

# Let the Sparks Fly!

## Kombucha: A probiotic health tonic made with fermented tea

Christina Maitland and Matt Klassen, owners of Raincoast Kombucha, joke that Powell River is where young people go to retire. But they're just getting started - and business is booming.

**What supports did you encounter opening your business?**

**C** • The most helpful was the Community Futures program. It's made such a difference.

**M** • I agree! I tell everybody about Community Futures.

**C** • Kombucha is a new product and health regulations hadn't been established. Finding the right commercial space to make our product was also hard; rents were not affordable for a new business.

**M** • We started at the Farmers Market as hobbyists, and finally found commercial space through a relationship there. Then, once the health licenses were in place, the business took off. We have grown so much we need to move into a new space.

**C** • Distance can be both a barrier and a benefit. Transport costs are high, but it creates a filter that keeps Powell River special. Townsite Brewery has been so helpful; they have been like our mentors.

**M** • The business community works together to share transport expenses. We collaborate with other businesses, like 32 Lakes Coffee Roasters and local artists, who have the same challenges. Everyone wants to see each other blossom. We find opportunities to work together.



**TEA FOR TWO:** Matt Klassen and Christina Maitland have become a symbol of the "live your dream" lifestyle Powell River offers.

**How is sustainability a factor?**

**M** • Practicality in business is important for economic sustainability. When we started we had great ambitions, but would undermine ourselves by not enforcing our terms. To keep the business sustainable, we had to learn to be practical.

**C** • We are discerning with who we do business with. If principals clash, relationships are not sustainable. Being at the Farmer's Market is still very important to us - we get to connect with our community. We prioritize the environment and focus on forward thinking options. We have a deposit program and re-use our bottles.

**M** • All of our deliveries are done in person and our vehicle runs on biofuel/veggie oil.

**Ideas to cultivate a thriving economy?**

**M** • Support local people; avoiding products which are made far away. If you need something, ask a local business to bring it in for you.

**C** • There is so much to share in a sustainable way. Powell River is an incubator and is ripe for growth. More people should open business, although let's not grow too big...our community is a sanctuary.

**M** • I want to encourage and support

people to make the leap. There is so much talent here.

**C** • We joke that PR is where young people go to retire!

**What advice would you give new businesses?**

**C** • Some people think economics as a negative thing; I used to be one of those people. Not anymore! You can do business from a principled perspective.

**M** • We need to bring balance to economics.

**C** • Go to Community Futures! Get to know your 'community' of other business owners to collaborate and share expenses.

**M** • If you are creative, focus on the creativity but ensure you have quality support such as bookkeepers to manage the numbers and paper. Know your product, be proud of it, and do it because you love it.

**What about Powell River makes you proud?**

**M** • This is a sharing community. You don't have to do everything yourself... encourage others to do things and share. There are so many different options here.

**C** • Two main things: Natural beauty; the oceans, the forests - all of it makes me feel at home. And the community.

There are so many options for innovations; so many super cool things are happening. The community is beautiful; many inspiring people live here.

### What is Groundswell?

Groundswell, the January 2014 conference at VIU, brought 160 community members together for a day of inspiration, creativity, ideas, and relationships that focused on a positive future for our region.

Participants expressed a strong interest in creating a better understanding of the dynamic links between economic, social, and environmental wellbeing.

They were also eager for the conversations that started at Groundswell to make their way into the community, and to see these efforts result in concrete actions. This series is part of that effort.

To learn more: read the full Groundswell conference report: [wordpress.viu.ca/ddcc/groundswell-conference/](http://wordpress.viu.ca/ddcc/groundswell-conference/).

Please join the conversation on Facebook: [facebook.com/ddccPR](https://facebook.com/ddccPR)



# GROUNDSWELL:



inspiring creativity, ideas, and relationships  
that advance the wellbeing of our community

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Contact [megandulcie@shaw.ca](mailto:megandulcie@shaw.ca) for more information.

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