

Holly branches out from her comfort zone

Thoroughly modern Holly Jamieson had a successful executive career and money in the bank. But she gave it all up to follow her dream of owning a flower shop in the eastern suburbs.

JAIME MORGAN reports.



LURE OF THE FLOWER: Holly Jamieson with her partner Mark Loveday in their eastern suburbs flower shop. COVER: MARK BRAKE

HOLLY Jamieson certainly seemed to be the thoroughly modern woman. She had a successful executive career, partner, eastern suburbs address and money in the bank.

But this dynamic 24-year-old has walked away from it all – except her partner, that is – to follow her dream of owning a flower shop.

She swapped her career with a high-profile international brand for the uncertainty of a small start-up business, eastern suburbs home for eastern suburbs shopfront and money in the bank for an overdraft.

Instead of the long hours she was putting in, she now eats, sleeps and lives her role as joint proprietor of Lotus Flowers in Greenhill Rd at Burnside as she strives to cater for corporate and walk-in customers. Her only support is the spare minutes partner Mark Loveday can offer – and these are few and far between because in addition to his full-time work as a business executive, he also runs an internet business from home at nights.

“We guess it’s like having a baby,” Ms Jamieson says.

“You have to nurse it every minute of the day because never mind learning to walk before you run, we are still at the crawling stage.

“Instead of having a staff to work with we are suddenly responsible for everything – from the design of floral presentations to marketing to sales to washing floors and the front window.

“But it is a challenge we are relishing and we are loving it.”

Matriculating from Pembroke School and graduating from the University of South Australia with a double degree in marketing and communications, Ms Jamieson then hit the road “to see the world” before returning home and starting work –

first with Coca-Cola and then most recently as a branch manager with Flight Centre.

It was when her career there really started to take off, and she was being offered positions further up the corporate ladder, that she decided to bite the bullet and follow her heart rather than her head.

“I know it sounds a bit dramatic at 24, but I was doing really well at Flight Centre and had already received several promotions and the company was looking for a major commitment from me to go to the next stage,” Ms Jamieson says.

“It’s not as if I wanted to suddenly run off and join the circus, but every time I passed a flower shop I had to stop and go in for a look.

“I had done a casual floral course,

“That’s where being 24 helped because I can give it my best shot and if it doesn’t come off it will be disappointing, but it won’t be the end of the world”

but I never thought I would get the chance to live the dream but when I was faced with making some major career decisions it suddenly hit me – it’s now or maybe never.

“And that’s where being 24 helped because I can give it my best shot and if it doesn’t come off it will be disappointing, but it won’t be the end of the world.

“But I never thought I would be back at school as soon as this – after university I had had enough – but to keep up with developments in the industry I have been back studying floriculture to make sure I know where the scene really is.”

All of this led, two months ago, to the doors opening at Lotus, a bou-

tique flower shop at the top of Greenhill Rd opposite the Zest Health Club complex.

And Ms Jamieson has not wasted any time in trying to create her own niche in a very competitive market.

She says she and Mr Loveday want to reinvigorate the approach to being a florist. She must be doing something right because already she has secured a growing number of corporate clients who want regular arrangements and walk-in traffic is starting to pick up. As well, they plan to recruit their first employee in the next few months.

They also cater for weddings, funerals and special functions.

Lotus Flowers has even drawn on its owners’ marketing studies to introduce “frequent-flower points” to attract repeat business. “Our goal is to produce quality products and get that message across by word of mouth, which will help our business grow,” Ms Jamieson says.

“The work I did at UniSA and Mark’s sales and marketing background has given us the confidence to extend our

approach in marketing the business, and our experience in business has told us that we do have the ability to manage our own enterprise.

“Mark is making it all a lot easier than it might otherwise have been – he is a real help, very encouraging and supportive and has come up with some great ideas that I have been able to implement.

“He also did most of the shop fit-out to help me cut costs so I am very grateful for all that input.”

And like any new mother, Ms Jamieson says she is looking forward to when her “baby” is old enough to allow her a full night’s sleep instead of sitting there worrying about what will happen the next day.

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