

New Plymouth business offers gift baskets with an international flair

SALLY THOMPSON • SUN NEWSPAPERS

Two Blonds and a Brunette Gift Co. began creating gift baskets with an international flair in Winnipeg in 2002. Now, only five years later, Karen Bebchuk has opened in Plymouth the first American franchise.

Originally from Winnipeg, Bebchuk knew the founders of the company. While she kept plenty busy as a wife, mother of three children, coach, athlete and employee at Gear West, Bebchuk said she always dreamed about having her own business.

"I was keeping my ears open," she said. "I was in my 39th year, and I wanted a career change with more flexibility. Owning a business would help me meet my goals."

Getting involved with Two Blonds and a Brunette was the opportunity Bebchuk was looking for.

"I didn't want to start completely from scratch," she said. "Because the business is new, the franchise fee was affordable, the overhead was low, and it was an opportunity to get in on the ground floor."

The products also caught Bebchuk's eye.

The company is based in Canada, so many of the foods and spa items it offers cannot be found on Minnesota store shelves.

"I really pride myself on our unique

Business name: Two Blonds and a Brunette Gift Co.

Owners/managers: Karen Bebchuk

Employees: None

Address: 10800 Old County Road 15, Suite 104, Plymouth

Featured products and services: Gifts and gift baskets

Years in business: Opened April 2007 in Plymouth; since 2002 in Winnipeg

Other locations: Primarily in Canada; two in U.S.

Hours of operation: By appointment

Information: 612-210-1601 and twobandb.com

gifts," she said. "About half the products are made in Canada, and most are made by small, women-owned companies."

Licorice from Australia and chocolates from Belgium are among items that might be in a gift basket. Baskets come in a wide range of prices, and can be designed especially for men, women, babies, gourmets or corporate giving.

Some baskets are actually baskets, while others are hatboxes or damask-covered boxes.

"Whether corporate or personal, Two Blonds and a Brunette Gift Co. offers



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The original two blonds of Two Blonds and a Brunette Gift Co., Seri Blatt (left), and Laura McDonald (center) of Winnipeg, join Karen Bebchuk of Plymouth in displaying the company's gift baskets.

the perfectly appropriate, perfectly stylish gift for any occasion, yet also strives to work with each client's budget and needs," Bebchuk said. "After all, we all want to feel like a socialite on a secretary's budget."

What is the best thing about her new business?

"I'm really enjoying the challenge of meeting new people and having the great opportunity to make them happy,"

Bebchuk said. "The other really important thing I like is the flexibility. I can set my own schedule and be home when the kids are out of school. I'm very busy, no question about that, but I can fit it all in."

The third best thing, Bebchuk said, is the product itself.

"We really have fabulous products, the kind I'd like to use," she said. "Who doesn't like to receive a gift basket?"