



## Mari Thomas Jewellery: fitting new home for Welsh jewellery brand

Celebrated Welsh jeweller Mari Thomas was looking to leave her rented business premises when she spotted a local hotel up for sale and realised that it could make the perfect workshop and gallery.

By her own admission, Mari Thomas is always moving the goalposts. “My dream when starting out 20 years ago was to have a small workshop and a cabinet of my work in a gallery in Swansea,” she says, “and that happened after about a year. So you set yourself another goal and when you start getting nearer to that you develop bigger and bigger dreams.”

A few years ago, Mari sat down and sketched out a five-year plan for her business – “real blue-sky thinking, almost what the impossible could be,” she says. When she took another look at it again recently, she was amazed by how many milestones she had passed.

One of the biggest moments in Mari’s career (and there have been many, including pieces made for Sting, actor Ioan Gruffudd, the National Eisteddfod festival and the Welsh Rugby Union), came this summer when she bought her own premises in Llandeilo.

### Elation, pure panic and a pat on the back

With the rent on her previous building rising and plans to buy a new property having fallen through, Mari found her eye drawn to the Old Castle Hotel in the centre of town. “It was bigger than the place I’d been looking at and seemed an enormous hill to climb,” says Mari, who went on to secure a mortgage on the property from NatWest, with help from business development manager Mark Dobson, who was referred by Mark Davis from Stevenage-based brokerage firm Omega Commercial Solutions. “The day I signed, there was a mixture of elation and pure panic – but there was also a small pat on the back for myself, too,” she says.

Investing in her own workplace has brought a degree of stability to Mari’s life. “Now I have an asset that gives me financial security for the future,” she says. “It’s also the perfect platform to present not only my work, but the work of other talented jewellers and silversmiths in a way that people can really appreciate the craft behind it.”

Mari asserts that anyone in business needs the occasional bump in the road to keep them on their toes. “I’ve had to pick myself up so many times, but I think in order to achieve the ups in business you also need downs – and you learn from them,” she says. “And then the rewards are yours to reap.”



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