

Thorn Originals

Our last trip was over a month ago, and the road crew was getting anxious to get back to our travels. Fortunately for us, Vickie Malget and her staff were gracious enough to welcome us to Thorn Originals. Not only does the business have a shop full of flowers, décor, candles, and more, but as anyone who has ever visited Thorn's can tell you, it's worth the trip for the aroma alone.

Being the inquisitive bunch that we are, we came armed with many questions. The first thing we wanted to know was, "Where in the world did Thorn Originals get its name?" Vickie explained that the store was opened by Steve Daniels in the 1970's as The House of Flowers. A couple of owners later, Don and Sharon Hawthorn renamed the store, shortening their last name in the process, hence the "Thorn". They had expanded the business to include some décor items, as well. Vickie chose to leave the unique name the same when she purchased the store on St. Patrick's Day, 1986.

Vickie has grown Thorn Originals over time. She shared that, as attrition claimed other local businesses, she responded by diversifying her product line to fill the voids. Today, Thorn's offers flowers, balloons, snack food baskets, home décor, candles, jewelry, kitchen cookware and gadgets, bridal and baby registries, tuxedo rental, wedding invitations, cookies, and much more. Their themed items include western, collegiate, inspirational, garden, etc. In addition, they provide free gift wrapping, local delivery, and on-site decorating tips and advice. Vickie has even been invited on several occasions to provide table decorating and how-to classes for local organizations.



We can only imagine the knowledge, creativity, and passion it takes to run a business such as Thorn's. Vickie gained experience in the trade while working during high school in her aunt's local flower shop, Byrd's. This on-the-job training proved invaluable for her and led her to successfully operating one of the most popular, must-see places in town. Today, Thorn's staff

includes long-time employee and lead designer Sherry Piel, Mary Deken, Allison White, and Nicki Watson. Brenda Landes and Brenda Baker help out on Saturdays. Seasonal staff is brought in for extraordinarily busy holidays, such as Valentine's Day. Vickie explained that training is provided to new employees on many levels – from decorating styles to customer service. Some newcomers may come in thinking that it will be an easy job, but they quickly realize that hard work and dedication are a must.

As we've already mentioned, deliveries are a daily ritual at Thorn Originals. What an awesome job it must be to brighten so many people's days. We were anxious to hear about some of their favorite or most memorable delivery stories. Vickie quickly explained that the florist business is much like banking, and that these stories are always left untold. She did, however, share that more than one dog has mistaken a deliverer for his lunch. And you thought the mail man was the only one. But they all agreed that making these special deliveries is most always a joy, especially when the receiver wasn't expecting it.



Thorn's is famous for their unique window displays. We always look forward to what they come up with next. Sherry Piel takes much of the responsibility and challenge of creating these displays. She unveils a new one at least once a month, using holidays as well as local and national events as inspiration. Thorn Originals has even received multiple awards for its creative window designs.



Speaking of awards, Thorn's has a number of Main Street awards and nominations. The store has received the Best Business Practices award at both the local and state level. Vickie is one of the original founders of the Perry Main Street program, and she remains extremely active. She has previously served on the Perry Chamber of Commerce Board, and been named Main Street Board Member of the Year and Citizen of the Year.

We concluded our visit with Vickie sharing one of the more fulfilling aspects of owning Thorn Originals. During the past quarter of a century, a number of individuals have moved away from the area, but always come into the shop whenever they return for a visit. These folks routinely tell Vickie and her staff that regardless of their travels, "there's no place like Thorn's". We couldn't agree more.

While the Road Crew may already be planning its next excursion, we'll be hard pressed to find another community partner with a wider variety of products, a richer local history, and yes, an aroma that is as amazing as Thorn Originals'.

If you'd like the Road Crew to come visit your business, please contact Yvette Dow at y.dow@bankfbt.com.