

TAKE 10

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Cape Cod Picture Framing & Restoration provides one-stop shopping for art-minded customers, collectors

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DENNIS — An antique mirror in need of restoration, a sculpture in need of repair and decades-old murals that once hung in a Hyannis movie theater — Cape Cod Picture Framing & Restoration has seen it all.

“We really do everything,” said Tracey Nee, the on-staff fine arts restorer and conservator, and daughter of owner Ron Lindholm. “We frame snapshots ... to specialty pieces.” The shop offers frames of all different shapes, colors and sizes, as well as the ability to repair chipping paint, rebuild deteriorating frames, or bring pieces of artwork back to life after they survived a disaster, whether it be a fire or a flood.

When COVID-19 hit, the store shut down for a short time, which allowed the team to work on some backlogged projects, Lindholm said.

“Luckily, we have a team that is willing to work twice as hard to be part of the recovery,” Nee said. The father and daughter share how the family-owned and operated store continues to thrive, despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

Can you sum up what your business does to someone who has never been?

Lindholm: We specialize in custom, high-end framing, and I’ve been in the business for 44 years now. I originally started with my Dad, and then I opened my own shop, and he came to work for me. His concept right from the beginning was high-quality, and I personally tend to... look for niches, things that other people aren’t doing. We get referrals from auction houses, historic societies, and so on.

How big is your staff?

Lindholm: Full-time, there are five of us.

Ron Lindholm and his daughter, Tracy Nee, work together at Cape Cod Picture Framing & Restoration, where they create custom frames and also restore paintings to museum quality. [MERRILY CASSIDY PHOTOS/CAPE COD TIMES]

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What did you do before? Or are you juggling multiple careers?

Nee: I started working here when I was 12. I don’t really have much other experience. My husband and I bought a duplex a few years ago, so we have that for income. I am also an artist, so I paint and sell my work.

Lindholm: I went to work with my dad in 1976, and prior to that, I had a lot of jobs in construction. Around 1978, I got my real estate broker license and began selling real estate in addition to working for my father.

Does your business have a lot of competition? If so, what makes yours stand out?

Nee: I think there really are not many of us. You can probably count on two hands the number of reputable conservators there are in New England. The number of disreputable ones is countless. A lot of people think because they are an artist they can fix a painting. A lot of studios don’t do the framing or they do the paintings but they don’t restore the frames. So to have it all in one place, I think is pretty unique.

Who would you say is your base customer?

Lindholm: I would say art collectors.

Nee: Sometimes, it's people who just inherited a painting or are getting ready to pass on a painting for inheritance and want to restore it first.

Lindholm: We've also done work for every library and historical society on Cape Cod and off-Cape.

What are your plans for your business's future? **Lindholm:** I am not that far away from some sort of retirement ... That's probably something I am going to look at in the future.

Nee: I would like to see the art rescue department continue to grow, and it's always been my dream to expand the restoration department possibly to ceramics, textiles, things like that.

What advice do you have for someone starting out in business?

Nee: People say that if you do what you love you will never work a day in your life. That's not true. If you do what you love it will be hard work most of the time, but doing what you love is the most rewarding thing you can possibly do. I would say to connect with other small-business owners is an important thing because you can get an incredible amount of support and insight from other people who have done it, and who have been there before.

How has the outbreak of COVID-19 affected your business?

Lindholm: When we got shut down, we didn't know how long it was for or when it was coming. Tracey never ran out of work. She had enough backlogged to work her way through. I also figured there could be a pent-up need after we reopen because it's not like you can take it somewhere else and get it framed.

I wanted to make sure we cleared our schedule when we were closed down, and then as it turned out, we actually had an opportunity to do a couple of projects like the murals that we hadn't been able to get to. That was fortunate. Then basically, since we've reopened, we've been slammed. I won't really know how it affected us until the end of the year. Hopefully, we won't be shut down again.

Did your business have to close down for a period of time? Has it been able to reopen?

Lindholm: March 12, we closed, and we reopened the second week of June.

Do you think your business will be able to survive through the upcoming fall and winter?

Nee: We are redoing our website so that people can request quotes online and have video chat options and things where if we do have to shut down again or we can't have people in the store. We are trying to make it easier for people to connect with us.

Lindholm: We have certain service that we can still provide while we are shut down. We can still do art rescue. We can still do Zoom evaluation of a painting for restoration and have contactless pickup and drop off...so I guess we just go with it and see what we have to do. I think we are all adapting to the new now.

Take 10 is a weekly feature in which we interview an established Cape and Islands business owner about the secrets to their success. Email suggestions for businesses to feature: biz@capecodonline.com.

The corner of this frame

was damaged and has been restored. The frame includes 22-karat gold water gilding.

[PHOTOS BY MERRILY CASSIDY/CAPE COD TIMES]

Cape Cod Picture Framing & Restoration offers a variety of options for customs framing.

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