

THE NEXT GENERATION

Meeting young entrepreneurs...

Name of Company :	La P'tite Poterie
Date Established:	June 2005
Owner:	Suzanne Babineau
Age of Owner:	29 years old
Location of Business:	6172, Route 134, South Bouctouche
Products or Services:	Pottery Studio; Selling pottery – retail and wholesale
Number of Employees:	1

How did the idea of starting your own business first come to you?

I took an evening class in pottery a few years ago at the Aberdeen Cultural Centre in Moncton, and I literally fell in love with pottery. I had made an arrangement with my teacher to be able to go to her studio as much as I wanted. She was very kind; she taught me many things and was able to transmit her passion for pottery. That is the moment I took the decision that I wanted to become a potter, as a way of learning a living.

Could you describe what you do?

I get my inspiration from nature in order to transform clay into pieces of pottery that have a unique character. Each piece is original and practical, and is created to please the eyes, the hands and the soul. I love to create pieces that are solid, durable. I love to decorate them delicately with simple lines and artistic forms. My work is influenced by painters, traditional artisans, more particularly African men and women who work in textiles, architecture, pottery and basket-making. I have a pottery studio where I do series like cups, bowls, plates, service platters, tea pots, vases, among others.

Where are you from, originally?

I was raised in Dalhousie, but my parents are originally from here and they decided to come back and settle in the Bouctouche region. My parents offered me to set up my studio at their place and I accepted.

What kind of training have you had?

I obtained my B.A. (Arts) from the University of Ottawa in 1999. I came back here to work for a few years before resuming my studies to realize my dream of becoming a potter. In 2005, I obtained a certificate in pottery, at the New Brunswick College of Craft and Design, in Fredericton.

How much time did you put into planning your business startup?

I started planning my business at the beginning of my second year in pottery. During that year, I started buying equipment, design my logo and worked on my business plan. It was important for me to be ready to start my business as soon as I finished college. I did not want to waste any time. I graduated in May 2005 and, because of all my planning, I was already into production by June.

What situations have you had to surmount since you started your business?

My greatest challenge is time management: to find time to do everything I have to do. Since I am in my first years of operation, I try to be everywhere in order to get known. For example: I am at the farmers' market; I attend craft shows and art exhibitions. Furthermore, I have to fill large orders and I find that to manage all of this by myself is very demanding.

Are you involved in community projects?

Last year I started an art project in a school in the Acadian Peninsula, in the context of a program called Génie Art. The project aimed at initiating young francophone students, at the high school level, to the development of their creativity, through pottery. It was a four-week project. At the end of it, students created a large mosaic which is now a permanent exhibition in their school.

What are your future plans? Where will you be in 10 years?

At the moment, my studio is set up at my parents' place, so I dream of having my own studio in the Kent Region. The studio will be big enough to have my own boutique and to be able to give pottery workshops.

I invite you to come and visit my studio. Give me a call before you come - 743-1085.