



Markham businessman Bob Amireau wishes he had more time for painting. But the advertising and marketing consultant still manages to operate his business and produce 30 to 40 watercolor paintings a year.

## Business is keeping him art from his passion for

BRUCE ETHERIDGE  
Correspondent

Bob Amireau may be too successful for his own good.

The Markham businessman is so busy with his consulting firm his passion for art is relegated to weekends.

"My dream, as a teenager, was to be a successful artist," Amireau says. Slowly but surely he's realizing that goal.

Amireau is self-taught as an artist. From "modest" beginnings in Nova Scotia, he was unable to afford university or art school so he taught himself how to draw and paint through a correspondence course.

His natural ability and determination landed him a job at age 20 with the Simpsons department store chain as a commercial artist doing advertising layouts and illustrations.

After two-and-a-half years, he was promoted to advertising manager for Simpsons in London, Ontario, and was eventually made general manager for sales promotion for the entire Simpsons' chain in Canada.

"But even while moving up through the ranks at Simpsons, I never lost sight of my goal of becoming an artist," he says.

He branched out into his own consulting business four years ago.

"What I have is an advertising,

marketing and communications company. I provide a senior level of advice to companies for their communications needs," he explains.

He evaluates a business and then tailors a campaign encompassing advertising strategy, sales promotion, marketing and so on, that will be most successful in reaching a company's customers.

"I become a part of that business for a while," Amireau says.

The success of his own business, TRA and Associates Inc., relies entirely on Amireau having no full-time staff. He is the company.

Actually, he considers his business and artistic career to be "very much intertwined" — the two complementing one another.

"I have my painting to get away from the pressures of my business and my business to escape the frustrations of painting," he says.

As an artist, Amireau's interest lies primarily in painting landscapes and still lifes. He often uses Markham as his subject matter. Amireau looks for ordinary everyday scenes and turns them into something interesting.

"I try to show people a bit of beauty they may overlook in everyday life," he says.

Amireau concentrates on highlighting certain elements — the contrast of shadows on a snow-covered tree, the rough textures of bark or rock — and also in the

arrangement of these elements.

While travelling to and from business appointments Amireau likes to keep to the back roads looking for subject material — trees, barns, farmhouses, or streams — whatever catches his artistic eye.

He works in watercolor because a painting can be completed in "three or four hours." Amireau starts off by making a thumbnail sketch of a scene sometimes completing a painting in the back of his car.

Amireau has had 10 one-man shows exhibiting his art in the last 15 years. He's planning another one this fall at the Markham Theatre.

In 1980 the 49-year-old father of three was elected to the Ontario Society of Artists. Amireau says, this recognition by his peers has been the highlight of his artistic career.

It is the oldest art society in North America, recently having celebrated its 116th birthday, and boasts such members as A.J. Casson, the last remaining member of the Group of Seven.

The Board of Trade director says people have told him "You can't serve two masters" and eventually he does plan to turn his full attention to painting; but for now, producing between 30 and 40 paintings a year while operating a successful business, Bob Amireau isn't doing too badly serving two masters.

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