

# MELISSA DELLA PORTA



POETRY OF THE GODS - BURKS FALLS, ON

**“P**oetry of the Gods,” a Canadian Indigenous-owned skincare and candle brand, is the creation of Melissa Della Porta. The inspiration for the product line developed from a personal need to find a product that alleviates dryness. Unable to find a suitable product she liked, Melissa took a soap-making class and fell in love with it. From soap-making, she ventured into candle-making and eventually started researching the development of her skincare line. Once she was comfortable with the products, she began selling them. She has thirty stockists across Canada, as well as online sales.

Melissa didn't plan to be an entrepreneur, and no single moment led her to that decision. In the past, she had always worked for others. Holding a Bachelor of Arts in Criminology from Simon Fraser University in British Columbia and having experience in the prison system, Melissa says, “I've never dreamed of owning my own business, to be honest. It always looked like something foreign, not something I could manage myself. So, it just started from a small thought about how I can get my hands on something. And if I can't, I'll have to make it.”

Melissa proudly makes all her products (day cream, night cream, vitamin C serum, botanical mask, soap, deodorant, and candles) from scratch, importing only the boxes and containers. “We don't import any finished goods. We put the research and time into finding out ‘What are the ingredients?’ ‘What do they do?’ ‘How

can they benefit you?’ There's nothing in our products that are fillers. Everything works and has a purpose in the product.”

Melissa has a strong love for nature and the power that one can gain from it. “Nature is always an inspiration for me. It never fails us. And as long as we take care of it, it's always going to be there for us. For me, nature is where everything stems from.” Her products and business, including the ingredients and marketing, reflect this love for nature. The name “Poetry of the Gods” is based on the concept of communicating with the spiritual side of your being, whether external or internal.

Melissa is grateful for the support of her Indigenous Financial Institution (IFI), Waubetek Business Development Corporation. “They have provided us with startup funds, which, honestly, we wouldn't have made it this far without. And they continue to be such a supporter, encouraging us, and offering programs and funds. They've just been an amazing assistance.”

She took a course on developing a business plan, which she found very helpful. Understanding the importance of a target market and not assuming that you are selling to everybody was a vital element of the process.

Due to the financial aspects of starting a business, Melissa chose to take on most tasks herself rather than outsourcing. As a result, she understands every aspect of her business, but it has been time-consuming. Marketing aspects such as building a website, photography, and social media are particularly time-consuming. Recently, she started

outsourcing some functions, such as accounting, which reduced stress and time commitment.

She appreciates the support of her two employees and her husband, who manages shipping and receiving. Working with these people brings her joy and she considers it one of the best perks of having your own business.

Melissa encourages people to step outside their comfort zones to pursue their dreams. “I'm an introvert, and I don't like hanging out with many people. I keep to myself, and it's hard to run a business when that's your personality. So just stepping outside a little bit, just getting outside of your comfort zone a little bit, is definitely worthwhile, and a lot of people will connect to you. You'd be surprised how your story connects to other small business owners.”



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