

# Weekend Business



## A marvelous evolution

### From antique store to popular diner

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Photos by Brent Calver

Marv Garriott was looking to get out of the restaurant business at the start of the century.

After owning a bar in Calgary and a restaurant in High River, he decided to open an antique shop in Black Diamond – a simple business he could run on his own.

“No employees, no cooks, no nothing, just you,” said Garriott.

It didn't last long.

Seventeen years later, Garriott runs the popular, 1950s-themed Marv's Classic Soda Shop and sells frozen treats under his growing Marvello brand.

It was not his idea when he opened his antique store in 2000.

However, food eventually slipped into the business model.

First it was candy. Garriott said he thought it was a good fit for an antique store at the time.

Then came the ice cream – three flavours at first. “I think it was a few years in we started to do ice cream a little bit, milkshakes and stuff like that,” said Garriott. “We only had three flavours – vanilla, chocolate and strawberry.”

Eventually, he said it became hard to find good

quality antiques and collectors were becoming more particular about what they were buying.

Garriott said someone suggested (he says it was a former employee while she would say it was his idea) he sell hot dogs.

One thing led to another and his antique store became a restaurant.

“We started with a little grill and started doing hamburgers, then we got a couple little deep fryers and started doing potatoes and the next thing we knew we had a kitchen,” said Garriott.

As the ice cream and food sales took off, he expanded the kitchen and menu.

Marv's has become known for finding inspiration in the 1950s-era.

“The building was built in 1934, so I was going to do a '30s style,” said Garriott. “Everything that I did, everybody associated with the '50s.”

Garriott grew up in High River in the 1950s. He said it was an optimistic time when people gained more freedom.

“It was the best time to ever grow up,” he said. “The wars were all over, there was nothing but good time.”

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Marv Garriott in his classic soda shop, a slowly evolving business over a decade in the making.