



BATHING IN BOTANICALS

In idyllic Matakana, a business is soaking up the success of combining livelihood with lifestyle.

Matakana Botanicals is designed to be the epitome of style, purity and class with a distinct local twist. The company formerly known as Les Florales specialises in products under a variety of labels made in New Zealand.

It started in 1986 as a home basement business creating pot pourri out of a bath tub and has evolved into the country's most established premium 'bath and body' company. Its range occupies prime retail real estate in upmarket stores in Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Japan, Australia and the United Arab Emirates. The company also supplies Emirates Airlines First Class, and a number of world class hotels, with their unique 'Sleep' and 'Focus' sniff boxes.

The one annoying blip in a brand story that otherwise oozes goodness and luxury was the concrete head office and distribution centre in industrial South Auckland. With everything else so natural and pure it seemed slightly out of step. Until the move was made to Matakana.

Danvers Devereux is the son of company founder Colyn Devereux-Kay. He has transformed what was an overgrown junk yard full of old wrecks and general rubbish into a showcase for some of New Zealand's finest natural products.

He spent months working out the sort of environment he wanted to develop as his own home and also the 'home' for Matakana Botanicals. The rustic quality of board and batten was a must and for that he says it was natural to choose Customkit. "New Zealand offers the ideal environment to create our products and to source premium natural ingredients from specialised growers. This in turn is reflected in the quality of the products we produce utilising macadamia oil, extra virgin olive oil, wild harvested organic manuka honey and oil and lavender. Much is sourced locally in Matakana plus further afield in Great Barrier Island.

"It was important to me that we had open, airy and natural spaces that did justice to our brand and suppliers. Given

their product is naturally-grown and made out of a renewable resource, Customkit became an important part of the project."

The buildings are 90% energy efficient and the objective was to create as many aspects and functions as possible that were sustainable. Everything had to fit with the natural theme, even the loo, an environmentally-friendly septic tank system created by Biolytix using nature (in the form of worms) to break down waste.

"When you're 'walking to the talk' of protecting the planet it's important to go that extra distance to achieve great results," says Danvers.

Over the past three years Danvers has worked with Matakana builder Gus McKergow and members of the Customkit crew to develop a series of buildings dotted around the 1.82 hectare landscape. It includes the main office, a warehouse, shop and cafe, a distillery and candle manufacturing area, and a combination implement shed and honey house. There is even a special place for the original pot

OPPOSITE PAGE: Pure magic. The main building with cafe and retail areas.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: a lavender boulevard leads to the honey house; the pergola provides the perfect space to relax and unwind; bees and bicycles are right at home; the honey house and implement shed.

BELOW RIGHT: Customkit's Michael Anselmi - pictured here with Atareta - reaches out to help the endangered New Zealand falcon. Find out more at www.wingspan.co.nz

pourri bath tub where the whole story started.

Gus says he particularly likes working with clients who choose the Customkit route.

"They are interesting, hands-on people, who want to have their say in the creation of their environment. That's more interesting for me and my team. It means we're creating places with a great deal of imagination, individuality, style and flair."

Products Paints: Resene exterior Product name CoolColour All Black. Interior: Cafe Resene Titania and Blackboard Office/House Seafog.

Windows & Doors: VANTAGE Titania; Vantage manufacturer: Composite Joinery. **Roof:** Colorsteel Endura Sandstone Grey supplied by Franklin Long Roofing. **Septic System:** Biolytix Wastewater.

Pergola Timber: Matakana Sawmills. **Builder:** McKergow Builders.

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