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RIVER VIEW PLAZA

twenty yearson

OBR notches up a decade



Alison Haycock, owner of One Beach Road (OBR), believes that the location of her boutique in the River View Plaza has been one of the secrets of her success. OBR, which specialises in NZ made fashion, opened 10 years ago. "The outlook on the river and bush is stunning, and because we're off the main street, it encourages people to relax and browse," she says. "Customers, both locals and Aucklanders, have remained loyal to the shop and it's been a privilege to cater to their tastes." OBR stocks Baker Street, Madge, Cowshed and Amelia Rose, which are all manufactured by Jan Turley. "The Amelia Rose line is consistently popular and has moved to be quite a sophisticated range."

Plaza capitalises on river view

River View Plaza landlord Rona Glover lives in hope that one day Warkworth will realise the potential of its river side location.

"When I bought the riverside property in 1990 there was just a furniture shop and a laundry here, with big bushes hiding the river," she says.

"I had no big ideas for it until 1993 when I went to America and Europe and noticed that everywhere I went, every property that was a success was near water – it could be a river, the sea, a canal or even a big fountain.

"When I came back I went to see Grant Neil, a young architect just starting out, he came up with some designs that looked good and we had an informal meeting with a Council official. I came out of that meeting stunned, because all my working



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Rona Glover

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Good things come in threes

Three experienced business people have pooled their talents to open Treo, in the River View Plaza, in Warkworth.

Julian and Shona Huxtable are former owners of Dragonfly, at Matakana, while Barbara Larsen worked in real estate in Warkworth for more than a decade.

“The partnership allows us all some flexibility,” they say. “It’s something to keep us busy and involved in the local community, without completely dominating all our time.”

Treo is stocked full of trendy homewares, glassware, gifts, linen, towels, and outdoor and garden knick knacks.

“Contemporary interior design is probably the best way to describe what we’re selling,” Shona says. “We’ve tried to source locally made products, and we’ve made an effort to find things that are individual and not widely stocked elsewhere.”

Sheets and towels include brands such as Seneca and Baksana, and the Italian Mywallit range includes leather handbags and wallets.

All three owners are confident about Warkworth’s business future.

Julian, who once ran a chain of fuel companies in the UK, says Matakana has been a bit of a wake-up call for Warkworth.

“It’s good to see that there are moves



Julian and Shona Huxtable, and Barbara Larsen (front).

afoot to cooperate and promote the region as a whole, rather than individual centres,” he says.

Barbara says there is a growing professionalism towards business in Warkworth, which she hopes to see continue.

“What I’d really like to see is the town make better use of the river. It’s our greatest asset which is largely ignored.”

River view shopping

from page 42

life in the UK I’d had to fight to get anything through Council and here was this man saying ‘Yes, this looks very nice, I’m sure this will go through all right’.

“David Hook moved in on the site in August and we opened the first shops in December.”

Nearly 20 years on, the Plaza continues to be a boutique shopping destination, where visitors can relax and enjoy the river vista in relative

peace and quiet.

The mix of stores includes homewares, furniture and accessories, sewing supplies and dry cleaner, books, and fashion. There is also the opportunity indulge with hair and health and beauty treatments, or a delicious coffee.

Although Rona now lives in Wellington, she is a regular visitor to Warkworth and is still avidly interested in town affairs.

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