

Success Story: Albuquerque

St. James Tearoom: a bit of England in New Mexico

Mary Alice Higbie, proprietress of the St. James Tearoom, visited the Albuquerque T-VI Small Business Development Center in October 1998, asking for help writing a business plan. She wanted to know what would be involved in starting a traditional British tearoom in Albuquerque.

"This was to be our first business.

We had never done anything like it before," Ms. Higbie said. "Bob Gramley, Business Advisor at the SBDC, was very encouraging during such a scary change in our lives. He provided a wealth of information in writing a business plan, financial projections and overall advice on how to start and

succeed in a new business."

Ms. Higbie is a tea and etiquette consultant certified by the Protocol School of Washington, D.C. She went to England to research recipes for her savories, tea sandwiches

and scones with fresh lemon curd and clotted cream. Her research has

paid off. The St. James Tearoom opened

with two employees on December 22, 1999 and was awarded a four-star rating by the Albuquerque Journal within six months. The St. James has since expanded twice, and now employs 30 people in a century-old adobe home



Mary Alice Higbie, owner of the St. James Tea Room.

in the North Valley.

The St. James Tearoom is located at 901 Rio Grande in Albuquerque; phone 242-3752. The Albuquerque TVI Small Business Development Center on Eagle Rock Avenue can be reached at 225-5250. ■ ■ ■

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