

BOTANICALS



MATAKANA BOTANICALS

As a premium bath and body products company, Matakana Botanicals is proud of its green credentials but even owner Danvers Devereux concedes there was “one missing piece in the jigsaw puzzle”.

“We regularly bring over distributors from Japan so when they come over here we would always drive them up to Matakana to show them our olive press and where we get our macadamias from, and fly them over to Great Barrier Island to see where we get our honey from,” says Danvers. “All beautiful places but then we would come back to our office and warehouse in East Tamaki.

“As one of our distributors said, ‘You’ve got a beautiful picture with your business but one missing piece’.”

And that was the moment that spurred Danvers to “do something big picture” and move the firm’s base to a rural setting in Matakana.



So just over three years ago he bought a 1.82ha piece of land where the company could not only have its warehouse, offices, shop and a cafe but also grow some of the plants that go into Matakana Botanicals’ products.

Danvers says that the site he bought, however, resembled the car wreckers’ yard from the Kiwi movie ‘Smash Palace’.

“On the property was a classic old bungalow but everything was overgrown with long grass and because the guy that lived there was a hoarder there was machinery and car wrecks all around,” says Danvers. “In the first year we were tidying up the property, cutting out privet and removing scrap metal.” Then the bungalow was renovated so Danvers could live there part-time and use it as an office, and he began planning the buildings he wanted on the property as part of the Matakana Botanicals operation. “I always liked the barn-style architecture so I began looking around to see who did the board and batten barns and that’s how I came to work with Customkit.

“I wanted the barns to be wooden buildings and I liked the fact that the timber comes from regenerating forest,” he says.

"I also liked the portal structure that they use that gives you big open spaces and allows you to add your own touches inside, and you can also put pergolas on them – one of ours has egg chairs hanging off it." The first of four barn-style buildings to go up was the warehouse followed by the café/showroom then the lavender distillery and candle making building and lastly the "man cave/honey house".



Danvers says he worked closely with Customkit on the buildings' designs so they could be fitted out for purpose, and took their advice on the positioning of the buildings so they sat well on the land and were optimised for passive solar gain and the installation of solar panels. Danvers says he and authorised builder Gus McKergow have become great friends during the course of creating the village of "contemporary rural buildings".

Danvers says, "We have had so many compliments from local people because it is very visually appealing from the road."



Part of those smart looks is the Colorsteel roofing, which is also in keeping with the barn aesthetic of Customkit buildings.

Kevin Taylor, of Customkit, says using corrugated metal roofing is a traditional look although the materials have improved: longrun pre-painted roofing replacing corrugate sheets, just as ply and batten has replaced board and batten.

"Using those materials goes back to where Customkit started with farm buildings and we've stayed with that look even as we've moved into bigger and more distinctive forms," Kevin says.

"But it's not just the aesthetics of the longrun roofing that we like; it's the lightweight nature, the spanning properties, the durability and the simplicity of fixing that all work for us."



Kevin says that with Danvers' project, care was taken with the setting out of the laminated veneer lumber (LVL) portals to allow for racking systems and such like. "We also wanted to make sure the buildings related to each other," he says. "It was a collaboration between him and us, and it's nice to have that interaction with the client." While the buildings have similar forms, the colour scheme Danvers employed also ties them together.



Building regulations meant he couldn't stain the timber; it had to be painted. He chose Resene's 'All Black' for the timber cladding, which contrasts with the lighter Colorsteel Endura 'Sandstone Grey' roofing. The paint is one of Resene's CoolColour range, specially formulated for dark paints so that they don't absorb as much heat, which can cause the paint to fail and lead to cracking and cupping of timber.

Because Matakana Botanicals not only draws inspiration from nature but also aims to respect it, Danvers was determined that his business would have a light environmental footprint. Solar panels provide the bulk of the electricity for the business, which uses LED lighting and has a worm farm system that converts waste into fertiliser. Skylights have been incorporated into the barns to reduce the need for electrical lighting, while doors, windows and louvres have been placed for efficient natural ventilation

as opposed to airconditioning. Water is drawn from an artesian bore and Danvers has created a unique irrigation system that is infused with nutrients from seaward gathered at the beach.

An outdoor bath is another part of the magical rural setting but is also a piece of company history.

Danvers' mother Colyn Devereux-Kay used that bath when she began making pot pourri in 1988 in the basement of the family's Remuera home when she started Les Floralties. That company then branched out into upmarket bath and body products. Danvers took over the business eventually and renamed it Matakana Botanicals when he shifted the business north.

Danvers, who has a background in horticulture, says the Matakana property allows them to grow lavender and herbs for their products and will enable him to explore an interest in medicinal herbs.

And next year the public will be able to have a look at the final piece in the company's jigsaw when the shop and café opens around springtime.

*Building design by Customkit/Ecospan
Telephone: 09 238 6518*

*Builder: McKergow Builders
Telephone: 021406180.*

Roofing: Colorsteel Endura 'Sandstone Grey'

*Roofing supplier: Franklin Long Roofing,
Telephone: 09) 887 4714.*

Roofing installer: ??????