

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS IN ROMA

Maree @
Gorgeous...



gorgeous

Maree Bunt didn't let a lack of experience in retail deter her from buying one of Roma's most established gift stores, Gorgeous, in January 2009. The young mother of two had always wanted to run her own retail business and when Gorgeous came on the market, she jumped at the opportunity.

"I had looked at buying the business before but my girls were still too young so I decided to put it off," says Maree. "Then when Gorgeous came on the market again and the girls were a little older I just knew I had to do it. I had worked in administration and secretarial roles but had always wanted to work in retail and run my own business- it's been a huge learning curve but well worth it."

Maree has been busy making changes at Gorgeous, expanding the range of children's clothing and introducing new products in the kitchenware range. "The business has definitely evolved over the past few years," she says. "I have removed the lines of ladies clothing that were here and have expanded the kids clothing so that I now stock girls clothes from new born through to size fourteen and boys clothing from new born to size seven. I have also expanded my kitchenware range and introduced some very well respected

brands such as Scanpan, KitchenAid, Laguiolo, Chasseur and Robert Gordon Australia."

Maree says her aim was to provide her customers with a good experience every time they entered the store. "I have really focused on stocking products that are very good quality but still affordable and having a large range so that people can find a gift no matter the occasion."

Good customer service is also central to the experience that Maree and the team at Gorgeous are trying to provide. The atmosphere here is very friendly, vibrant and fun.

"I think that comes naturally to me and my staff

2012 is shaping up to be a busy year for Gorgeous with an online store due to open in the next six months. "A lot of our customers from out of town already ring and order products and gifts over the phone and although they trust our judgment it would be great to give them an opportunity to do their shopping online," smiles Maree. "I think many of our regulars who don't live in Roma will be really excited to see Gorgeous online."

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Elspeth Barker says her decision to open Roma's first graphic design studio in 2008 was both impulsive and terrifying. But three years on, Elspeth is riding the wave of optimism that has hit Roma thanks to the developing oil and gas industries, and has established her own thriving graphic design business, Plash Creative.

"I was working as a junior designer in a Brisbane based firm and I soon realised that I was doing huge hours and giving away all of my young, fresh designs for not a lot of reward," she laughs. "It made more sense to me to be working in my own business where I could use my own ideas for my own clients."

Having grown up in nearby Charleville, Elspeth said the decision to base Plash Creative in Roma was no accident. "Roma was just starting to get busy and, at that time, there were no other graphic design businesses in Roma," says Elspeth. "I set up in the middle of the GFC (Global Financial Crisis) which was daunting but decided to give it six months and then reassess. After six months Plash Creative was going really well and I've been busy ever since."

Plash Creative specialises in all things creative including print, web design, packaging, photography, corporate identity, environmental design, marketing, public relations, copy writing and branding. The agency boasts an impressive list of clients in many fields of business right across Australia. "The studio is located in Roma but that is certainly no barrier when it comes to doing business and many of my most valued clients are hundreds of kilometers away," says Elspeth. "As long as they have a computer and can open a PDF file we can do business."

Elspeth believes her rural background and "refusal to say no" set her apart from other graphic designers. "Being able to have a decent chat about how the cattle are going or how the cotton looks makes doing business with rural people a lot easier," she smiles. "I also have a motto that all business is good business – I never say no to a job no matter how big or small."

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