



John and Tina Imhof Cambridge Hotel and Restaurant

4 West Main Street Cambridge, NY

www.cambridgehotel.com • (518) 677-5626

Success Magazine: What made you decide to make this historic landmark into a hotel and restaurant?

John & Tina: It has always been a hotel/restaurant and has been listed on the National Historic Buildings Registry. Without the hotel there was a void in the center of our village. After three years of it sitting vacant, we decided to re-open it. The Cambridge Hotel has always been one of the main focal points of our wonderful community.

SM: Keeping the architectural integrity of the building must have been quite a challenge. How did you prepare for such a task?

J&T: The building was renovated and decorated in 1998/99 after several years of neglect. When it closed in 2003, most items were left in place. We only needed to furnish a few rooms and do extensive cleaning before opening the hotel. The restaurant, on the other hand, needed a bit more attention and we worked hard to make it more functional and energy efficient.

SM: What do you believe makes a business successful?

J&T: Hard work, dedication, and a core of people who believe in the business. We have a talented chef, a fantastic innkeeper (our daughter), and a committed staff. Couple that with the support from the local community, and it is a recipe for success. We provide great food, cheerful and attentive service, and real value for your money.

SM: Where does your motivation come from?

J&T: A love of our community and the desire to watch it continue to thrive. Every time a guest—local, or out-of-town—has a wonderful experience at the Cambridge Hotel it renews our faith that we are doing the right thing.

SM: Who have been the most influential people in your lives?

J&T: Our entire family. Each member contributes as they are able—answering a phone, reviewing financial statements, seating a guest, clearing a table, fixing a broken pipe, or any of the myriad of other jobs that must get done. Everyone chips in. A particular inspiration as it relates to the hotel is Graeme “Tink” Parrish who, in 1998, had the vision to purchase the crumbling hotel and convince the community to invest nearly a million dollars to restore it to its former beauty. We have named our pub “Tink’s Tavern” in his memory.

SM: What is the greatest challenge you’ve faced since starting the Cambridge Hotel and Restaurant?

J&T: Creating a new image. In 1999, the original investors did not run the restaurant, but rather leased it to a corporation that required a coat and tie to dine. It was too elite for the area, and many thought it was not a warm, comfortable place where you could come as you are for a great meal. Since we are family run, those core values have come front and center. We are a fun-loving, laid back group who like great home cooked food and the ability to have a good time with friends and family. Our patrons are finding that out now as well. Of course the downturn in the economy just as we bought the hotel has created some additional challenges, but we believe we have turned the corner and are looking at a bright future.

SM: What do you think makes the Cambridge Hotel and Restaurant so special?

J&T: Aside from our exquisite food and beautifully decorated rooms, the hotel exudes history. Located in a quaint Rockwellian little village, with an eclectic mix of friendly staff and patrons, every visitor takes home a special slice of the good life (also an allusion to our famous pie a la mode).

SM: What is your favorite thing about the Cambridge Hotel?

J&T: All of our unique rooms and our bar, which was made from lane number seven of the old bowling alley.

SM: If you could change anything about the startup process of your business, would you?

J&T: Yes, we should have been more hands-on and trusted our own instincts from the beginning. It has taken us a while to really understand the business and to have the confidence to do things our own way but, now that we are, the results are getting better each passing day.

SM: What are your business plans for the future?

J&T: To stay open so all our friends have a nice place to gather and enjoy the wonderful life that Cambridge has to offer. Down the road we would like to finish the sixteen rooms on the third floor and convert the old bowling alley in to a banquet facility. We hope to be able to celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary there (in another twenty-eight years) in grand style.

