

# DIVERSITY

OPPORTUNITY & GROWTH

Profiles of Immigrant Entrepreneurs  
in Newfoundland and Labrador



2007

Diana Dabinett in her hometown of Pouch Cove.

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Project Coordination: Association for New Canadians

## A Message from the Minister

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As Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment, with responsibility for immigration, I am extremely pleased to present the second edition of ***Diversity ~ Opportunity and Growth***, a magazine featuring successful immigrant entrepreneurs in our province.

***Diversity ~ Opportunity and Growth*** is the theme of our recently announced immigration strategy. The primary goals of the strategy are to increase the number of immigrants who choose Newfoundland and Labrador as their new home in Canada, and to provide the opportunity for them to remain in the province.

Increased immigration is an important component of the province's growth agenda. Diversity indeed leads to opportunity and growth. As the stories in this magazine demonstrate, opportunities have been created and growth stimulated through the creativity and insight brought by immigrants to our province.

These individuals have come to our province from many countries of the world and have settled in both urban and rural areas. Together, they have created over 350 jobs for local residents.

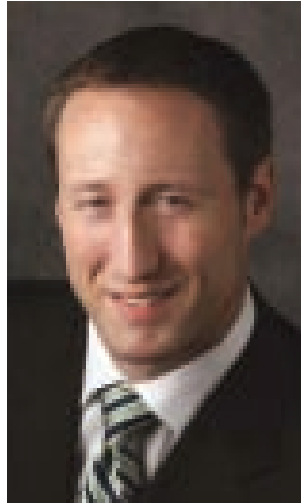
Without exception, they speak highly of our province, the safe and secure communities, relaxing lifestyle, and welcoming people.

I hope you will enjoy the stories of their journeys and of their success in our province, and we thank them for making Newfoundland and Labrador a more prosperous province.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shawn Skinner', written in a cursive style.

SHAWN SKINNER, M.H.A.  
Minister

A Message from  
the Honourable  
Peter G. MacKay,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
and Minister of the Atlantic  
Canada Opportunities Agency



Un message de l'honorable  
Peter G. MacKay, ministre  
des Affaires étrangères et  
ministre de l'Agence  
de promotion économique  
du Canada atlantique

With almost 30 years of experience, the Association for New Canadians is considered an expert in welcoming new Canadians to Newfoundland and Labrador, and in providing the kinds of services that promote integration and inclusion.

Each new Canadian has a story to tell. Some of those stories are captured in the following pages - stories of successful entrepreneurs who overcame the challenges associated with moving to a new country and starting a new business.

Canada's New Government recognizes the contributions these entrepreneurs have made to strengthening the communities they live in. By creating jobs, they have helped build the economy of Newfoundland and Labrador. Their vision and determination to succeed are to be commended.

Atlantic Canada has a lot to offer its newest residents: a strong sense of community and unmatched quality of life. Canada's New Government welcomes the important role played by the Association in enriching the experiences of newcomers, and the lives and perspectives of all Atlantic Canadians.

Forte de sa trentaine d'années d'expérience, l'Association for New Canadians est vue comme une spécialiste dans l'accueil de néo Canadiens à Terre Neuve et Labrador et dans l'amélioration des services qui favorisent l'intégration et l'inclusion.

Chaque néo Canadien et néo Canadienne a une histoire à raconter. Vous pourrez lire dans les pages qui suivent les histoires d'entrepreneurs prospères qui ont relevé les défis associés à l'installation dans un nouveau pays et au démarrage d'une nouvelle entreprise.

Le nouveau gouvernement du Canada reconnaît l'apport de ces entrepreneurs au renforcement des collectivités qu'ils habitent. En créant des emplois, ils ont contribué à bâtir l'économie de Terre Neuve et Labrador. Leur vision et leur détermination sont louables.

Le Canada atlantique a beaucoup à offrir aux nouveaux arrivants : un fort sentiment d'appartenance et une qualité de vie hors pair. Le nouveau gouvernement du Canada souligne le rôle important que joue l'Association dans l'amélioration des débouchés et dans l'enrichissement des expériences et de la vie des nouveaux arrivants et de toute la population de la région de l'Atlantique.

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# Alteen Brothers Limited

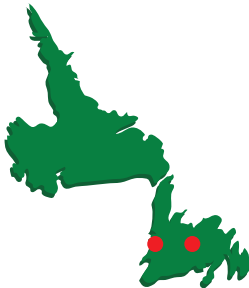


**Alteen's Jewellery Showroom**

Country of Origin: **Lebanon**



*“It’s a wonderful place to raise a family.”*



Doug Alteen  
74 Broadway  
Corner Brook, NL A2H 4C8  
Ph: 709.639.9286  
E-mail: alteens@nfld.net

Employees: 40  
Future Plans: Expand throughout the province

There is an age-old debate about whether entrepreneurs are born or made. As for the Alteen family, entrepreneurial desire is in their blood, as the saying goes, and it's literally the only way of life they know.

Louis Alteen grew up in Lebanon, which saw its share of civil unrest even back at the turn of the last century. Louis wanted to find a better way of life and decided at the age of 16 to come to the land of opportunity. Hence, he headed to Canada, and eventually settled in Amherst, Nova Scotia and married his wife who was from New Brunswick.

Louis remained in Amherst and operated a successful fish business for some 50 years and raised a family of six boys and three girls. The eldest son, Waldo, moved to Sydney, Nova Scotia where he ran a furniture store for about five years and in 1944 started Alteen's Jewellers. Soon after, his brothers began joining him in the company.

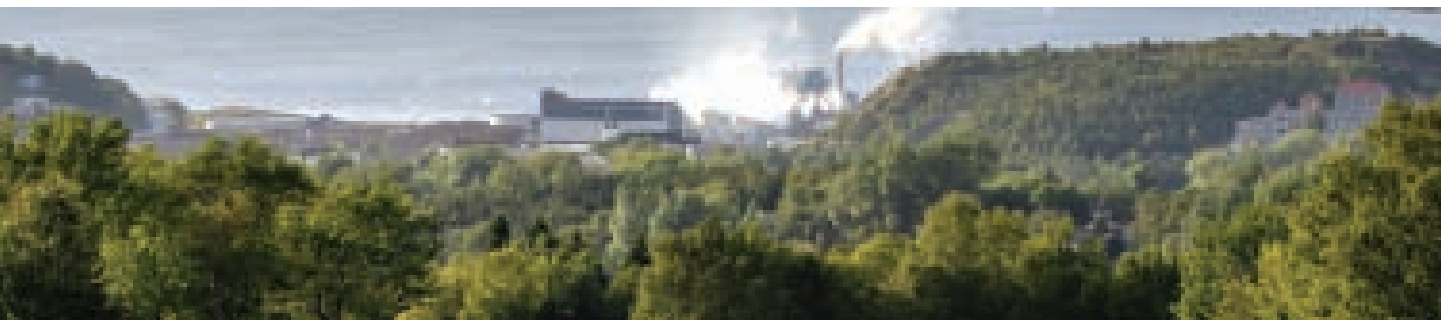
While some of the brothers were running Alteen's Jewellers, Nicholas, the second eldest brother moved to Corner Brook, Newfoundland and Labrador in 1938 and started a small shoe store which grew to a very successful operation called National Shoe Limited. The store became very well known throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. In the early 1950's, Louis Jr. joined Nicholas in the business and eventually purchased the company when Nicholas passed away. Louis Jr. successfully ran the footwear and safety supply company until he retired, upon which time his daughter and son-in-law took over the operations. "In many cases, we have customers and friends for three generations," says Doug.

The Alteen brothers expanded the jewellery business throughout eastern Nova Scotia and in 1949, Doug moved to Grand Falls-Windsor to open the first Alteen Jewellery store in Newfoundland and Labrador. Shortly after, Lawrence joined Doug who decided to move to Corner Brook and open another branch. Before long, the company expanded to include stores throughout western and central Newfoundland and Labrador.

Cumulatively, the Alteen family employs 40 people in their businesses throughout the province. Doug quotes, "We are blessed with beauty beyond compare." It is "the friendliness of the people that makes it a wonderful place to live," he says.

The company has experienced many changes over the years and although they have ventured into different areas, such as manufacturing, real estate, and electronics, it remains dedicated to the jewellery industry. Doug emphasizes that, "he doesn't know of another place you could go for a better environment" to live in. Newfoundland and Labrador is "a wonderful place to raise a family," he says, "it is a place where you will find everything you need."

What the future holds is difficult to predict with the elders retiring and many of the offspring heading into a variety of professions, but one thing is for sure, the entrepreneurial spirit of the Alteen family will drive them to continue to succeed for many more years to come.



The City of Corner Brook

## Bianca's

Bianca and her partner came to this province from Bulgaria in 1990. Her Eastern European background, fused with the tastes and colours of childhood, influence her personal style and business acumen. After looking at the local dining offerings, Bianca decided to open a restaurant, modestly called "Bianca's."

Bianca's restaurant has managed to unite the ingredients of Newfoundland and Labrador's traditional foods with a European dining experience. This unique mixture was, like many things in life, a happy accident. "If the meeting of Bianca with Newfoundland and Labrador were guided by chance, it was transformed into a passionate relationship," says Bianca.

A distinctive addition to the local dining scene, the original location on Water Street in downtown St. John's put the restaurant in the heart of the city's fine dining district. A move to a building across the street a few years later enabled Bianca to add a bar, an extensive wine cellar, private rooms and an area for live music. Benefiting from a growing trend in wine appreciation, Bianca's became known for its vintages and was recognized with the Wine Spectator Award of Excellence from 1999 to 2007. This designation is given to quality establishments based on their wine selections, menu, ambiance and service.

Today, Bianca's 120-seat restaurant offers patrons an experience in culinary delight. Incorporating an open kitchen concept, the aroma of food being prepared, the chefs' frantic activity and

the serving staff busily delivering meals to tables, makes for an establishment that is vividly alive. To maintain such a successful business, Bianca has 27 people on staff. The restaurant also offers ancillary facilities to meet the needs of its clientele such as a conference room, a small cigar room and a wine cellar. The original artwork by local artists and Bianca's friends adds a European flair throughout the restaurant.

On a typical Friday night the restaurant is busy. Bianca can be found helping to choose a wine for a customer, seating guests or tending to one of the many tasks that a bustling, dynamic restaurant demands. Bianca's defines fine dining in the City of St. John's. An established restaurant, Bianca's wishes to continue offering a unique dining experience to its loyal customers and attracting new ones for years to come.

As for living in Newfoundland and Labrador, Bianca comments: "I have built a very good life here for us and we have made a lot of good friends." Starting a business in the province has been very rewarding for Bianca and she thanks the community support and her many friends for her success.



**Bianca Tzanov**

Country of Origin: **Bulgaria**

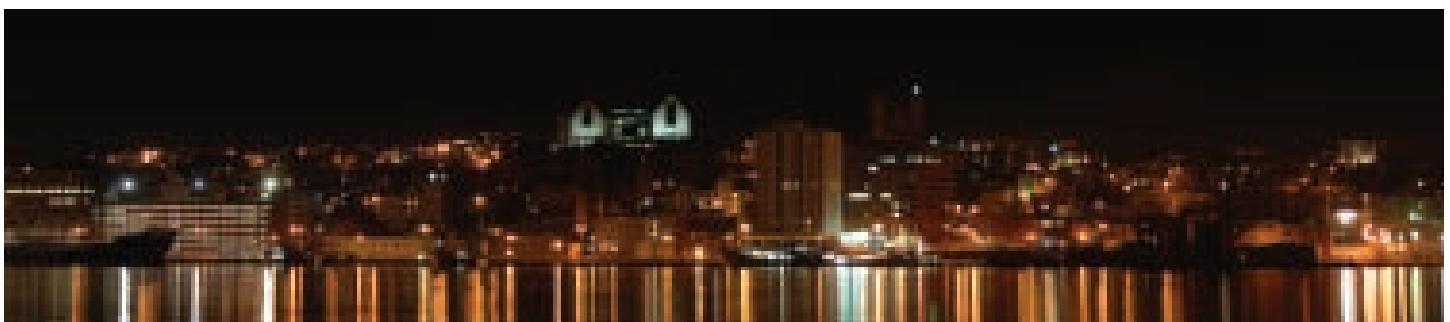


*"I have built a very good life here for us."*



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Website: [www.biancas.net](http://www.biancas.net)

Employees: 27  
Future Plans: Expand customer base



City of St. John's at night

# Blueberry Hill Bed & Breakfast



**Barbro and Jim Jackson**

Country of Origin: **Sweden**



*“I like everything about the province, especially the people.”*



Jim and Barbro Jackson  
Cavendish, NL AOB 1J0  
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Website: [www.blueberrybb.com](http://www.blueberrybb.com)

Employees: 3 to 7  
Future Plans: Expansion of cottages

The story of how Jim and Barbro met and settled in Newfoundland and Labrador is rather intriguing. Barbro grew up in Sweden and did quite a bit of travelling. On a trip to Amsterdam, Barbro met Jim by inviting him to join her and a group of friends for breakfast. Jim was on leave from the Canadian military at the time and, as fate would have it, a year later they got married. Barbro and Jim lived in Toronto, Canada which was Jim's last posting before he retired. After over 30 years of service, Barbro and Jim moved back to his hometown of Cavendish, Newfoundland and Labrador.

Barbro continued her education in the province by taking a Travel and Tourism course at a local community college. When she graduated in 1998, Barbro decided to open a bed and breakfast out of their home in Cavendish. "For us to make a living at a bed and breakfast it had to be feasible," says Jim. So when they launched Blueberry Hill Bed and Breakfast and Ocean Delight Cottages, Jim and Barbro made sure they had a suitable staff to work all year round. Currently, the business employs a full-time cleaning person plus several students during the tourist season.

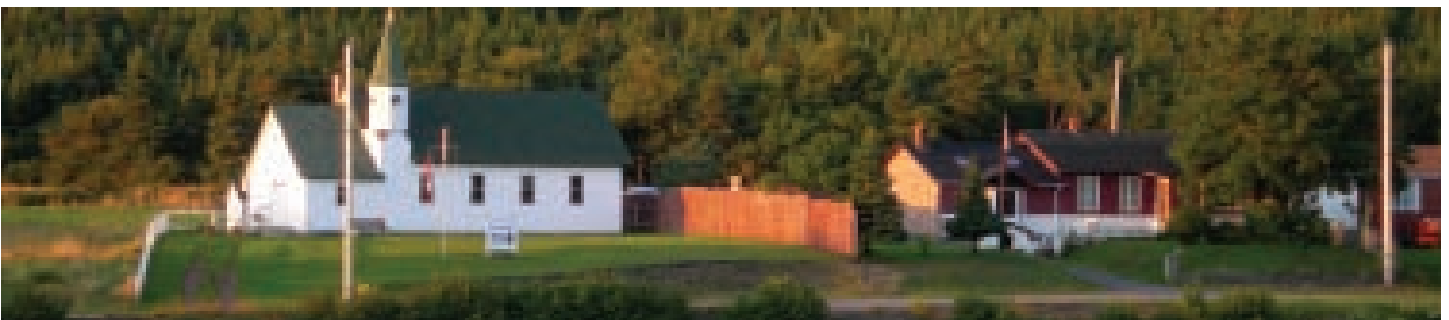
It is necessary to be well versed in Newfoundland and Labrador tradition, knowing what to see and where to go, when starting a bed and breakfast. Blueberry Hill boasts the perfect starting point to explore the many attractions on the Baccalieu Trail: the ocean, scenic walking trails, quaint fishing villages, archeological sites, boat tours, and the Heart's Content Cable Museum. Added to this, the Bed and Breakfast is

elegantly and uniquely decorated and features an old-fashioned bedroom with outport Newfoundland and Labrador furnishings and a canopy bed.

"Charming and creative, bold, beautiful and breathtaking," are comments Jim and Barbro hear about Blueberry Hill. It is this positive feedback which makes it all worthwhile for Jim and Barbro. Barbro likes "everything about the province, especially the people," she says. Barbro notes that a lot of tourists say they are impressed with Newfoundland and Labrador and its people. They comment on how peaceful and quiet it is in Cavendish.

While living away and travelling extensively for many years, Jim developed a great appreciation for the province. He is always impressed with the scenery, the ocean, nature and the pristine environment. Barbro shares the same view. She enjoys telling her guests about how she met Jim and calls it their "love story." As a host, she emphasizes that it is important to treat the guests with respect and trust; this is her advice on how to stay in the hospitality business.

In the future, Barbro and Jim anticipate putting up four more cottages on the oceanfront. This will make a total of eight cottages and will create further employment for students and area residents. As well, Blueberry Hill's proximity to numerous other amenities will generate significant economic spin-off, especially during the tourist season.



Cavendish

# Campbellton Berry U-Pick

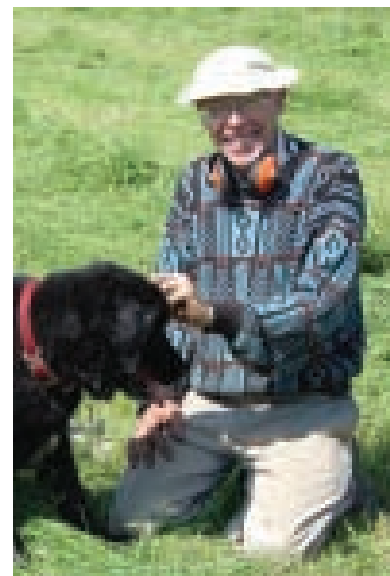
Philip and his family arrived in Canada from England when Philip was four years old and in Newfoundland and Labrador when he was 16. That was in 1965. Now he has raised a family of his own and has been operating a business for over 27 years.

His family settled in Campbellton, a small community on the shores of Notre Dame Bay. Philip and his wife, Rhonda, chose Campbellton because "Newfoundland and Labrador is a paradise in which to raise children." The area boasts lush greenery and plants and is suitable for growing fresh fruits. This combined with Philip's education led him to build Campbellton U-Pick Berry Farm.

Campbellton U-Pick Berry Farm cultivates fresh fruit - strawberries, raspberries, blackcurrants, and rhubarb to be picked by customers throughout the summer season. This is a very busy time of year as the farm supplies area residents with their fruit for making jams and preserves. During the winter months, sleigh rides are available on the farm. Philip proudly declared that the farm is a "little taste of Heaven surrounded by the land and sea."

The farm hires locally and employs from 3 to 20 staff depending on the season. This is quite significant in its rural location where employment is limited, especially for students. The farm is a very popular stop for tourists who can enjoy Newfoundland Pony rides along with the berries that they pick. In effect, the farm has become a mainstay of the landscape, regarded as an integral part of what the community offers to visitors and residents alike. Rhonda recognizes the reciprocal nature of this relationship and contributes by serving on both the Board for the Provincial Federation of Agriculture and the Canadian Farm Business Management Council.

Future plans include continuing to seek ways to improve efficiency and increase profitability for the farm. Philip and Rhonda are delighted that they received the Provincial Federation of Agriculture Environmental Award for 2002 and 2007. Their advice to other immigrant entrepreneurs planning to set up a business in the province is to "do what you love."

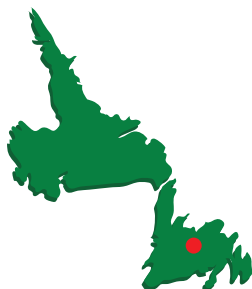


**Philip Thornley and his dog Sparky**

Country of Origin: **England**



*“Newfoundland and Labrador is a paradise in which to raise children.”*



Rhonda and Philip Thornley  
Campbellton, NL A1C 1A8  
Ph: 709.261.2739  
E-mail: [campbelltonberry@nfupick.com](mailto:campbelltonberry@nfupick.com)  
Website: [www.nfupick.com](http://www.nfupick.com)

Employees: Seasonal, 3 to 20  
Future Plans: To increase profitability



Strawberries from Campbellton Berry U-Pick

# Diana Dabinett



**Diana Dabinett**

Country of Origin: **Zimbabwe**



*“This community is large enough to support diversity and small enough that everyone knows your name.”*

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 E-mail: dianadabinett@nl.rogers.com  
 Website: www.dianadabinett.com

Employees: Herself  
 Future Plans: National promotion

Trained as an educator in South Africa, Diana Dabinett's career path was set. After completing a fine arts degree in Cape Town, South Africa she settled in London, England to teach for several years. There she met her future husband who introduced Diana to the prospect of moving to Newfoundland and Labrador.

Balancing her passion for art with raising her family, Diana realized she could do both. Working from her home, she set up a studio and committed some time to put her artistic flare to work. This situation was ideal for Diana as she was able to continue practicing her skills and talents in the visual arts. "You must always try and establish yourself but at the same time satisfy your creative self," notes Diana. Her paintings are a way of expressing her creativity.

Having lived in Pouch Cove, Newfoundland and Labrador, for 31 years, Diana feels she is very much immersed in the province's cultural community. Newfoundland and Labrador has offered an environment that she believes is very safe and incredibly unique. "This community is large enough to support diversity and small enough such that everyone knows your name," says Diana. The hospitality and the friendliness of the people are very welcoming factors for newcomers who want to establish businesses in the province. She notes that the "people are very sociable; they have both the time and the interest and you quickly develop friends and acquaintances."

With her training and artistic background, Diana plays a significant

role in the provincial education system. Her many activities contribute to the development and growth of young people as well as other teachers. She is involved in organizing various art groups and art programs for students and teachers in schools throughout the province. She also adjudicates art competitions and teaches at a number of centres and departments across the province.

Diana's visual art is inspired by her experiences in Newfoundland and Labrador. She speaks fondly of these experiences and portrays them in her artwork. Her love of art steers her to places throughout the province known for their beauty and spectacular scenery. According to Diana, "if the rest of the world found out about this place, we would be the envy of the world."

Diana's advice to immigrants is to "create your own future and create your own goals," and to think about the opportunities inherent in living and creating your own future in Newfoundland and Labrador.



Diana Dabinett, Down the River

# First Western Boutique

Salem Ali has come a long way from his home country of Libya and took the long route to Newfoundland and Labrador. In 1982, he came to Canada to study engineering in Windsor, Ontario and then on to study at St. Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. As a player with the varsity soccer team, Salem travelled around Atlantic Canada for tournaments, including several trips to St. John's. Having always enjoyed his trips to the province he decided after graduating, to vacation in the province before heading back to Libya. Recognizing the potential opportunity, Salem decided to make Newfoundland and Labrador his home.

Three years after settling in the province, Salem met his wife Nancy and they started a family. It is the "best place to raise a family; very safe and affordable," quotes Salem. While working in the local retail industry, both Salem and Nancy found a noticeable demand for western wear in the province. "I worked with a company that sold cowboy boots in St. John's," explains Salem. "From this experience, I realized there was a huge demand for this unique type of clothing." Both Salem and Nancy were determined to seize this opportunity and start their own business.

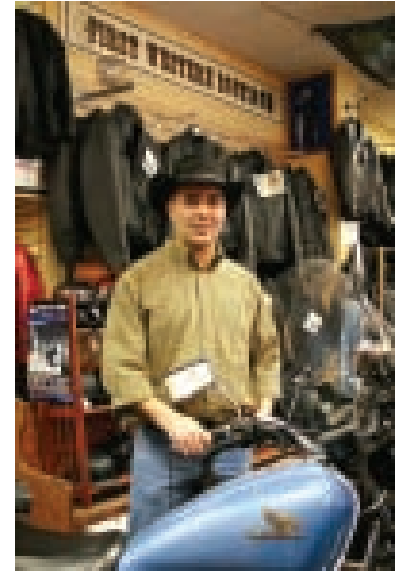
The motivation for such an endeavor stemmed from the "opportunity in the province because there is room for growth and anybody can succeed if they are willing to work," says Salem. Along with their enthusiasm, Salem and Nancy both realized the importance of having a business plan to provide the roadmap for their business idea. With the wealth of business support resources in the province, they managed to secure \$30,000 to start their business. As well, it

was "easy to get good labour and lots of things can be made here," comments Salem. He attributes this type of support network as invaluable to their achievement to date.

First Western Boutique sells a wide range of western wear from cowboy boots, horseback riding equipment, motorcycle gear and even clothing for "wannabe cowboys," says Salem. The first store was started in 1999, and in 2003, a second location was opened. Putting together a solid business plan "helped us be realistic about our goals and gain an in-depth understanding of our customers," explains Salem.

Seven years later, the Ali's are enjoying every minute of being entrepreneurs and providing unique products locally. "We take pleasure in serving the local community through our business," says Salem. It is amazing Salem says, the "number of small businesses in Newfoundland and Labrador, and how they really are the engine behind the province." First Western Boutique employs seven people between both store locations.

Salem's advice to immigrant entrepreneurs who wish to start a business is that "Newfoundland and Labrador is a land of opportunity for any hardworking individual who wants to make a living: you need to work hard, know your business, know your goals, and constantly strive to make your business better." He said that there are "people who are more than willing to help and there is a good, loyal customer base." He "has much gratitude towards his customers and to the province for making his business a reality!"



Salem Ali

Country of Origin: **Libya**

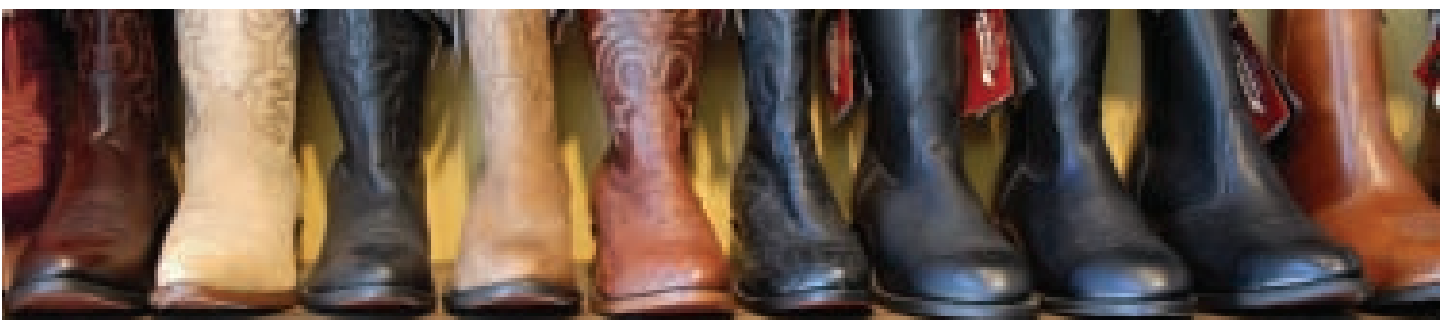


*"It is the best place to raise a family; very safe and affordable."*



First Western Boutique  
159 Water Street  
St. John's, NL  
Ph: 709.738.1628  
E-mail: fwb@nf.sympatico.ca

Employees: 7  
Future Plans: Grow the business



Display of cowboy boots at First Western Boutique



**Martin Verhoeks**

Country of Origin:  
**Switzerland**



*“You will enjoy the musical talent, and be intrigued by the vibrant art community.”*



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Website: [www.formandfunction.org](http://www.formandfunction.org)

Employees: 2  
Future Plans: Extensive expansion

## Form and Function

Martin Verhoeks grew up in the Netherlands and Switzerland. A dental technologist by trade, Martin gained extensive experience in Switzerland. Martin completed a four-year program that entailed the most basic of dental technology to the most intricate of fabrication processes. With this particular education in hand, Martin left Switzerland and travelled to Toronto to take a position in a large dental laboratory. He never envisioned staying in Canada for any longer than two years.

From 1981 to 1988, Martin worked in the lab and became accustomed to the busy lifestyle of Toronto. When Martin saw an advertisement in the local paper for a position to train technicians in Newfoundland and Labrador, his first reaction was, "I should do this for a joke", as the ad quoted "great hunting and fishing." He really wasn't interested in those kinds of activities but "the money was good," he remembers. So, thinking he would return to Toronto after the six month position, he decided to make the excursion.

After the initial six months, Martin's contract was extended for another six months and he was offered to manage the 20-30 employee laboratory; realizing the opportunity, he decided to stay; even though it was still in his mind to return to Toronto. After eight years in the province, the idea of returning to Toronto was no longer appealing.

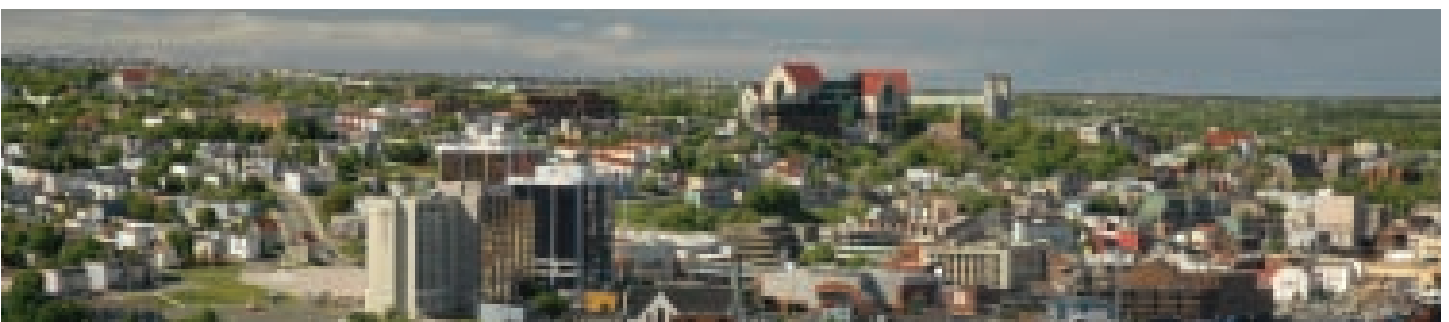
Martin's company, Form and Function Dental Studio Inc., was incorporated in 1997. It manufactures dental and maxillofacial prostheses and caters to a niche market that focuses on implants,

high quality complex crown and bridge work and facial prostheses. According to Martin, "one of the reasons I stayed in Newfoundland and Labrador was the importance of the quality of the product versus the dental environment in Toronto, which was much more about volume and price." Even though the transition from Toronto was difficult at first, his decision to settle in the province was easy because "the employees were more willing to take time to deliver good work than in Toronto, and I made some great business contacts and friends."

Martin comments on the friendly disposition of the customers, "I have never had any problems with people," he says. Martin employs a co-worker, to assist with some of the work, and they make a complementary team.

With regard to the future, Martin plans to expand his business and quips that "the future is bright." Martin reiterated that it is the relaxed atmosphere and quality of life that keeps him in Newfoundland and Labrador. He further commented that the business climate has changed dramatically in the last six years and believes that it is "a more culturally astute environment."

For other immigrants considering life in Newfoundland and Labrador, Martin advises that "if you get immersed into the local culture, you will enjoy the musical talent, and be intrigued by the vibrant art community." It is a place with potential opportunity and growth.



City of St. John's

# Great Wall Restaurant

Charles Tan has spent most of his life working in the restaurant/hotel sector. At the age of 24, he left his home in China to start a career in the restaurant industry in Montreal, Quebec. Upon realizing that a 'big city' lifestyle was not for him, he looked for new opportunities in smaller centres that would enable him to open his own restaurant.

In his search for a business opportunity, Charles saw an advertisement in a local newspaper that described a restaurant for sale in Wabush, Newfoundland and Labrador. Immediately, he talked to his wife and friends about the possibility and they all agreed that this was the time and opportunity to take a chance and make a change.

After 15 years of operating The Great Wall Restaurant, Bar and Dining Room in Wabush, Newfoundland and Labrador, Charles has no plans to leave. The business has become a well known establishment throughout the Wabush area.

In the restaurant business there are times when you are really busy and then there are down times. Charlie notes that, "people are nice and very supportive" when the business is fluctuating, "especially at times when the business is not as busy." He emphasized that the people of the province are welcoming and friendly. He appreciates the willingness of the people to interact with his family and to learn about their culture.

Charles advises any immigrant entrepreneur who wishes to open a business to work hard and they will become successful. Currently, the restaurant employs 22 people, mostly Labradorians. His wife is also quite active in the business as she handles the day-to-day office work and employee scheduling.

Apart from operating his business with his wife, Charles plans to become more active in the community. He is pleased that he decided to start his business in a small town and is especially thankful that "the small town I chose is the town of Wabush, Newfoundland and Labrador."



**Charles Tan**

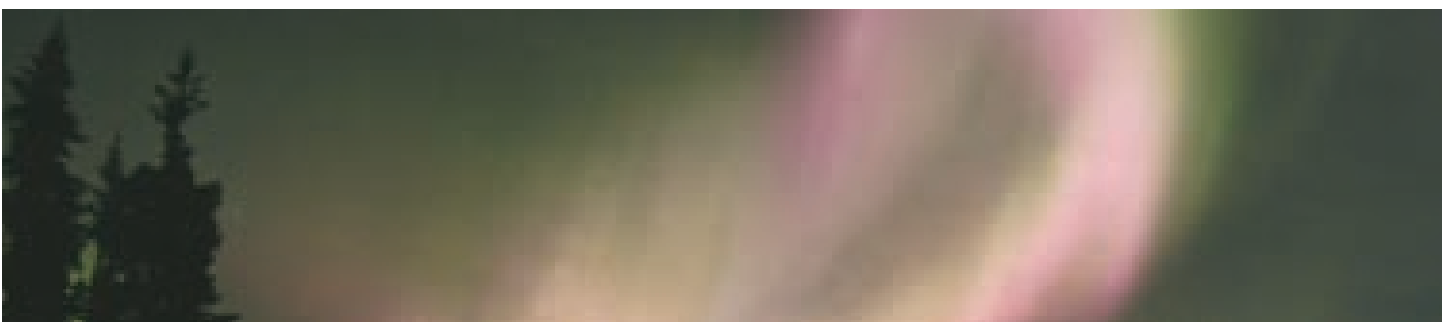
Country of Origin: **China**



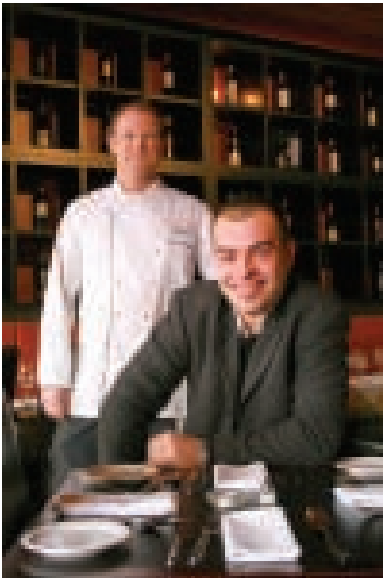
*“People are nice and very supportive.”*

Charles Tan  
9 Grenfell Drive  
Wabush, NL A2V 2Y3  
Ph: 709.282.3261  
E-mail: charles@tanscanada.ca

Employees: 22  
Future Plans: Become more active in the community



# Gypsy Tea Room



**Emir Mahic**

Country of Origin: **Bosnia**



*The support from the local marketplace is what Emir found most important.*

Gypsy Tea Room  
210 Water Street  
St. John's, NL  
Ph: 709.739.4766  
E-mail: emirmahic@yahoo.com

Employees: 14  
Future Plans: Expanding restaurant

In Bosnia, where Emir Mahic was born, there has been extensive political unrest for many years. For this reason Emir applied for immigrant status and came to Canada in 1997. Settling in Newfoundland and Labrador, Emir was eager to secure employment. He worked in a number of jobs throughout the province, and also enrolled in an English language course at the Association for New Canadians.

Emir began integrating into Newfoundland's cultural scene by going to the local restaurants and bars. The restaurant/bar industry piqued his interest, so he decided to start one of his own in the heart of St. John's.

The Gypsy Tea Room began as a bar atmosphere but grew to a 50-seat restaurant in a matter of weeks. Emir encountered his share of challenges while setting up his business. He comments that "running a business is a challenge because you always want to be on top of things, on top of the business, on top of human resources issues and on top of the supplies necessary to run a business, basically, on top of everything." With challenges however, come rewards. Emir says that his independence and being able to travel is well worth being an entrepreneur.

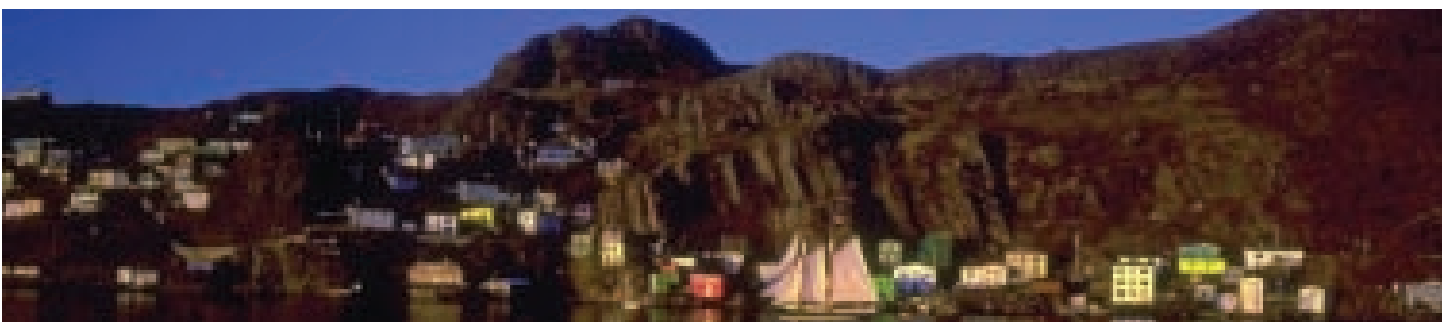
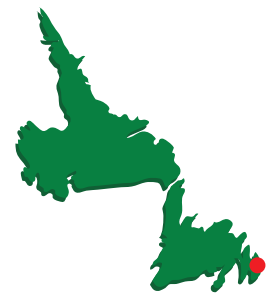
"To be successful, you have to believe in yourself and your idea, and be different," says Emir. It is also important to meet your customers' needs. Emir started by renovating the bar space and putting a diverse mix of wines in the wall for customers to see. He has positioned the restaurant as upscale

with eclectic taste in both décor and menu. Emir effectively runs the restaurant but attributes much of his success to the 14 employees who help him with day-to-day business operations.

Emir is quite passionate about his restaurant. The food, the service and the ambiance are the three qualities that make his restaurant different. Emir believes that the location of his business and the support from the local marketplace is what he found most important. He adds, "there is nothing I would do differently."

The Gypsy Tea Room is pegged to grow, with Emir adding a new wine cellar which will accommodate an additional 100 different wines. As well, he plans to open a private room downstairs which will hold 60 patrons.

The Gypsy Tea Room has added to the diversity of the restaurant sector in St. John's by creating a new, innovative choice for customers. Emir's advice to other immigrants who wish to start a business in the province is simple, "believe in yourself, roll up your sleeves and do not be afraid to work."



Lower Battery, Entrance to the City of St. John's

# Harcourt Mink Farm

Mink farming in Newfoundland and Labrador has grown significantly in recent years, in part due to Jorn Mogensen. Jorn is an established Danish mink farmer with over 30 years of experience in the industry.

In Denmark, he owns and operates a farm, feed and pelting operation. While considering expansion, Jorn noticed an advertisement in the Danish Fur Breeders' magazine inviting Danish farmers to establish commercialized mink farms in Newfoundland and Labrador. This province was said to offer numerous advantages and potential for the development of a world-class mink industry. Jorn decided to capitalize on this opportunity and relocate.

Compared to Denmark, "the province has the proper climate for mink production as well as offering potential advantages in land, feed, and labour availability and cost," says Jorn. His decision to construct a mink fur farm in Newfoundland and Labrador was further validated when he found an ideal location on the Bonavista Peninsula.

It was centrally located and was in an area of significant agricultural development. There were 54 hectares of land available and a vacant fish plant building that was sufficient to house a pelting operation. Even more appealing, there was a "good pool of potential workers in the area." Jorn's vision for expansion was starting to become a reality.

Jorn's business has contributed significantly to the economic growth of rural communities in Trinity Bay and

nearby towns. "The economic impact of the farm is far reaching," says Jorn, who has created up to 50 full-time jobs in the area. As well, it has given "people a reason to stay and work in their rural community rather than travelling to other provinces for employment," notes Jorn. He plans to increase production by developing 15 to 20 acres of land to expand the physical space and erecting mink sheds, storage sheds and perimeter fencing. This, along with the purchase of a second fish plant, will enhance the current infrastructure and, most significantly, the potential for long-term employment for as many as 100 full-time workers at the new Clarenville Fur Farm.

Another benefit resulting from Jorn's business move is that he is now able to sell mink products under premier North American labels which is not possible in his Denmark operation. Jorn's contribution has and will continue to have positive implications for more robust and enriched commercial growth on the Bonavista Peninsula of Newfoundland and Labrador.

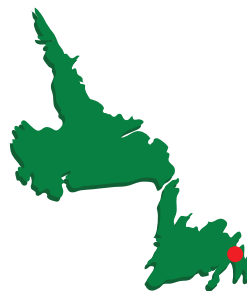


**Jorn Mogensen**

Country of Origin: **Denmark**



*“There is a good pool of potential workers in the area.”*



Jorn Mogensen  
263 Memorial Drive, Suite 202  
Clarenville, NL A5A 1R5  
Ph: 709.466.8154

Employees: 50  
Future Plans: Increase production and expand operations



Shoal Harbour Causeway in Clarenville

# HCR Electronics Canada



## Employees of HCR Electronics

Country of Origin:  
**United States**



*“the province is a prime location for our business.”*

HCR Electronics  
Springdale, Newfoundland  
Ph: 709.673.4655  
E-mail: [Hcr@nf.aibn.com](mailto:Hcr@nf.aibn.com)  
Website: [www.hcrelectronics.com](http://www.hcrelectronics.com)

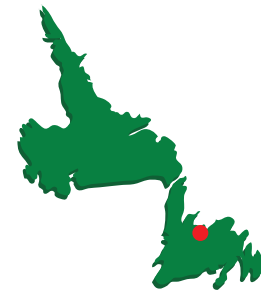
Employees: 6  
Future Plans: Expand product line

Glenn Morris came to the woods of Central Newfoundland and Labrador to hunt wildlife. But his keen eye also saw a business opportunity in the community of Springdale. Glenn is the owner of HCR Electronics Inc. of Burnet, Texas. The company, which manufactures feed timers for livestock, was facing a labour shortage and needed a dedicated workforce to build its products. In Springdale he found the personnel eager and available to fabricate a line of the company's products. Soon, HCR Electronics Canada Inc. was established as a subsidiary. At the Springdale facility, the company constructs circuit boards and wire components for digital electronic timers, battery testing equipment and miniature charging systems.

Once he was sold on the willingness and aptitude of the local workforce, Glenn needed an administrative manager. Harvey Tizzard, who had met Glenn in 2000, obliged by assuming the bookkeeping duties. Eventually, Harvey was asked to administer the Springdale division. A key part of the company is coordinating both locations. The parent company in Texas keeps in close touch with its Springdale subsidiary. Glenn is often travelling between the two sites, and five Springdale employees have been to Texas for training. Springdale has the responsibility of building and checking the products that are then shipped to Texas for further quality assurance testing. Glenn says, "We are trying to produce the best product possible, and we have accomplished that thus far. In the Springdale operation, we do it all, from soldering to the finished product".

Since the company's products must have a dependable source of high-grade components, the Springdale workforce plays a pivotal role in the future of the company. Glenn is excited that he has "found this reliable source in Springdale, Newfoundland and Labrador." HCR Electronics Canada currently has six employees in Springdale, with plans to hire another four people by the end of the year.

Glenn is very pleased with the investment climate and the available workforce in the province – so much so that there are other projects being considered. Future plans call for the development of a solar-powered security light designed to operate indoors. He comments that "the climate for business growth is due to the federal and provincial initiatives for local enterprises, combined with the skilled workforce, which makes the province a prime location for our business." A bonus feature for Glenn is that he really enjoys hunting, fishing and all other social aspects of the Newfoundland and Labrador lifestyle.



A Fly-Fisher's Dream

# Home Impressions

Prem and Sangeeta Nijhawan came to Newfoundland and Labrador from India in 1996. Prem had spent two years commuting between India and Toronto to assist with his cousin's business, and during this time he began to contemplate bringing his family to Canada and starting a business of his own. Prem operated businesses in India and he commented that, because of the concentration of people, "it doesn't matter what you do in New Delhi, you will be successful due to high consumption." This demographic change was the biggest adjustment for him, having moved from New Delhi, "a busy city of around 13.5 million to St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, which seemed like a small village." He did note that there are over 100 Indian families living in the province, and he highlights that the people of Newfoundland and Labrador very much helped in his transition from India.

Prem's cousin operates stores that import furniture from India and China. For the first year and a half in the province, Prem managed the St. John's location. When that store closed, Prem had to decide whether or not he and his family would relocate to Toronto to be near his family and start a business there. After careful consideration, Prem resolved instead to open his own stores in this province. He currently runs Home Impressions in the Avalon Mall and Pay a Dollar stores in St. John's, Gander and Grand Falls-Windsor. He left India for 'better business opportunities' and says you cannot make things work with one person, which is why his wife is now actively involved in the business along with 30 employees.

Prem considers Newfoundland and Labrador as one of the "safest places to be in Canada, easy going life, easy for family." He is a director of the Hindu Temple and also a member of the Friends of India and the Sikh Association. His children are involved in basketball and Indian dance classes. "We very much contribute to the community and to the economy," says Prem "we feel very much at home." He summarized that "living here in Newfoundland and Labrador, I am more attached to my culture, my religion and my values than in Toronto." They do manage to visit India every couple of years which is a reward to Prem.

His future business plans include expansion of stores by examining the feasibility of furniture import as an additional avenue, and securing staff at the existing stores. Prem indicated that his greatest success is that he is totally content with his family and his business. That said, however, Prem is energetic and ambitious and he is considering enrolling part-time at Memorial University of Newfoundland to pursue a Master's Degree in Business Administration to supplement his Bachelor of Science.



**Prem and Sangeeta Nijhawan**

Country of Origin: **India**

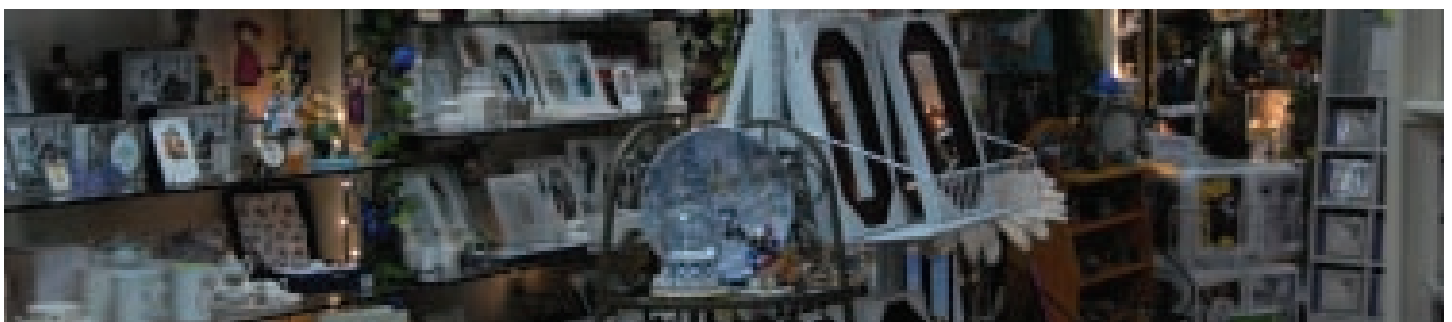


*“It’s one of the safest places to be in Canada, easy going life, easy for family.”*

Home Impressions  
Avalon Mall  
St. John's, NL  
Ph: 709.753.0858

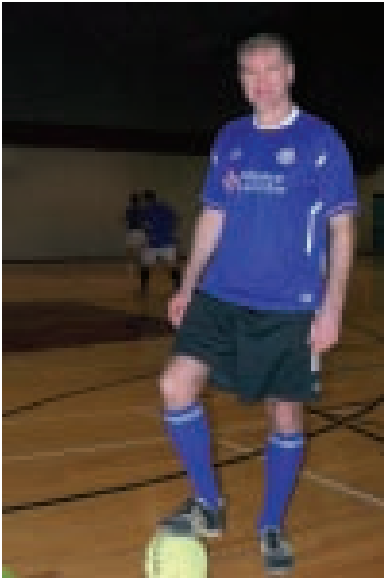
E-mail: homeimpressionsnf@gmail.com

Employees: 30  
Future Plans: Increase number of stores



Merchandise at Home Impressions

# Ian Marshall's Soccer Camps



**Ian Marshall**

Country of Origin: **U.K.**



*Ian “immediately fell in love with the area and the people.”*



Ian Marshall's Soccer Camps  
 Sam's Place Restaurant and Bar  
 Ph: 709.638.2773 and 709.686.1624  
 E-mail: marshallsoccer@hotmail.com  
 Websites: www.theianmarshall.com  
 www.samsplacrestaurant.ca

Employees: 20  
 Future Plans: Indoor soccer facility  
 and expansion of soccer camps

Soccer player turned businessman, Ian Marshall is still a pro. This former Premiership forward played soccer at the elite level in the United Kingdom for eight seasons and notched almost 100 career goals. Now he is drawing on his experience as a player and instructor to develop soccer in Western Newfoundland. Ian knew that providing soccer camps in the province was something that would be “viable and fun.”

Newfoundland and Labrador has always had soccer-savvy regions; the Burin Peninsula, the St. John's area, and now the Corner Brook area. In 2003, Ian “stumbled across the hidden gem that is the west coast of Newfoundland and Labrador and immediately fell in love with the area and the people.”

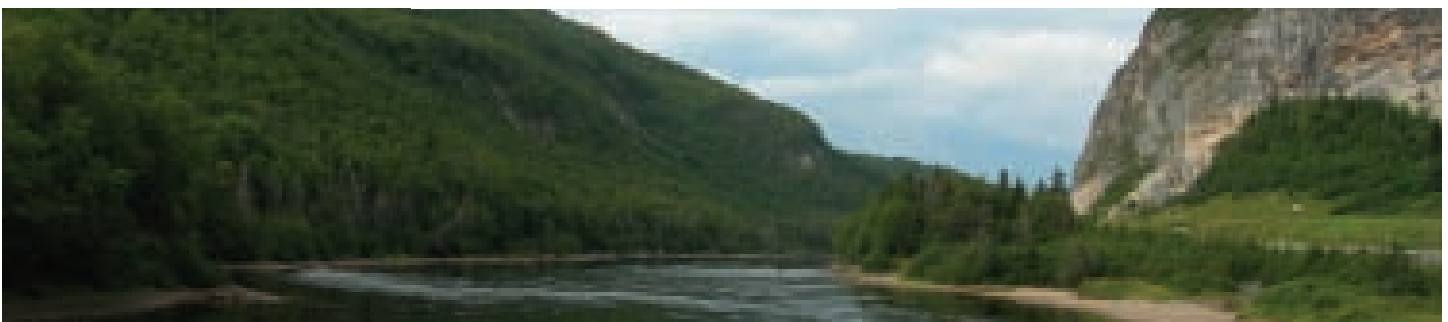
Both young and older budding players are demanding skilled instruction, sport-specific training and higher calibre play. Now, they can get this in their region at the Ian Marshall Soccer Camps. Once the camps are established, Ian expects that bringing in other professional players to work as coaches and mentors will be an added attraction for potential customers. As well, making available soccer trips to the United Kingdom will provide an enhanced experience to players from this province. A benefit of offering a soccer camp in Pasadena is its connection to the U.K. A regular flight between Deer Lake and Gatwick serves the Humber Valley Resort's European customers. Ian takes advantage of this link with home whenever he can.

Ian's partner, Chris Hodges handles the organization and structure of the camps. Chris spent a decade working with the

professional English soccer club, Leicester City. While there, he played a major role in organizing and promoting soccer camps, coaching in schools, and recruiting players into the club's academy structure. By constructing the Ian Marshall Soccer Academy, which will house an indoor soccer facility, the game can be played year-round on a proper playing surface. Ian recognizes that there could be many other uses for the indoor facility, such as year-round swimming, winter golf, basketball, tennis, volleyball, running tracks, fitness centre, childcare programs, special and corporate events and concerts. Chris and Ian attest that with the continued support of parents, volunteer coaches, teachers, municipalities and the Western Soccer Association of Newfoundland and Labrador, soccer will definitely become entrenched into the local sporting culture.

Ian is also busy managing a restaurant he opened in May 2006. Sam's Place Restaurant and Bar is a casual meeting place for the Humber Valley area and is a “complement to the soccer camps,” he says. The restaurant is something that interests Ian but it is not a priority. The restaurant employs 12 people during the winter season and 20 people during the summer months.

When asked of future plans Ian says that he is focused on constructing the indoor soccer facility and expanding his soccer camps throughout the province. If the dedication that characterized his years as a professional player is any indication, he is well on his way to realizing that dream as well.



Humber River, near Corner Brook

# International Flavours

Born and raised in Pakistan, Talat Mian and her husband Mohamed were both well educated with a post-secondary education. They moved to Zambia for work where Mohamed worked as an environmental engineer and Talat was an elementary teacher. Due to economic turmoil and societal norms that were difficult for Talat, Mohamed searched for work in Canada. According to Talat, "I felt in Zambia that I had lost my sense of independence and I felt it was difficult to communicate my thoughts."

Talat knew that travelling to Canada would be a wonderful opportunity for her family. They applied for landed immigrant status, and Talat commented on the ease of the immigration process. Mohamed was very comfortable during the immigration process and he was assured that finding employment would not be a problem.

Initially, Talat and her family travelled to Prince Edward Island, Canada where they spent less than six months in the summer of 1990. In the Fall of 1990, her husband accepted a job as an environmental engineer in Newfoundland and Labrador and so the family moved from Prince Edward Island to the City of St. John's.

In 1996, Talat was working as a research assistant at Memorial University of Newfoundland and was asked to supply a local restaurant with samosas. After that particular business closed, Talat was approached on whether or not she would be interested in buying the business and running it on her own. To make her decision, Talat received support and guidance from her Egyptian and Pakistani friends that provided her with sound business advice that she used in her business start-up. Her

business, International Flavours, started as a grocery store with two tables. She comments on how quickly it became very busy. She laughs, "a customer found another table and a set of chairs and brought them to me to use in the business, then I had three tables!"

Her most frequent customers come from the downtown core as well as people from the university. In 2000, Talat had to make a decision, to either go back to Pakistan with her youngest daughter who was studying dentistry there, or to stay in the province with her oldest daughter. Talat comments, "I felt I belonged here in Newfoundland and Labrador" and consequently, she decided to stay in St. John's and open another store, "this time with more tables," she laughs.

Talat has been living in the province now for 16 years and her business is a "chatting place, my friends place," she says. "I like chatting with my customers who have become my friends, it is my social point," comments Talat. In a joking way, Talat says "I don't know if they love my food or if they love me!"

Talat has four employees that "do everything – they serve, they wash, and they cook." She says that in this business, "everything in the store needs to be simple and fresh."

To Talat, it is important to be simple and consistent with a little business acumen. She values her relationships with her customers and takes part in activities that encourage local business involvement. Her advice to others who wish to start their own business is to "start from scratch and build slowly" as the "rewards make it worth it!"

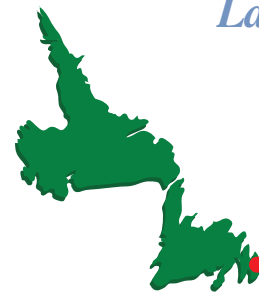


**Talat Mian**

Country of Origin: **Pakistan**

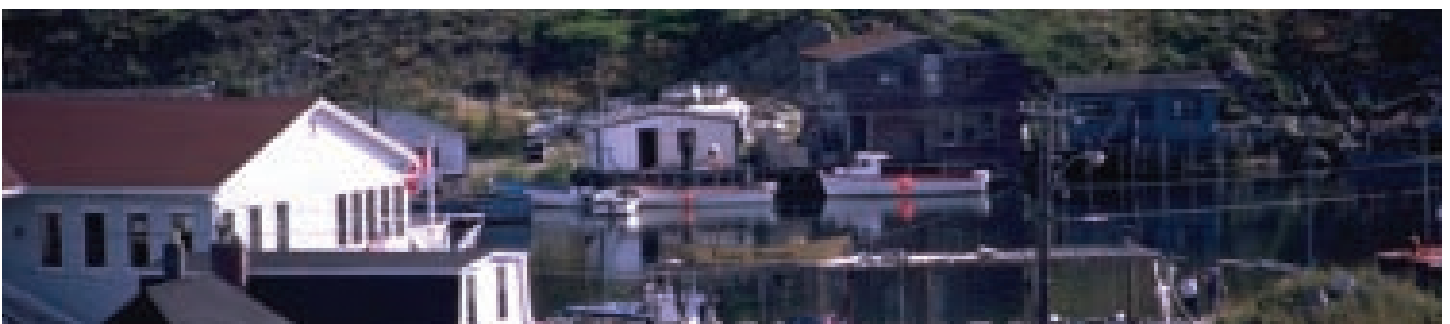


*"I felt I belonged here in Newfoundland and Labrador"*



International Flavours  
Quidi Vidi Road, NL  
Ph: 709.738.4636

Employees: 4  
Future Plans: Build customer base



Quidi Vidi

# Louis Gee's Pizza & Donairs



**Bashir Habib**

Country of Origin: **Lebanon**



*“The entire family is enjoying the friendly, community-based life..”*

Louis Gee's Pizza & Donairs  
 Corner Brook and Gander, NL  
 Ph: 709.632.8500 and 709.256.8500  
 E-mail: Rbhabib@hotmail.com

Employees: 7  
 Future Plans: Additional location in St. John's

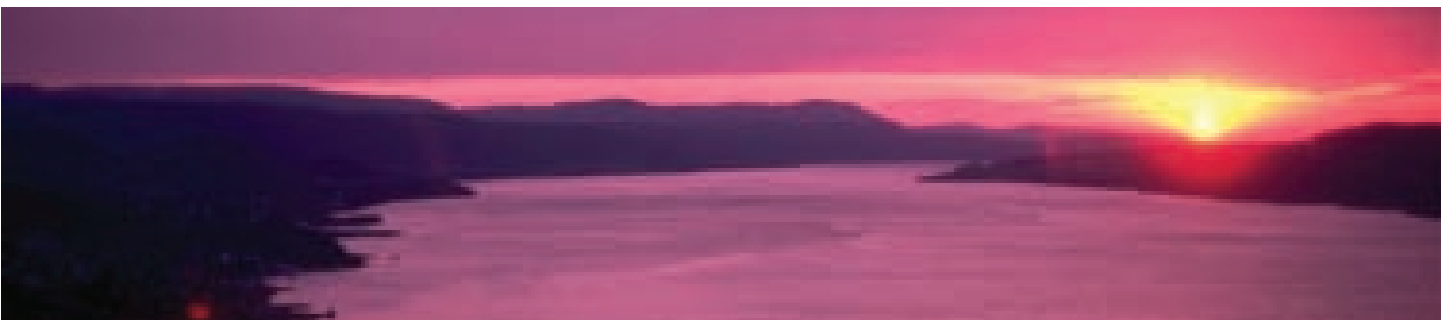
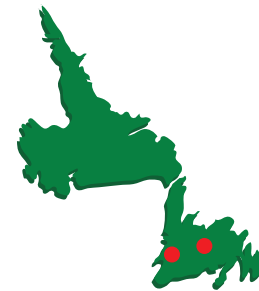
Bashir and Roger Habib are new immigrants to Newfoundland and Labrador ... from Nova Scotia. Originally from Lebanon, they learned the pizza business from their uncle in Halifax. At the suggestion of an employee, they moved from Halifax to Corner Brook to try their luck in the take-out business in this province. The opening of Louis Gee's Pizza & Donairs gave people in Corner Brook a fresh new selection of pizza dishes.

The Habib's have built a new life in this province. Bashir's wife is especially fond of her new home. She came to Corner Brook directly from Lebanon and derives pleasure from working in the business and interacting with customers, many of whom have become friends. The Habib's are active in the community, support local causes and follow a "buy local" policy. Both of Bashir's young children grew up in Corner Brook and the entire family is enjoying the friendly, community-based life. This active family especially likes swimming and skiing.

Roger eventually moved on to Gander and operates Louis Gee's Pizza & Donairs in that town. Bashir is considering expanding to St. John's but would like to assess the competition first. He was initially told that Corner Brook would be a difficult city in which to establish his business, but his tenacious approach worked. With four employees in Corner Brook and three staff at the Gander location, the Habib's recognize and appreciate their employees' work ethic.

As the operators of a busy family business, the Habib's seem to be constantly working – preparing food, serving customers, ordering supplies and so on. Bashir would like to spend more time with his family, focusing on the children's education, while also keeping up his Sunday skiing ritual during the winter season.

Bashir maintains a focus on "good service, good food and hard work". From this mantra, the family has built a business that has become a fixture in Corner Brook and boasts "the best slice in town". By balancing his family's needs and taking advantage of business opportunities, it looks like the move to Newfoundland and Labrador was a wise one for both Bashir and Roger Habib.



Sunset from Corner Brook

# Michel's Bakery

At dawn on Nov. 15, 1985, Michel Vallin did what he had done every morning for several years. He began baking. However, this day was different - he was working for his own business. "That was 22 years ago" Michel comments, "I would never have envisioned having a place like this in Newfoundland ... but things happen for a reason; it's destiny." In 1976 Michel left Grenoble, France and headed to Newfoundland and Labrador - a place he knew nothing about - to train as a pastry chef and, hopefully, find employment. One of his first jobs was with the then named Newfoundland Hotel as a pastry chef.

Michel had always dreamed of opening a place of his own. "Yes, I thought about doing it, but you have to have experience and a business approach." he says. So, after gaining some experience and developing a reputation for his decadent desserts, Michel partnered with Eugene Mueller, a co-worker at the hotel, and together they started Michel's Bakery in St. John's. The first five years of the business were the most difficult. "Making mistakes costs you money," said Michel. Despite the early challenges, the business grew and established a loyal clientele for its bakery and deli. Michel eventually bought out his partner's share of the business.

A consummate owner-operator, Michel spends his days in the bakery preparing the menu and serving a busy lunch crowd. Michel's personal favourites include his French baguette, salmon with dill cream sauce, chicken stuffed with dressing, and fish n' brewis. The

company has expanded and in addition to the storefront location on Water Street, Michel's does extensive catering. Through all of this Michel says, "the community has really supported me."

Michel's business philosophy is that "you open the business and make it work." It is this type of focus and ability to adapt to change that has worked for Michel through the years. The company currently employs 10 people engaged in a variety of tasks from baking, serving and delivery. The bakery's reputation as a place to go for quality is unsurpassed. This reflects in no small part the attitude of its owner, one that puts food and family above all else.

As for advice for prospective immigrants wanting to set up their own business, Michel suggests, "make the plan." He also says, "try and pay off the business as quickly as possible." Michel still spends five days a week at the bakery but "I take weekends off to spend time with family," he says. Future plans for Michel include spending some time in Grenoble and vacationing in the southern United States with his wife enjoying the wine and the beach.



**Michel Vallin**

Country of Origin: **France**

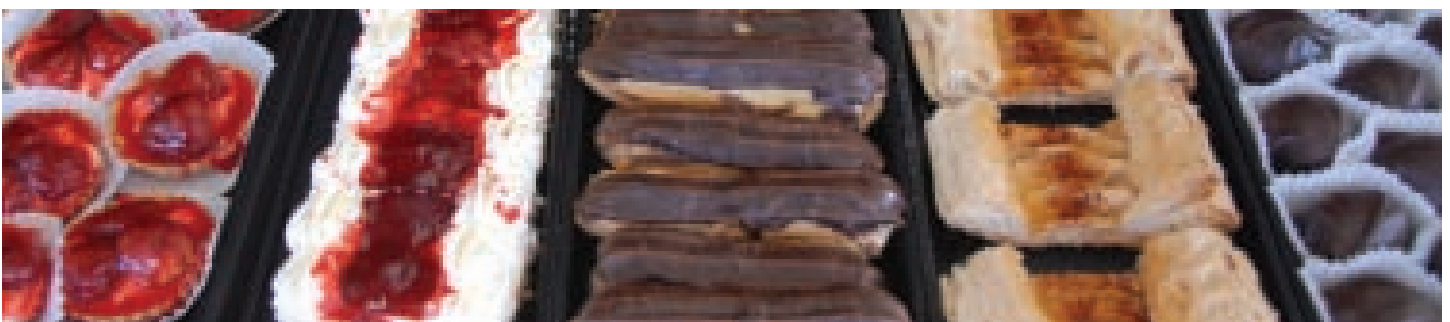


*"The community has really supported me."*



Michel's Bakery  
799 Water Street  
St. John's, NL A1E 1C3  
Ph: 709.579.0670

Employees: 10  
Future Plans: Spend more time vacationing



Baked Goods at Michel's Bakery



**Arne Helgeland**

Country of Origin: **Norway**



*“You will blend in easily with the nature and culture.”*

The Paint Shop  
91 Broadway  
Corner Brook, NL A2H 4E2  
Ph: 709.634.4302  
E-mail: Arne@cornerbrookdecor.com

Employees: 5  
Future Plans: Spend time developing the International Appalachian Trail

## The Paint Shop

The oil industry has contributed significantly to Norway's development. Stavanger, its capital city, is considered the oil headquarters of the country. Newfoundland and Labrador has also seen substantial economic growth from the oil sector in the past 20 years. This connection brought Arne Helgeland to Newfoundland and Labrador on an oil rig in the 1980's.

After four years working on an oil rig in the province, Arne met a co-worker whose wife owned a paint and decorating store called The Paint Shop. Arne, having been the production manager of a textile factory, thought the idea of owning a Paint Shop would be an interesting venture. So, in 1986, Arne and his Newfoundland-born wife-to-be searched for a location to open another Paint Shop. As Arne recollects, “the search for a location took us as far east as Gander and then back to the west coast of the province.” The urban centre for western Newfoundland and Labrador, Corner Brook had similar characteristics to his hometown. The people are friendly and the scenery is comparable, with its surrounding ocean and mountainous landscape. Arne comments that “it was easy to blend in.”

Arne started by leasing a small store that he thought his wife would operate while he continued working on the oil rig. However, business was good so Arne decided to work in the store as well. As thoughts of expansion were always on his mind, Arne purchased a larger store in the same area. Arne recalls just “jumping in and buying it.” The Paint Shop has paid off for Arne and his wife; they also employ five

people. He remembers before arriving in Newfoundland and Labrador that he was questioned as to how he would handle blending into the culture. His reply was, “you have to meet people and make friends, and you will never have a problem.”

Arne is very much involved with the community. He volunteers for numerous organizations such as the Downtown Business Development Association, the Scottish Heritage Society, and the Corner Brook Stream Trail. His goal is to help build the International Appalachian Trail, which will span from Newfoundland's most western tip to the northern tip of the Great Northern Peninsula. Arne comments that, “people like a little comfort nowadays,” and Corner Brook's adventure tourism industry, together with its culture and scenery, “will elicit a response from others to travel here and visit.” His advice to immigrants who wish to live in the province is that, “you will blend in easily with the nature and the culture.” This is why he is planning to stay in the province upon his retirement.



Entrance to the Paint Shop

# Pesantez & Segovia Trading

For Jennifer Murray, St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador was just another posting for her and her family. "It has been eight years since I came here" she says laughing. "We were supposed to stay here for a couple of years and go back to London, England to our home-base, and here we are! I am pleased, and have no regrets," Jennifer says confidently.

Jennifer was born in Ecuador, but spent most of her life travelling with her partner who was involved in the oil industry. She found Newfoundland and Labrador a perfect environment to bring up her two boys. She decided to make it her home because, "it is a great place to bring up the children, and it is probably one of the safest places in the world to live." Since 1998, Jennifer and her children have settled in St. John's.

"Although, this is probably the smallest city I ever lived in, I was amazed by the opportunities this place presents," comments Jennifer. Specifically, the geographic location of St. John's allows for good connections to North and South America and it is just four hours away from Europe. Jennifer researched the local market and very quickly identified some business opportunities that were appropriate to her business and language background. Her knowledge of different cultures and languages has provided Jennifer with a unique opportunity in the province. Upon developing her business idea, Jennifer decided to start Pesantez and Segovia Trading Incorporated in late 2002. Her business idea had a fourfold vision; language solutions, logistic support and import and exports. Jennifer acknowledges that her business journey has not been easy but she is delighted at how far she has come. She reflected "I

feel my life has a whole different meaning, both personally and professionally." She said the province has "given me the opportunity to re-invent myself and believe in me." She notes that she has received great support from the government and the local community, "they have embraced me with their support," she says. As her humor gets the best of her, she notes that "it would have been easier to just carry on travelling the world without real challenges!"

Although, most of her work so far has been focused on logistic support to international vessels, her translation services have been growing steadily because of her network with local and international translators from around the world. The company's import and export division has recently developed into a great project. It currently imports wines from Spain and will soon import wine from Switzerland and other parts of the world. She represents companies not only locally, but nationally. She adds, "I am so excited with my new venture; the wine business has always been one of my passions!"

Currently, Jennifer is the sole proprietor of the business and she employs up to three people. Her plan is to expand the business to capitalize on the growing wine industry. As well, both the importation and distribution of wine is consuming a large percentage of the time allocated to the business. Future plans are to grow the translation aspect of the business, include proper target identification for wine import and distribution, and make plans for more extensive international travel. Jennifer's company will certainly be one to watch for its contribution to the social and economic enrichment of the province.



Jennifer Murray

Country of Origin: **Ecuador**



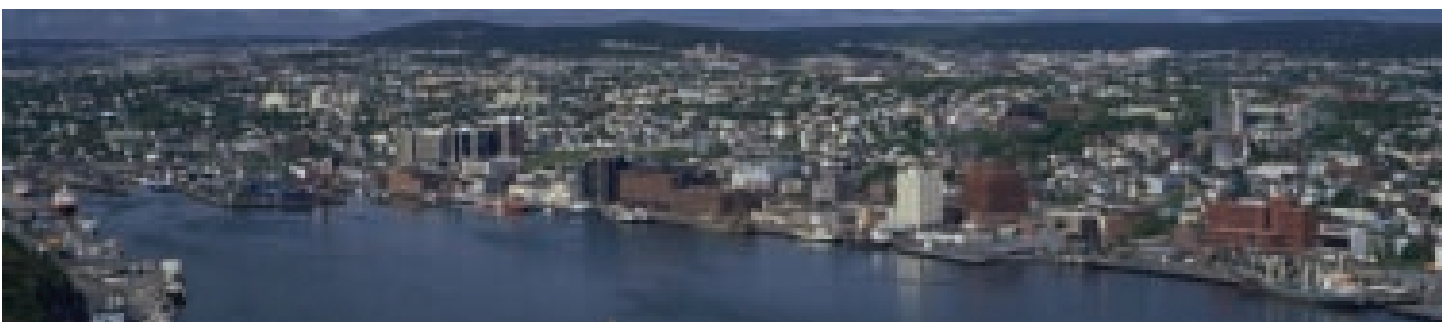
*"... it is probably one of the safest places in the world to live."*



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Website: [www.pesantezandsegovia.com](http://www.pesantezandsegovia.com)

Employees: 3  
Future Plans: Grow translation services and develop wine import market



City of St. John's.



**David Kannenberg**

Country of Origin: **Germany**



*“[the people] are warmer here than in any other place I’ve been.”*

Red Oak Catering  
 Unit 50, Hamlyn Road Plaza, Suite #466  
 St. John's, NL  
 Ph: 709.368.6808  
 E-mail: johnr@redoaknf.com  
 Website: www.redoaknf.com

Employees: 80  
 Future Plans: Acquisition

# Red Oak Catering

Born in Dusseldorf, Germany, David Kannenberg began to nurture a passion to cook at a young age. He gained considerable experience in the culinary field to allow him to apply for landed immigrant status in Canada. Testing his culinary skills in locations across Canada, he decided to take a one-week chef position at a popular hotel in St. John's, the capital city of Newfoundland and Labrador. At the time, he commented, "let's try it out and see what it is like." That was back in 1997, and 10 years later he now calls Newfoundland and Labrador his home.

During the course of his job, David met a co-worker, John Rogers, whose dream was to start a business some day. On the basis of this shared vision, a business partnership was formed. The pair was continuously looking for a suitable business opportunity and one day it happened. A perfect location became available at the Bungalow in the heart of historic Bowring Park, within the city, that would allow David and John to showcase their culinary and catering skills.

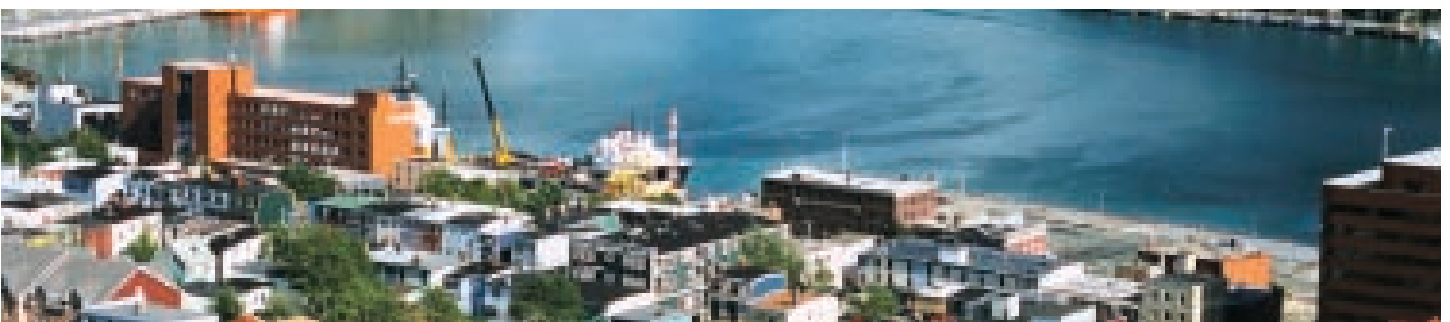
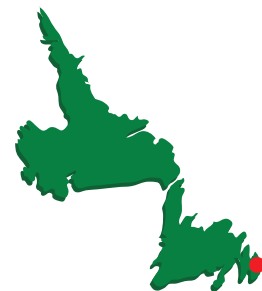
Red Oak Catering Inc. began as a stand alone catering company and today has added four locations which employ a total of 80 people. Having spent five years in Canada prior to coming to the province, David found the adjustment to Newfoundland and Labrador culture easy. He spoke fondly of the people, that they, "are warmer here than in any other place I have been."

Family and stability are very important to David. Newfoundland and Labrador is a great place to raise a family and to

make a reasonable living. He attributes much of his success to local people who work in the business sector. "Newfoundlanders have contributed to many successes in the province and are very knowledgeable of the ventures that will work and those that will not."

As entrepreneurs, David and John are always exploring new business opportunities. "You have to look at what fits with your vision and your personal business model." It helps that there is a supportive network in the community that encourages and provides the necessary resources to assist in business development.

Over the years, David and John have donated their current facilities to various charitable organizations and will continue to do so. In the near future, the partners plan to acquire another location for their catering business. This is their way of contributing to the social and economic growth of the province. David's advice to anyone starting a business in Newfoundland is to "listen to those that live here, as they know what is best."



View of the Harbourfront from The Rooms Café

## TVAL Skincare

While completing her graduate studies in Biology in Stockholm, Anna met her partner, a Canadian citizen, who was planning to complete his graduate program in Newfoundland and Labrador. It was then that Anna agreed to accompany Jason to the province on the understanding that they would stay for two years.

Within a few months of her arrival, Anna decided to start an online business selling soaps, lotions and make-up. She was inspired to do this because of her prior knowledge of the products and the business from her work in Sweden. As the internet business grew, Anna considered a store front operation to complement the internet sales component of the business. "Having my own shop was a dream," said Anna. There were many times when Anna needed extra hands and was comforted and elated to know that others would help without being asked.

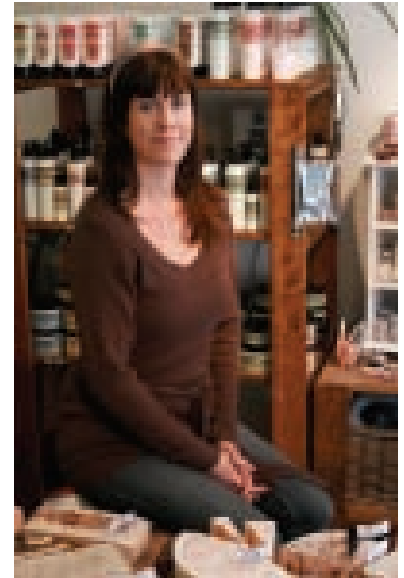
According to Anna, Newfoundland and Labrador's culture is very similar to that of Sweden's except there is one big difference - the people. In this province, the people are, "more open and more friendly and everyone is willing to take the time to help so that you never feel alone," said Anna. This is one of the reasons Anna has settled in St. John's. She notes that in Stockholm, "you do everything faster - you eat faster, you walk faster, you talk faster, and you are always in a hurry."

The environment for new business start-ups turned out to be, "different here in Canada compared to Sweden." It was easier to start a business in the province than in Sweden - "it was easier to hire." As well, her business is located in the

downtown core of St. John's which is a growing area in the city. She meets many interesting people and is part of a hub of economic activity. Anna notes that the best part about being in business is that she can make a living doing what she loves to do. To her, it does not feel like a job or work, but having the "freedom to play all day".

Anna has found that Newfoundlanders are very loyal to local businesses. She is continually building her clientele, both local and internet-based, and acknowledges the "very intimate connection with customers." The lifestyle, culture and its natural beauty are the best aspects of living in Newfoundland and Labrador. In fact, the spectacular view of the entrance to the harbour in scenic downtown St. John's still captivates Anna as she walks to work each day.

TVAL Skincare Inc. has since grown to include a more extensive skin care line, foot care, hair care and make-up. All her manufacturing is done locally including recipe development, packaging, product design, labels, website updates and photographs. TVAL currently employs four people and Anna recognizes that the business is growing. In fact, Anna's brother-in-law relocated from Toronto to come and work at TVAL Skincare Inc. Anna's advice to immigrant entrepreneurs is to take advantage of all the resources available locally. The province is committed to providing a supportive and competitive business environment for immigrant entrepreneurs. Anna agrees, "there are a lot of people who want to help you and there are government programs that provide information that is very useful for setting up a business."



**Anna Hellqvist**

Country of Origin: **Sweden**



*"The lifestyle, culture and its natural beauty are the best aspects of living here."*



TVAL Skincare  
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Website: [www.rustic-handmade-soap.com](http://www.rustic-handmade-soap.com)

Employees: 4  
Future Plans: Online store management and store expansion



A Sample of TVAL Skincare's Products

## Benefits of Immigrating to Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada

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- Safe and Welcoming Communities
- Hospitable and Friendly People
- Excellent Education System
- Clean and Pristine Environment
- Low Population Density
- Access to Natural Beauty and Spectacular Scenery
- Vibrant, Multicultural Community
- Growing Economy and More Employment Opportunities
- Low Crime Rate
- Short Travel Distances and Commute Times
- Federal and Provincial Immigration and Multicultural Support Groups and Organizations
- Provincial Nominee Program
- Enhanced Language Training Services

*It is the “best place to raise a family; very safe and affordable.”*

Salem Ali, First Western Boutique

*“The climate for business growth is due to the federal and provincial initiatives for local enterprises, combined with the skilled workforce, which makes the province a prime location for our business.”*

Glenn Morris, HCR Electronics



