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Insider Profiles

Came for a Job, Discovered the Unexpected



"I can just see things happening here. Even when we're at a happy hour, things are still being done. And everybody here wants you to be successful, everybody tries to help."

Levin Armwood moved to Washington D.C. from Cleveland, Ohio, eight years ago to hunt for better job opportunities, but what he found was an unexpected passion for making bow ties.

His new calling came about organically, the result of having to wear ties every day when he worked as a banker for Bank of America. In an effort to be different he began wearing bow ties, but he soon grew unhappy with the off-the-rack selection offered at local stores. That's when he began making his own, teaching himself to sew by watching online videos and reading blogs.

Armwood started getting compliments for his creations, and before he knew it, he was drawing requests for bow ties. In just 18 months, he has made nearly 250 bow ties. Now, boutiques from all over the Beltway are contacting Armwood to carry his one-of-a-kind creations in their own stores. Currently, you can purchase his bow ties at [Etsy](#), Cheryl Lofton Tailors and Why Not Boutique.

With a unique niche career, Armwood appreciates D.C. for the things that make it one of a kind, whether it's Georgetown's original architecture or the homegrown go-go music that can only be found at local clubs. Being in D.C. has allowed Armwood to express his ingenuity, make the leap to a riskier career path and quickly find great success.

"I can just see things happening here," says Armwood. "Even when we're at a happy hour, things are still being done. And everybody here wants you to be successful, everybody tries to help."

Like many others, Armwood loves the city for its eclectic neighborhoods. "You can be whoever you want here," he says. Most of his time is spent in the Shaw/U Street neighborhood. "The history behind it all ... the black businesses that were part of that corridor of 'Black Broadway' ... it's just awesome."

Armwood's favorite spots in the area include the [Howard Theatre](#), [Ulah Bistro](#) ("you can go in and just have a quiet dinner, but you're in the middle of everything"), [Busboys and Poets](#), where the food is "consistently good," and [Indulj](#), for its great music scene.

"People here are very trendy," notes Armwood, who says bow ties are very "in" right now. "There are people that wear them every day with their business suits, and you see guys in jeans and a blazer with a bow tie going out for drinks. When I wear a bow tie and somebody asks where I got it, being able to say I made it — it means something."



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