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ENTREPRENEURIAL WOMEN IN BUSINESS

Lunch location for women a winning recipe: Hilmi

Initially, it was only that — a lunch restaurant — but, after many customers asked if Capers was open in the evening hours, the restaurant expanded into the later hours and drew increased traffic.

Capers further changed a year-and-a-half ago as a conscious decision was made to create an environment where women in business could take clients, friends and co-workers for dinner or lunch and enjoy a glass of wine. Hilmi consulted with wine industry officials and professionals as she made the decision to target clientele.

“That was a risk because you’re dealing with a small market and we did target specific demographics when we looked at women in business,” she said. “We wanted a location where women would be comfortable without feeling intimidated.”

Hilmi said the change has created challenges, but it

has also proven to be the right choice as the business is successful. She said it has become important to try and stay “ahead of the game” and come up with new ideas but she enjoys this aspect of running the business.

Capers features a list of roughly 250 different types of wine including a wide variety of local product. Hilmi said she believes having the local wine on the list is important.

“We offer quite a selection of local wine. I think it’s really important to support the local economy and local initiatives,” she said.

Supporting the community, through the inclusion of local wine and other ventures, is an important part of being in business according to Hilmi. She is a member of the BBIA’s board of directors and also served as a committee member for the Canada day festivities held this year. For next year’s Canada Day festivities she will serve

as chair person.

Over the years, she said, the city has been good to she and her family and it is only appropriate that she return the favour.

“We came to Belleville 17 years ago and we’ve established our home here and we have four children and the community has been very generous to us in terms of support. I think there comes a point where it’s important to give back to your community because that’s how a community thrives.”

Returning to her advice to any woman in business, Hilmi said success can only be achieved by balancing priorities.

“You’ve got to get your priorities right. Family, business and community. It’s very difficult to balance all those but you have to remain focused.”

Hilmi, Collette