

# Cabinet manufacturer and retail company continues to expand

by Patricia Roy



JoAnne Parnham, co-owner of Prestige Kitchens Ltd. in Summerside.

**P**restige Kitchens Ltd. Custom Cabinetry and Counter Tops was started over 35 years ago to manufacture kitchen counter tops. They began to also make kitchen cabinets, and now the production line at their Summerside plant includes bathroom vanities, entertainment units, fireplace mantles, closets and shelving.

The business expanded to Charlottetown with a showroom and retail store in 1993. The Summerside location began offering a line of home decor and giftware about six months ago.

The company was started by **Wayne Parnham** in 1972. Wayne is still involved with the business. Sons **James** and **Jerry** and his wife **JoAnne** took over its administration around the time of the latest expansion of the plant in 2004.

The production plant has a number of specific manufacturing areas, such as the counter top shop, the kitchen cabinet manufacturing area, the staining room and the supply room. "All sections of the plant are equipped with the latest technologically advanced and computerized machinery," says JoAnne.

## Employees trained on site

The company currently employs 26 people full time. During the summer months, two students worked in the plant and two in the office. Six staff members are employed at the Charlottetown location: two installers and four in sales.

The production staff at the plant includes **five technicians** trained in either **AutoCad** or **20/20 Design Software**. "We train on-site or send people to Moncton for the software training," says JoAnne. "Most of our product designers have been with us for many years, so it is usually just a matter

of upgrading their training." Other employees include interior designers, installers, cabinet makers, sprayers and stainers, as well as office staff and delivery personnel.

## Most difficult position to fill

JoAnne says it would be difficult to replace a product designer. "It would be hard to find somebody who already has 20/20 training and knows how to do precise measurements on cabinets and walls. However, we are really lucky as most of our designers have been with us since the company began."

Two interior designers were hired five or six years ago to meet the demand. Interior designers visit a home and help customers pick colours and designs for the kitchen and for the rest of the house as well. "Consulting with an interior designer before any work is done seems to be a trend that is growing," says JoAnne. "We may need to hire more staff in the future."

## Busy time for the business

Prestige Kitchens sells their products across the Atlantic region as well as in Ontario and Georgia. Although there is never really a down time for the company, JoAnne says the upcoming fall season is shaping up to be busier than usual. "The downturn in the economy does not seem to have affected us, as we seem to be getting busier and busier. A lot of orders are coming in from Newfoundland and shipments are going out every week.

"Apartment buildings going up in Charlottetown will keep our crews working well into the winter months. We are also filling orders from Islanders building homes or doing renovations. To meet this growing demand, we have recently hired three new people. We accept applications and résumés at any time."

Drop off a résumé at the office or e-mail [joanneparnham@prestigekitchens.com](mailto:joanneparnham@prestigekitchens.com)

For more information about Prestige Kitchens, call 436-5236 or toll free at 1-877-436-8677. Visit [www.prestigekitchens.com](http://www.prestigekitchens.com)