.

### Ritz-Carlton comes calling

Her artistry has caught the attention of not only local Kentucky Derby goers, but also hat enthusiasts and members of the media across the country.

Schultz's Prospect company, Attitudes by Angie, was featured in USA Today in May 2005, and one of her hats was worn in the movie "Elizabethtown," which also debuted last year.

More recently, she was asked to participate in an annual hat festival, hosted each year by the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Phoenix. Schultz, who was approached by the organizer of the event, competed with about 100 milliners from across the country and Europe for a spot in this year's festival.

The Kentucky native submitted one of her hats as an example of her work, and that creation ultimately landed her a position among the top six designers who will have their collections showcased during the



Angie Schultz displays her creations in the living room of her home.

PHOTOS BY RON BATH • BUSINESS FIRST

### Attitudes by Angie

**Description:** Company that embellishes and sells all styles of hats and related accessories

**Designs feature:** Feathers, ribbons, flowers, velvet, beads, glitter, tulle and more

**Price range:** \$300 to \$1,200

**Owner:** Angie Schultz

**Celebrities with Attitudes by**

**Angie hats include:** Oprah Winfrey,

Angelica Houston and Kelly Ripa

**Web site:** [www.attitudesbyangie.com](http://www.attitudesbyangie.com)



upcoming event in August.

Schultz already has shipped her 16 hats to be displayed, all of which feature "delicious" yellow-and-white designs.

The colors were chosen to complement the hotel's recently-renovated Tea Room, which shares the yellow-and-white color scheme, festival organizer Contessa Davenport said in an e-mail. Davenport represents Fabiana Worldwide Boutique, a Scottsdale, Ariz., special-events company that the Ritz-Carlton hires to coordinate the festival.

She said she discovered Schultz via the Internet. Davenport was impressed with Schultz's "flawless attention to detail and the passion she brings to each piece she designs."

### It's 'Lucky Seven' time

For Schultz, the festival represents a significant boon to her business. Fabiana

already has purchased all of the hats, which will be resold to attendees.

But more important, Schultz said, the event lends credibility to her work and gives her increased exposure. There's no telling who might wander into the Ritz-Carlton and fall in love with her elaborate hats, she added, her mind whirring with the possibilities.

No matter what might result from the festival, Schultz already refers to 2006 as her "Lucky Seven" because of the upswing she has seen during her seventh year in business. She declined to disclose her business' revenue but said the volume of sales has risen steadily.

There used to be a flurry of activity around Derby time, and then business leveled off until the next spring. These days, she stays busy year-round with special events, private clients and sales through local outlets, such as Rodeo Drive clothing store and the Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft.

Hats and supplies, the majority of which she buys in New York City, fill nearly every corner of her basement studio, and soon it will be time to move the operation outside of her Prospect home.

Although she gets a little overwhelmed thinking about the task, Schultz welcomes the growth.

"I'm out there now," she said. "People know who I am, and it's time to step it up."

Contact the writer via e-mail at [SJEFFORDS@BIZJOURNALS.COM](mailto:SJEFFORDS@BIZJOURNALS.COM).

### "Elizabethtown" exposure

One of the highlights in Angie Schultz's career was to have a hat she designed featured in the movie, "Elizabethtown."

She remembers sitting in the dark movie theater, not even following the storyline because she was concentrating so hard on finding her hat. When she finally did spot it — a black hat decked with pearls — Schultz said she pointed at the screen and yelled, "There's my hat!"

No doubt everyone in the theater thought she was crazy, she said laughingly, but that didn't temper her joy.

### Discovering the craft

Schultz's hat love affair started when she began wearing them regularly at age 3. But it wasn't until about seven years ago that she began making her own.

She was shopping for decorative hats, and local stores didn't carry what she was looking for. So Schultz bought some plain hats and decorative materials, heated up a glue gun and went to work.

She had a natural instinct for design, she said. And embellishing hats was therapeutic for the full-time mom who had been searching for a new purpose in life since her two sons — now ages 22 and 25 — were nearly grown.

The hobby, which has since become a lucrative business, provided the direction she needed. "It was like I had an awakening."