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Christopher Chang, Orlan Ferry Photography



“Everyone was attentive, no one was on their phones or chatting with each other. It made us feel very special and seen as musicians.”

~ Anne Tong, who goes by the name Chinese American Bear



Clockwise from top left: Laurie Ubben, center, with her sister, Jenny Hess, left, and Lee Seward watch The Deslondes perform at Little Saint. Dan Cutler of The Deslondes practices at the Little Saint farmhouse before the show. Ben Venom sews the stunning curtain that hangs behind the stage. Jeff Ubben, the owner of Little Saint (standing) visits with members of The Deslondes and friends. Performers are treated to a pre-show vegan dinner at the restaurant downstairs from the performance venue.

CURTAIN OF ROCK

Punk rocker meets sexy farmer.

That was the only direction Ben Venom received from the team at Little Saint in Healdsburg when they hired him in 2021 to create a 15 x 30-foot textile to serve as the stage backdrop.

Immediately, the San Francisco-based artist had an idea: a giant curtain designed to look like a stained-glass window, only with concert tees instead of glass panels.

He turned to a friend nicknamed Sluggo, who had played in punk rock bands since he was a teenager and had a vast and eclectic collection of T-shirts (Slayer, Hazzard's Cure, and Metallica, to name a few) from which to choose.

Assembling the giant curtain in his crowded San Francisco apartment simply wasn't going to work, so Venom crept down the back stairwell of his building and snuck into an empty unit. There, he pinned it all together, then carefully walked it back up to his place and sewed it.

“Fun fact: There was a little bit of breaking and entering involved in the making of this,” says Venom, 47. “You gotta do what you gotta do.”

Once the curtain sewn, it took hours of lessons from another seamstress to learn how to attach the curtain to a track in the ceiling before it was installed prior to Little Saint's 2022 opening.

Venom's curtain has become an iconic piece of the Little Saint experience, evoking a sense of nostalgia in audience members when they discover a T-shirt from a favorite band or concert they attended.

