



The Fort Langley Villager

Langley Heritage Information
604-513-8787

Fort Langley Visitor Information
604-888-1477

Langley Chamber of Commerce
604-530-6656

The Villager is a great source for shopping, dining and information about Fort Langley & area!



RIBBON CUTTING
LEE'S MARKET
GRAND OPENING

Ir: Charlie Lee, Robert Lee, Peter Lee and Langley Mayor Jack Froese

New Lee's Market corner of Mavis and Church

See page 16 for valuable coupons for Lee's Market



k'wy'i'y'e
Spring Salmon Studio



Phyllis Gabriel and Drew Atkins first met in 1996. The timing was right. Before, they both had chose to travel through life on a road full of dangerous twists and turns. After climbing out from the wreckage, their paths crossed. It was like kindred souls being reborn together.

Sharing a passion for life and all its beauty they realized that they had a common dream, to enrich their lives through the creative process and that one day the dream would provide them with an opportunity to share it with others.

Phyllis and Drew committed to building a new life together and Drew moved from Victoria to Kwantlen First Nation to be with Phyllis. They moved into a little house at the end of Glover, it was a little worse for ware, and was to be torn down. With a bit of sweat and a few tears it became a home and the dream had taken root. On July 1, 1998, they were married with a simple service in the park at Kwantlen First Nation. They spent the next year preparing giveaways for their potlatch and traditional Coast Salish Wedding Ceremony by canning fish, picking berries and making jam, carving, and weaving wool and cedar. A union blessed by the gift of their hands. On September 25, 1999, they were married again with a sacred ceremony in a Longhouse in Chilliwack.

Phyllis had been taking oil painting lessons since 1996 from a family friend, local artist and renowned painter Barbara Boldt, at the Barbara Boldt Original Art Studio, who coincidentally had also lived in the same little house once upon a time. It was quite apparent that Phyllis had incredible talent that had been waiting to be released. With the help of some outstanding instruction and a nurturing friendship Barb helped Phyllis' talent flourish. While at the same time Phyllis had introduced Drew to Squamish Nation Master Carver Xwa-Lack-tun and a powerful friendship ensued. Drew spent the next 8 years as Xwa-Lack-tun's apprentice working on many projects together and learning all that he so generously shared. In 2001, Phyllis' art took on a whole new dimension when Haisla Master Carver and Jeweler Derek Wilson shared his gift with her and taught Phyllis the art of silver engraving. Derek Wilson passed away September 2011. "It was like Manifest Destiny, there was power in the way things came to be." "Good people were placed in our lives at the right time. We had support all around us from friends, family and the community of Kwantlen First Nation," Drew said .

Art started to take a more prominent role in their lives and became integral to their healing journey. As their family grew so did their dream. Together they built a new home down the road in a spot chosen by Phyllis' father, the late Grand Chief Joe Gabriel, where they now live with there three children, Elinor, Noah and Deighton. In 2005, they established K'wy'i'y'e Spring Salmon Studio as a home based business. K'wy'i'y'e, (pronounced K'why'ee'ya) is the Nle?kepmx (Thompson First Nation) word for "spring salmon," and comes from Phyllis' mothers (Maureen Gabriel, née Joe) traditional territory, Spences Bridge, BC.

Working out of an extra bedroom that was converted into a carving studio, Drew found himself in constant trouble for spreading wood chips throughout the house. Even the amazing smell of fresh carved red and yellow cedar wasn't enough to overshadow the inconvenience. Phyllis also set up a table in the middle of the living room to do her jewelry. The best light of course was found in front of the French Doors that opened onto the back porch. In essence the whole house had become a work space. They realized a proper studio space was needed and it just seemed natural to include a Gallery to display their work and meet with clients.

So a hole was dug and a space was designed, although never on paper, and the seven year journey to building their bigger dream had began. Having to do most of the work themselves when time and funds were available it felt like it was never going to happen. Then, on September 15, 2012, they finally had their Grand Opening. A show of Phyllis' paintings influenced by some of Drew Carvings. A collaboration of sorts. Over 100 people joined them in celebration with a traditional Salmon BBQ. Some guests traveling from as far away as Scotland, Boston and Nova Scotia.

"Art has always held more than a decorative role in Coast Salish culture. It has always been much more than that. It helps to preserve Oral Traditions, train community members in cultural practices and to commemorate special events. Although we consider ourselves Contemporary Artist we are very traditional in our approach. We do our best to honour our teachings."



Phyllis' First Nations name is Qwoy'tic'a, meaning "I wear the clouds like a blanket" or "Shrouded in clouds" but she is better known as Phyllis Atkins. Her name is Nle?kepmx (Thompson), she is also Sto:lo and her family have lived in the community of Kwantlen First Nation for generations. Kwantlen is located along the Fraser River in Ft. Langley. Her interest in art began at an early age but its only been within the last decade that she finally pursued her true passion. After exploring her aboriginal culture, Phyllis found great strength in the traditional ways and teachings of the Sto:lo and Nle?kepmx people and with that knowledge she has learned to love, honor, and respect herself as a First Nations woman.

As a contemporary artist, Phyllis continues to learn, change, grow and create as she is truly inspired by her ancestors. She believes that her art is a reflection of her love and respect for the beauty and strength of the natural world and the traditional ways of First Nations people.

Drew's Uncle, Bernard Atkins, worked as a photographer for the Provincial Government in the early 50's and accompanied Wilson Duff and Bill Reid on the 1957 expedition to Ninstints World Heritage Site to record the poles for the Provincial Museum and he became good friends with many of the early master carvers. A great appreciation for the art and culture was nurtured within the Atkins family. Drew started to carve long before he ever touched a knife to wood. Some of his fondest childhood memories are when he spent afternoons with his father, Michael Atkins, at the Royal British Columbia Museum's Thunderbird Park, in Victoria, watching the carvers at work. Some of Drew's work can be seen in Fort Langley, the 3 panel carvings at the roundabout on Mavis and River Rd. and his cut steel panels and post and beam structure at the Fort Langley National Historical site.

K'wy'i'y'e Spring Salmon Studio is located at 23625 Gabriel Lane, in Fort Langley. Phyllis and Drew Atkins are the proud owners and artists of K'wy'i'y'e and they both specialize in custom commissioned work. Phyllis creates hand-carved jewelry, oil & soft pastel paintings, cedar weavings and art cards. Drew carves masks, plaques, totems, house boards and any architectural detail in the home (i.e. doors, mantelpieces, room dividers, etc). As well, Drew works with other materials such as metal, glass and concrete.

Their personal approach to art encourages clients to meet with the artists and be involved in the design process creating an intimate and spiritual connection to the artwork. Please contact us to make an appointment for your visit. We look forward to sharing our gifts with you!



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