

# Retail artistry

*Home Style* honours Terry Raven, owner of Pots & Paraphernalia in Duncan, B.C., with Canada's 2018 Global Innovator Award

**T**hirty-six years ago, Terry Raven, owner of Pots & Paraphernalia, went after her dream and opened a retail store in the small town of Duncan, B.C. She now has a job she truly loves, working in a beautiful environment, surrounded by beautiful products and wonderful staff.

A trained artist, she has a unique un-

derstanding of composition and merchandising techniques, regularly creating breathtaking displays. And it's just one of the many reasons she has been selected as the recipient of the 2018 Global Innovator Awards for outstanding housewares merchandising.

Originally featured in our July 2017 issue, Pots & Paraphernalia is housed in

a stunning heritage building with soaring 40-foot ceilings and a grand sweeping staircase. Terry's passion and ability to make the most of this exceptional environment through her keen sense of space and light has kept her loyal customers captivated and her staff inspired for four decades.

"My mission is simply to service my





With an artistic background and unique understanding of merchandising techniques, Terry Raven regularly creates award-winning product displays.

community as I have for the past 36 years," she says. "My vision is to create a beautiful environment that sparks creativity for my customers. And my strategy is to provide, beautiful, functional, high quality items combined with excellent customer service."

The original 600-square-foot store opened in 1981 but over the years, they expanded to 1,800 square feet. After 25 years, her customers demanded more so Terry purchased a 5,000-square-foot heritage building in the downtown core. She says it was the best move she could have made.

"We are located in a beautiful brick heritage building that had become derelict over the years so a great deal of renovation was required" she explains. "But it was worth it."

The 40-foot ceilings have huge wooden timbers, skylights and a mezzanine floor for an overall feeling that is very airy and spacious. There are three huge chandeliers suspended from the high ceilings and a huge, wide curved staircase that leads upstairs right at the front entrance so customers are tempted to explore the upper area. Central to the design is a large double sided counter clad with copper which lets all staff keep an eye on what is going on.

Categories are very clearly delineated so



that customers know precisely where they are and what they are looking at.

“Merchandising is the reason my business is a success” says Terry. “With my art background the product displays are my ‘paintings’. We have always used our merchandise presentations to tell a story. That story might be shabby chic, or cooking pasta, or serving dinner on a beautiful table. We re-merchandise the entire store about every six weeks.”

Lighting is also extremely important to Terry. It must be plentiful, soft and not discolour the merchandise. She always plays background music so cus-

tomers are comfortable when shopping.

In addition to promoting the store with ads in upscale magazines on Vancouver Island, Terry has also recently started doing TV commercials twice a year, and it’s been quite successful.

They also participate in the Summer Festival Sale in the City of Duncan every July. It helps to clear out dead stock before the new fall inventory is purchased.

All staff at Pots & Paraphernalia are trained to talk to every customer at least once before they leave the store. “We try to be informative and we know our products inside and out,” says Terry.

“We give the customer a ‘reason’ to purchase an item but also give them the freedom to make their own choice without pressure.”

While it’s the breathtaking merchandising that draws the customer in the first places, it’s the relaxed shopping atmosphere at the store that keeps them coming back for more. Everything they sell is functional and serves a purpose beautifully.

“It has been a wonderful and successful 36 years,” says Terry. “My staff are wonderful people – hard workers who share my vision. After so long in our small town, I know most of my customers, their children and even some of their children’s children.”

She adds “I work in a happy environment and spend every day in a beautiful building surrounded by the most beautiful products from all over the world. My customers tell me ‘I LOVE this store’ at least 10 times a day.”

It’s clear she’s still motivated – even after all these years. That’s because, as Terry explains: “When you love what you do, you always look forward to going to work.” ☺

*Terry and her team will now travel to the International Home + Housewares Show in Chicago on March 10th where she will be honoured with all other national winners. Additional information is available online at [www.housewares.org/show/gia-retail](http://www.housewares.org/show/gia-retail).*

