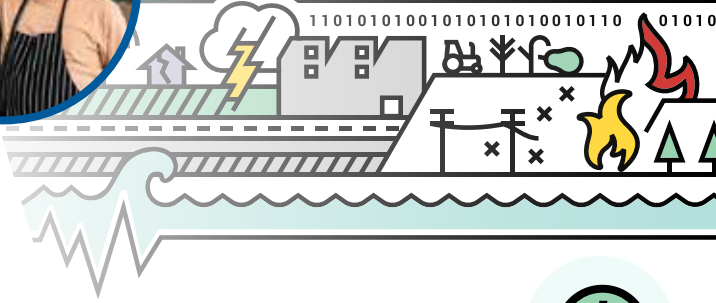
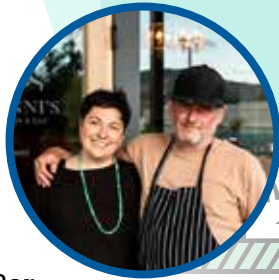


# ECONOMIC RESILIENCY

## Business Spotlight

Henni's Kitchen & Bar and Pizza Leona are two very different restaurants created from the same drive and passion to bring great food made from great ingredients to the White Salmon. Henni's Kitchen & Bar is an eclectic, up-scale restaurant that delivers a dining experience to remember. Pizza Leona is White Salmon's newest take-away pizza spot. By sourcing ingredients from local farms, certified organic distributors, and sustainable farms, both restaurants bring outstanding food and flavors to the Columbia River Gorge.

**In this Spotlight, we learn how the pandemic forced owners Christiaan Erasmus and Sarah Morton-Erasmus to reshape their business.**



### Gorge Living

We moved to White Salmon believing that the community was a great place to raise a family and grow a business. There were not a lot of fine dining options when we settled in, but we had faith that the community was going to grow and was going to be receptive to the type of dining experience we had envisioned. Now, going on our 12th year operating Henni's, our instincts proved correct. Five years after opening Henni's doors, we opened our second restaurant in White Salmon, Pioneer Pizza.



### Pandemic

The pandemic hit us hard. In March of 2020, both Henni's and Pioneer Pizza had to close their doors. It was heartbreaking to have to lay people off and not know what was going to happen. We knew there would be relief fund programs coming so we felt that we would be able to wait it out. Having the pizza restaurant allowed us to focus on take-out orders when dine in options were still closed. It was soon evident that the take-out only model was working for us so we started to incorporate what we were learning once we could go back to business as usual. We leased out Pioneer Pizza and created a pizza corner inside Henni's that is Pizza Leona. When we re-opened it was for four days per week instead of seven. The new Henni's model is working well for us and Pizza Leona is too. We all have a better work/life balance, and we were able to raise wages for the back of house staff. It is a very surprising result of the pandemic. Being adaptable and creative allowed us to implement this different but successful business strategy.



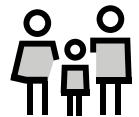
### Starting up



Starting a restaurant in White Salmon in 2010 was a risky gamble. We were able to use funds generously gifted to us from Christiaan's father and Henni's namesake, Hendrick. We also utilized loans from [MCEDD's Business Loan program](#) to grow our business over the years. The loans allowed us to upgrade our equipment. Over the years, we have utilized MCEDD loans to strategically reinvest in the business.



**"We want people to know our food is made with integrity. We value good food, our local suppliers, our community, our staff, and our families."**



### Recommendation to people wanting to start a business...

The restaurant business is a very hard industry, and it changes from minute to minute. You must love the business and love what you're giving to your customers. Having developed good working relationships allowed us to take advantage of opportunities that benefitted our businesses during the pandemic. Our community supported our business with online orders and gift card purchases which allowed us to keep our doors open. We have shifted some of our marketing budget to give back to the community with free pizza or free ice cream events as our way of saying thank you to our community. Relationships are important.



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