

Summer profits strong despite fuel costs, rain and heat

By Michaela Kennedy

The summer opened with one of the wettest Junes on record, followed by some of the longest sunny hot spells the island has experienced in recent years. Jamestown merchants fared well despite the climatic extremes and fuel troubles, with some retailers so busy that they say they are looking forward to a little break.

"Please call back. The sun has come out and so have the customers," said manager Ilesh Patel of Jamestown Wine and Spirits last weekend. Patel's comment summed up the sentiments of many island merchants this week on how business progressed over the summer season.

Some shops on Narragansett Avenue that tend to rely on walk-by traffic were disturbed by the wet start. Restaurants Chopmist Charlie's and Tricia's Tropicrille reported a drop in activity early in the summer. "June business was off by about 40 percent," said Chuck Masso, owner of the two restaurants with his wife, Trish Masso. He said that Tricia's, with outdoor patio seat-

ing, was more affected. "People don't think to come when it rains," he noted, adding that business improved when the sun arrived.

Sales at Jamestown True Value Hardware also fell early in the season, according to Scott Sherman. "You almost can't recover from three weeks of rain," Sherman said of his market that relies on customers who buy goods for fair-weather projects. "However, we've had a steady year," he said of business as a whole.

"The rain made it a challenge for growing and maintaining quality of the plants," said Heidi Lessard at the Secret Garden. Nevertheless, weddings and parties already booked helped to keep operations solid, she added.

Business was strong for the Bay Voyage Inn, even with the rain. "We had a lot of weekends booked, so we were happy with our numbers," said Michael Jacquard, restaurant manager at the inn.

Businesses at the waterfront reported an active summer

regardless of the weather. East Ferry Deli had a steady stream of locals and tourists. "We were very busy, despite the early rain and heat," noted the deli's manager Stacy Freight. Debbie Goyette, owner of the Purple Door, didn't mind the rain. "We were busy. When it's rainy, people shop instead of going to the beach," she said, adding that the ferry service also helped to bring more customers to town.

Spinnakers' owner Mike Ridge noted that when it rained, customers drank more coffee and ate more food. When the weather turned hot, customers bought more ice cream. "It's true what they say about New Englanders, everybody loves their ice cream," he said, laughing.

Other retailers that typically attract a steadier stream of locals and summer residents reported a good season of sales. "We're not affected by day trippers," Tim Baker of Baker's Pharmacy said, adding that he fills more prescriptions in the summer because of the people who come to stay in their summer homes. Maurice Browning, manager of

McQuade's Marketplace, noted that sales were up "about 5 percent from last year."

Many store operators raised concerns about surcharges tagged onto vendor deliveries this year because of escalating fuel prices. "I can't press a button to raise prices every time someone raises their prices on me. I deal with it," said Freddie Bingell, owner of the House of Pizza.

Browning noted that the grocery store is charged "\$5 to \$7 on every delivery" no matter how small the size. "But we haven't raised our prices because of it," he added.

Some merchants skirt the delivery expenses by ordering from local suppliers. "We get most of our deliveries from local vendors, so we haven't experienced too many problems. Some

gourmet items with UPS delivery have gone up in price, though," said Frank LaPere, owner of Grapes & Gourmet. Jacquard at the Bay Voyage noted that the restaurant buys seafood from local fishermen, which helps keep prices down.

The summer is drawing to a close, and most agreed it was a success. Trattoria Simpatico owner Phyllis Bedard described the summer as many others might. "We had our ups and downs, but I'm pleased to say overall it was a great season," she said. Steve Liebhauser from Slice of Heaven had a similar report, saying, "It was the best business season ever."

"At the end of the day, it was a vibrant summer, no issues, people were happy," said Bill Munger of Conanicut Marine Services.

Lunch prices listed for school year

The North Kingstown School Department, which provides lunches for the Jamestown schools, will charge the following prices for items on the lunch menu for the 2006-07 school year.

Lunch for Lawn Avenue School is \$3, for Melrose Avenue School, \$2. The reduced price lunch costs 40 cents. An adult lunch is \$3.50. Student breakfast costs \$1, the reduced-price breakfast is 30-cents, and an adult breakfast costs \$1.25. The price of a carton of milk is 50 cents.



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OPEN SUNDAYS 12-6

Beer

Miller Lite 30 pk cans.....	\$19 ⁹⁹
Bud/Bud Light 24 pk cans.....	\$17 ⁹⁹
Red Stripe 2/12 bts.....	\$22 ⁹⁹
Bass Ale 2/12 bts.....	\$23 ⁹⁹
Newport Storm 2/12 bts.....	\$22 ⁹⁹
Molson Ice 2/12 bts.....	\$17 ⁹⁹

Spirits

Goslings Rum 1.75L.....	\$26 ⁹⁹
Tanqueray Gin 1.75L.....	\$35 ⁹⁹
Svedka Vodka 1.75L.....	\$19 ⁹⁹
Cluny Whiskey 1.75L.....	\$16 ⁹⁹
Jim Beam Whiskey 1.75L.....	\$27 ⁹⁹
Grey Goose Vodka 1.75L.....	\$59 ⁹⁹

Wine

Mezza Corona/Yellowtail 1.5ml.....	\$9 ⁹⁹
Clos Du Bois Chardonnay 750ml.....	\$9 ⁹⁹
Beringer White Zin 1.5ml.....	\$9 ⁹⁹
Mark West Pinot Noir 750ml.....	\$9 ⁹⁹
Hayman Hill from Napa (all types) 750ml.....	\$9 ⁹⁹
Kendall Jackson Chardonnay 750 ml Case.....	\$119 ⁹⁹
Arancio White/Red 750ml Case.....	\$59 ⁹⁹

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