

SMALL BUSINESS

19 Adviser: Tips to spruce up your web site **20 How They Did It:** Family's foray into paint-your-

ENTREPRENEURS



JANINE BENTIVEGNA

Three's a charm

Chesterland shop offers something for all with blend of bicycles, coffee and yoga

By SHARON N. SCHNALL
clbfreelancer@crain.com

Diane Lees admits she's spread thin, but she sees in her overload limitless possibilities. For more than three decades, she's worked in the bicycling industry. She's run a full-service shop and developed and directed cycling events. She even wrote a book on how to be a prepared touring cyclist.

Last year she brought new opportunities in her long-time retail specialty and added two business startups to the mix, High Peaks Coffee and Daily Yoga.

In February 2004, Ms. Lees relocated to Chesterland HubBub Custom Bicycles, the establishment she founded in Cleveland Heights in 1997. She and partner Brian Jenks built up the business during the past eight



Since HubBub's move to Chesterland from Cleveland Heights in 2004, partners Diane Lees and Brian Jenks have worked on building up their businesses.

See CHARM Page 18

Charm: Customized service

continued from **PAGE 15**

years. With the Geauga County move a first was realized: designing and customizing the 3,500-square-foot store's physical layout from the get-go.

"This was our dream store," she said. "We built it exactly the way we wanted it."

Of the 5,000 independently owned bike shops nationwide, HubBub is one of a handful that emphasizes custom-designed bicycles and possibly the only one that concentrates solely on selling custom-designed frames.

The frames, designed by Mr. Jenks, a mechanical engineer, are built by one of their four preferred U.S. builders. The bicycles incorporate fitting and design solutions for cyclists who, for example, experience knee or back pain or numb fingers when cycling.

HubBub sport touring bikes sell from \$2,000 to \$7,000, tandems from \$3,000 to \$12,000. The business philosophy is "one bike, one person," and, the specification process lasts up to four hours with fittings, test rides and more fittings.

"Manufacturers build bicycles based on what they think the average geometry is for the average rider's shape," Mr. Jenks said. "Very few people are average."

Perhaps the best reason to add a coffee shop to the cycling mix was to counter the seasonal nature of the bike business with something that is neither labor nor inventory

intensive. From fall to early spring, the bicycle shop primarily is open by appointment, making it easy for Ms. Lees and Mr. Jenks to hone their beverage preparation craft. "We float back and forth," Ms. Lees said. "I am as comfortable in the bike shop as he is in the coffee shop."

The coffee shop's windows overlook the work space where Mr. Jenks takes primary measurements, identifies specifications and completes readjustments and wheel balancing, and Ms. Lees disassembles, cleans and reassembles bikes.

Three years ago, Ms. Lees revisited another passion, yoga, and received her certification to teach, which she did at a community center and in her former bike shop. A dedicated studio space was needed, and with the new location she has that and the third business, Daily Yoga.

"I should probably be put in the category of 'nuts,'" Ms. Lees said. "It probably takes a lot of guts doing what I'm doing. On the other hand, I cannot imagine not doing it. Here, it's all possible. We can go in any direction we want."

The yoga studio's quiet space also doubles as a meeting room or art gallery. "Having it under one roof is a big advantage," Ms. Lees said. "If I had to go to two locations, I never would have done it."

This year's projects include developing a winery and covered bridge cycling tour, and offering coffee tasting and yoga workshops. ■