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## Crop-A-Doodle-Do

**Location:** 12120 E. 266th St., Arcadia

**Owners:** Brenda and Bob Webster,  
Melissa Keene, Brett Morrow

**Founded:** May 2005

**Service:** Bed-and-breakfast, spa and  
scrapbooking getaway for women

**Phone:** 888-317-CROP (2767)

**Web site:** cropadoodle.com

Brenda Webster, left, and Melissa Keene kicked around the idea of opening their own scrapbooking getaway after seeing the growth of scrapbooking and girlfriend getaway trips.



Full-time flight attendant Melissa Keene and stay-at-home-mom Brenda Webster share more than a passion for scrapbooking. They also share in ownership of Crop-A-Doodle-Do, a bed-and-breakfast spa designed for scrapbooking getaways.

They started talking about opening the business in 2004 when both were looking at career changes.

Webster was looking for a creative outlet that would allow her to maintain her flight schedule while also feeding her creative side. Webster, who has three teenage daughters, was ready to re-enter the workplace.

While neither had owned a business before, they felt it was time to take a "huge leap of faith" and open Crop-A-Doodle-Do, The Ultimate Scrapbook & Spa Getaway.

Discussions about the business started in late June 2004. By September, they had found the perfect location—an 1865 farmhouse on 10 acres in Arcadia—a short drive northwest of Noblesville in Hamilton County. The home had been left to friend Brett Morrow by his grandmother.

Opening a bed-and-breakfast meant lots of bureaucratic red tape had to be navigated before the first guests could check in.

"We had to get variances to use the house as a B&B, which took from September 2004 until January 2005," Webster said. "We wanted to make sure that we could legally do this before we made a single change to the house," Webster said.

In January 2005, they had cleared all hurdles and began renovations and purchasing furnishings and accessories. They

opened five months later on Memorial Day weekend.

The name Crop-A-Doodle-Do came from Webster's daughter Hannah, who thought the name appropriate for both the rural surroundings and the scrapbooking theme.

Nearly all of the partners' investment went into renovating the house and creating a Web site and brochures, which left very little for paid advertising. That meant the women had to take some of the creativity they use in scrapbooking and put it into marketing the business.

Playing off the name, Webster and Keene gathered ideas and took them to Dave

site took off. I wish every client was as savvy and in tune as they were."

They started distributing their brochures at scrapbooking stores in Indiana and in several other states. But money couldn't buy the most important exposure the business has gotten to date: regular mentions in the mother of all scrapbooking magazines, "Creative Keepsakes," and a mention on Martha Stewart's CBS daytime show, "Martha."

"We sent Martha a letter and brochure inviting her to visit Crop-A-Doodle-Do," Webster said. "As luck would have it, the person whose desk it landed on thought it was a great idea and a producer called us right away."

While Webster didn't visit Stewart's studio, she was live, on-air in a segment last December in which Stewart chatted with viewers who had written in.

The phones started ringing just after the show ended and the pair had bookings through February of this year.

Many more bookings have resulted from getaway contests in "Creative Keepsakes" magazines. Women from California to the East Coast and as far south as Mississippi have visited Crop-A-Doodle-Do. Several local residents have been repeat guests. One of them is Beverly Clary, who has visited Crop-A-Doodle-Do three times.

What keeps her coming back? "I love the quaintness of the house," she said. "It's more of a family-type atmosphere, and you get to know the other women staying there."

Keene and Webster love the feedback they receive from guests, who sign a guest

book before leaving. But true to form, this is no ordinary guest book—it's a scrapbook where guests create their own page that includes a photo taken during their stay and a message about their experience.

They have learned a lot in the year that they have been in operation, including finding ways to give their guests the level of pampering that they want for them without killing themselves.

"We're constantly learning how to do things easier," said Webster, who still maintains a full-time flight schedule with US Airways.

"It's about setting limits," Keene added. "We would stay up until 3 a.m. with the ladies and get up at 6 to make breakfast. We soon realized that we needed to sleep, too."

The women staff the inn 24 hours a day when guests are there. Keene stays whenever Webster is flying.

Bookings have far exceeded their initial projections. They expected 70 percent occupancy the first year, 80 percent the second and 90 percent their third year. After just one year of operation, occupancy has reached 96 percent.

While they hope to expand to include weekday bookings, the owners want to grow slowly while maintaining a high level of personal attention. They have been approached about creating franchise opportunities for Crop-A-Doodle-Do and giving seminars on how to start a scrapbooking getaway business, but right now they're happy with their success.

The women don't see their rural location and lack of drive-by traffic as an obstacle to growth.

"We have such a specialized niche," Webster said. "Our business is more about the experience, not so much about the product."



Cassis, owner of Indianapolis-based Cassis, a design firm. Cassis designed the logo, Web site and brochure for the business, but he doesn't take credit for Crop-A-Doodle-Do's success.

"Their success has been due to their grass-roots effort [to market the business]," he said. "They contacted people in the industry distributing their brochures. Due to their networking efforts, the Web