

S.A.M.D.A.
BUSINESS
Success
STORY



The Story
DIVERSITY IS KEY



Pat Donaldson

BUSINESS NAME:

That's Empressive

BUSINESS LOCATION:

Empress

BUSINESS OWNER:

Pat Donaldson

BUSINESS SECTOR:

Tourism / Arts & Culture

Empress's Pat Donaldson opened the doors of That's Empressive art gallery and gift shop in 2002, but she is still amazed at the wide array of customers her business attracts.

"I had a fella come in one day from California, (he was doing a cross-country tour on his motorbike), and said his neighbour had shopped here last year and told him to go by and say hello."

That's Empressive boasts a beautiful collection of original art from across Canada and around the world. Many of the paintings are Donaldson's own work...inspired by stories from her life. That's Empressive also carries a wide range of items from local artisans. Donaldson says one of her biggest challenges is finding pieces to suit the tastes of travelers and towns people, alike. She works hard to hone her selection skills.

"I have found that in general, if I like something...the people I attract here also are interested in it."

That's Empressive has grown over the years from an art gallery, to a gallery and gift shop, to a place to gather for coffee or a light meal. It's also the only place in town to fill your gas tank, and Donaldson recently began stocking a few grocery staples, as well.

"Diversity is really, really important."

Donaldson didn't plan on settling down on the prairies; she originally wanted to retire on a lake in Eastern Canada. But she admits the community atmosphere of Empress drew her in. Signs along Highway 41 declaring, "Empress has Artisans" draw other people in as well. Donaldson credits that simple marketing tool with a good portion of her visitors.

As for her decision to own a business, Donaldson jokes she had no choice.

"I've always been my own boss...I don't make a good employee."

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Village of Empress, Village of Cereal, Town of Oyen, Acadia Valley, MD of Acadia No.34 and the Special Areas.

