



*For the hard
to buy for –
A sweet, doe eyed,
humming Alpaca*



Alpaca farm owner – Barbara Ronchetti

By Michelle Haynes

“We had eight babies this week!” Sounding as excited as a proud mama, Andrea’s greeting at the *Martha’s Vineyard’s Island Alpaca Company* sent us scurrying to the baby alpaca area. Or to be more accurate, to the crias, which as anyone who labors over the *NY Times’* crossword puzzle knows, cria is in fact a baby alpaca.

Barbara Ronchetti runs a nineteen-acre alpaca farm renowned for breeding and selling the finest alpacas in the world, evidenced by the array of blue ribbons and awards at the gift shop entrance. For this alpaca farmer/realtor, alpacas completely changed the color of her parachute. “I looked into the eyes of these beautiful, gentle animals at an agricultural fair and immediately fell in love. After a lot of homework and research I was determined to get into the alpaca business,” says Ms. Ronchetti. Ten years later the Island Alpaca Company is flourishing in the breeding and selling of prize alpacas and the luxurious by products made from their softer-than-soft fleece. For Ms. Ronchetti, getting to where she is today was quite the challenge. Initially, her personal bank of twelve years turned her down before she found a local Vineyard bank who believed in her and was willing to take a chance.

“If you want to do something, give it 150% and you can accomplish just about anything if you have the will and drive,” says Ms. Ronchetti, whose goal is to see her alpacas, “on the White House lawn,” she says, half in jest. During our visit, she had just learned a summer visitor who had discovered alpacas at her farm, had changed careers, and is now is an alpaca farmer in Australia. “We do screen our buyers for these alpacas are like my children. They are sweet and gentle, make great pets and their fleece produces one of the world’s finest fibers, as soft as cashmere.” Check out products and prices at islandalpaca.com. Better yet, meet Barbara and her alpacas at the impeccably maintained farm located minutes from the Martha’s Vineyard airport.



From Alpaca to sweater