

Shane Wilson Sculpture

Faro

Started: 1994

Contact: Shane Wilson

Shane Wilson makes “high end” sculptures of moose and caribou antler, sheep horn and mammoth ivory and sells his sculptures throughout Canada and the U.S.

Getting Started: A painter in past years, Shane began sculpting in 1992 after being inspired by the work of Atlin carver, Maureen Morris. He contacted her for advice and then helped bring her to Faro for a workshop. After a couple of years of improving his craft, he started selling his work but kept his day job to help cover start-up costs such as building an inventory of tools.

Key to success: Shane chose to market his own work instead of selling through galleries. His marketing approach has included a web site, a public display of his work in the Whitehorse airport, advertising, participation in northern oriented or wildlife art exhibits and trade shows, and a brochure. He recently



began working with an arts consultant in California who gets paid by commission on sales. The consultant prepares releases, provides important contacts and helps get articles in publications.

Lessons learned: A lack of experience of the business provided challenges that were met through trial and error. A business plan training course from Dana Naye Ventures provided important insights and made Shane more results oriented. Being in Faro is not viewed as a barrier given the flexibility provided by electronic marketing. However, he does wish that he had invested less in magazine advertising and tried to get a higher profile through articles earlier on. Hiring the arts consultant earlier in the business and developing a more professional marketing package—if he could have afforded it—would have been a benefit as well.

Future of business: Shane expects his business to grow and become self-sustaining. Currently he invests a lot of time the marketing and business management aspects of Shane Wilson Sculpture. While the diversity of work has its rewards, he hopes to be able to pass on these tasks to someone else in the future.