

Barbara Horne had to learn quickly when she opened Liquids and Eats at 118 South Warren St., that things are a little different when you do business on Warren Street rather than Wall Street.

Until last year, Horne, a Trenton native and resident, did project management for companies like Goldman Sachs. But with the recession came a downturn in business, and soon the contracts stopped coming in. So, when the opportunity came along to open a business in downtown Trenton, in the same storefront that most recently housed Gilmore's Café, Horne jumped at the chance and re-invented herself as a café owner.

In the consulting business, she said, she would get business, then acquire the resources to get the job done. But that approach doesn't work selling coffee. In fact, you have to do the exact opposite.

"I had to think in the opposite direction," she said. "I learned that one day by cutting and burning myself because I didn't have enough people here to get the job done. The one person I had hired was sick, and there was no one else to take over. People were sympathetic, but they didn't want to wait forever. In this business, you have to have the adequate resources in place, or else you're going to start killing your business."

Liquids and Eats held a grand opening Dec. 1, and Horne has been learning the ropes on the job since then. She is pleased that the new eatery has already attracted a regular lunch crowd of state workers. The "eats" on the lunch menu include paninis, two kinds of sushi (veggie and California roll) wraps and salads.

The "liquids" include chai and loose-leaf

tea, coffee, espresso drinks and smoothies. The eatery also serves griddle cakes, waffles, croissant sandwiches, quiche and oatmeal for breakfast.

A big part of Horne's plan for Liquids and Eats is being a green and socially responsible. The cafe hires from the local community, and holds workshops on how to live better. One recent speaker gave lessons on how to use free open-source software instead of expensive corporate programs. The Liquids and Eats Web site is a living example of how to do this, since Horne made it herself using Drupal, a free content management system.

Future scheduled workshops included writing and healthy eating. For more information on upcoming workshops, visit liquidsanddeats.com.

"We have a people, planet, profit strategy," she said.

"In that order," she added.

Horne plans to add on-line ordering capability to the Web site in the near future, to make it more convenient for state workers.

Horne said the name of the cafe evolved over time, as she planned out her business.

"Actually, it started out as 'Liquids Cafe,'" she said. "I wanted a heavy focus on coffee and espressos. But I also wanted to make it clear that there's food. I did a little bit of testing and we kind of got to 'Liquids and Eats.'"

With the new owner, new menu and new (as-of-yet incomplete) decor, Liquids and Eats shares only the location of Gilmore's Café.

Horne said the cuisine at Liquids and Eats brings foreign food to Trenton via an American style cooking.

"It's things Americans are familiar with, but which are not in the area, like paninis. That wasn't widely known in the area," she said.

For more information, go online to liquidsanddeats.com or call (609) 858-2324. Liquids and Eats is also on Facebook and Twitter.

"We have a people, planet, profit strategy ... in that order."

-Liquids and Eats owner Barbara Horne

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