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Discovery Map's Sam and Ann Douglass celebrate 25 years of making maps, friends and memories

DATELINE: LACONIA, NH, CAMDEN, ME, ROCKLAND, ME, HAMPTON BEACH, NH, KENNEBUNKPORT, ME, WELLS, ME, YORK, ME, OGUNQUIT, ME, and WAITSFIELD, VT...

In a day and age when most marriages don't last 25 years, Sam and Ann Douglass achieved that milestone long ago and accomplished another one: 25 years as business partners as owners of five Discovery Map franchises. The couple recently celebrated their quarter century in business together with the following Discovery Map locations: the Lakes Region/Winnepesaukee, Hampton Beach, Kennebunkport/Wells, York/Ogunquit and Camden/Rockland.



The Douglass's maps are part of Discovery Map International, Inc. (DMI). DMI is the leading provider of curated guides to top tourist attractions, cities and towns throughout North America. Including the Douglass' five, Discovery Map has more than 130 maps across the U.S. and Canada. It is the charge of a franchise owner to sell advertising space on the printed map and the online digital version, available at discoverymap.com.

"I'm not sure what we envisioned when we first purchased the Discovery Map of the Lakes Region franchise," said Sam Douglass. "We thought the maps were great and we became the first franchisee. We could see the value and were attracted to how much people loved the maps. After getting our feet wet with the first one, it was pretty clear that Discovery Map would be useful in a number of areas beyond the Lakes region. So, we went for it."

The couple first encountered Discovery Map while working at the Sugarbush Ski Resort in Warren, Vermont. Ann worked in the marketing department and Sam worked in group sales and on-hill events. He utilized the Discovery Map of the Mad River Valley to help showcase the wide range of attractions for those looking to book outings at the resort.

When the couple's colleague, Chan Weller, left Sugarbush and became the Discovery Map franchisor—it was then called Resort Maps—Sam and Ann leapt at the opportunity to own a map.

“When we first started out, Sam worked the business full-time and I kept my day job as a sign language interpreter at a local school and helped out part-time,” said Ann. “But we saw the first map take off and jumped at the opportunity to expand.”

In addition to the Lakes Region, the couple purchased Discovery Maps of York/Ogunquit and Kennebunkport/Wells in 1995, closely followed by Hampton Beach, NH and Camden/Rockland.

Like fellow 25-year Discovery Map veteran Brian Bamrick, owner of four franchises in New Jersey and Delaware, the Douglasses made the tactical decision to be as hands-on with their business as possible. From day one, the couple handled sales, creative and distribution.

“Personally handling the distribution has been key. That direct contact with your advertisers gives you a real feel for what's going on in the community,” said Sam. “That's not only led to continued business—e.g. selling ads to the current business owners and then to the next generation when they retire—but to other opportunities outside of business.”

The Douglasses are active in their Chamber of Commerce and the community with events like York Harvestfest. The couple has volunteered their fry-o-laters and their services to making French fries for the 20,000-plus that attend the annual event. Adds Sam, “There, we're not the map people but the French fry guys.”

So, what has the couple enjoyed most about owning five Discovery Map franchises?

“It's the flexibility of the lifestyle,” said Ann. “We work hard to publish our maps, but our daily schedule is flexible. This year, we were able to adjust the schedule of our map sales so we could travel to California to attend our daughter's wedding. You just don't get that type of flexibility with a regular 9-to-5 job!”

Said Peter Hans, president of Discovery Map International, “Sam and Ann are great examples of what is possible when you really invest yourself in your business. They truly are special people and we're delighted they live not too far from our headquarters in Vermont so we can see them on a regular basis.”

Full-time or part-time, Discovery Map franchise owners come from many walks of life. Some are corporate refugees or semi-retired individuals looking to build a business and fund their full retirement. Others include recent college grads, as well as mothers (and fathers) looking to build a business with hours around the kids' school schedules.

Forbes Magazine recently named Discovery Map® one of the top 10 franchises to buy with an initial investment under \$150,000. In 2018, it won the Top 50 Franchisee Satisfaction Award based on a survey conducted by Franchise Business Review.

For more information on the Discovery Map franchise opportunity, visit <https://discoverymapfranchise.com/>.

About Discovery Map

Discovery Map International is the country's leading provider of curated guides to top tourist destinations, cities and towns throughout North America. The distinctively colorful, hand-drawn maps are a favorite of travelers for navigating local dining, attractions, businesses, cultural experiences, ski destinations – and even the best locations to take selfies. Discovery Map can be found in local hotels, restaurants, shops, visitor information centers and other participating venues, and at discoverymap.com. Named by Forbes as “one of the best franchises to buy” in 2015, Discovery Map International is headquartered in Waitsfield, VT, in the heart of the Green Mountains.