



*Breathing New Life*

# Laurie Prescott Arnheiter

owner

PO Box 5, 292 Main Street, North Creek, NY 12853

ph: 518-251-4461 - [www.HudsonRiverTradingCo.com](http://www.HudsonRiverTradingCo.com)

**Success Magazine:** Laurie, what did you do prior to opening Hudson River Trading Co?

Laurie Prescott Arnheiter: Out of college I was an assistant in a progressive dental office, a professional ski instructor, and a mom. When I became a single mother, I went back to college for my real estate license and delved into public relations and marketing. From the Balsam House to the Omni Sagamore Resort as director of public relations, my life seemed to be moving in a positive direction. That is, until the last recession in '89/90 when I suddenly found myself single, with three kids and no job. So I did what any mother would have done. I pulled myself up by the bootstraps and started my own public relations/marketing agency—Interface Communications. I worked closely with Long Island developer Elliot Monter on all his projects in North Creek for many years, won the public relations contract to serve Warren County tourism, and began publishing travel guides such as the Dining & Entertainment Guide to the Southern Adirondacks and the Winter/Spring Guide to the Gore Mountain – Lake George Region. I have been telling the story of our North Country for almost twenty years. Over those years I purchased three buildings on Main Street, in North Creek with plans for revitalization and immersed myself in civic endeavors, all with economic development as my focus. The building that is now home to the Hudson River Trading Co. has become my primary focus.

**SM:** How did you decide to focus on all things Adirondack?

LPA: My experience in marketing the region for my clients taught me that the “Adirondack” brand had weight. I saw that Lake Placid and Old Forge marketed their Adirondack brand but at the time no one in North Creek was playing that card. When the Copperfield Inn opened up across the street from me, bringing in guests from all over the country and the world, I gave them what they wanted.

**SM:** What can you tell us about your location?

LPA: I am located at 292 Main Street; in the town of Johnsburg in the historic ski village of North Creek in the Central Adirondacks. The building was built in 1898 as a livery operated by Frank Kelly who, according to history, walked out of jail and into town. We know he was a big man who smoked a big cigar and had a habit of leaning back in his chair at the desk in the only heated section

of the building. The street level section of the building was originally accessed by big sliding doors which, when opened, allowed wagons, buggies—and in later days the first automobiles—to be pulled in and stored so the owners could board a train for parts south, or engage in business in town. The lower level was a stable where the horses were groomed and fed, awaiting their return trip back into the countryside. At the bottom of the stairs is the tack room complete with the original stenciled numbers that corresponded to the stall numbers. People with a sensitive sense of smell swear they can still smell the horses and the leather. Another level below that is what I call the manure pit. Actually it is where the stable hands threw the manure before it was removed from the livery. It has been converted and modernized for use as a graphic office and photo studio and much needed retail storage area.

**SM:** What items do you specialize in? What are your best selling items?

LPA: I see us as a “general store” specializing in rustic furniture handcrafted in NY State. Local women craft the upholstery for the furniture, plus the drapery, slipcovers, and curtain needs of my clients. Much of my rustic lighting is made in the USA as is our taxidermy supplier.

The second biggest sellers are the fabulous lines of clothing and footwear we carry. We have a huge selection of Royal Robbins, Woolrich, Isis, White Sierra, Not Your Daughters Jeans and footwear from Dansk, J-41, Sanita, ULU, and more.

I have worked hard to position the store to serve the community. I want parents with small children to feel that they can find the perfect birthday present here that won't cost a mint. I have some of the best books and smart toys on the market

**SM:** What has been the most rewarding experience for you as an entrepreneur?

LPA: When I started this project seventeen years ago, most of the buildings in this business community were either up for demolition, vacant and up for sale, or just sitting closed up. In the past two years we have seen an explosion in business growth. No less than fifteen new businesses have opened and there are more preparing to open. The excitement of the long awaited connection from

the historic ski bowl to the state mountain is within our sight, four good developers are working toward building quality lodging in a mountain setting, and a shuttle is being funded that will move people from the town and ski area to their lodging, restaurants, and taverns.

While communities throughout the country are struggling through this latest recession, North Creek seems to be in a bubble. We are growing and getting better each season. There is a good group of business people who work together, realizing that we are not each other's competition, but an alliance. Together we can build a community that gives our guests the experience of an authentic ski town, with services and amenities found in the best resort areas.

**SM:** Do you have any plans for expansion in the future?

LPA: Actually I have those plans in my office; I have been approved by both the town and county planning board. I am presently soliciting bids and organizing my plans to take down the barn on the back of the property and rebuild it, bigger and better able to serve me and my customers. There will be a new retail space, with storage in the basement for mattresses and rugs, and all that will be connected to the main building by a 20x30 breezeway garden center. I just received word from NYSERDA that I have been accepted in their new construction program as an energy efficiency partner. I want this building to be as green as I can afford and as energy efficient as possible.

**SM:** Why is Hudson River Trading Co. a must visit?

LPA: If you want to find something that is truly unique that you won't find anywhere else, where the staff acknowledges you and makes it their goal to help you; if you want to wander from room to room and floor to floor discovering delight after delight; if you want to support a business that supports the community, hires locally, and believes in employment that's flexible for women and their family needs—this is your place.

My team knows no one comes in the front door without being welcomed and spoken to, and no leaves without a “thank you, come back and see us again soon.” Through it all, we have built a business to be proud of, in a community we are proud of, surrounded by the best employees and customers anyone could ever ask for.