

essence

essentially...south canterbury



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contents

You may notice a change in our paper stock this month – we've switched from our glossy finish of the last few months to a non-gloss, more environmentally responsible paper. You can read a little bit below about the paper we are currently using. But we wanted to explain the change and give you a glimpse behind the scenes.

Like many newspapers and magazines, we've been affected by paper shortages and increasing print costs. You may have seen the news about the printers, Ovato, closing their Christchurch operation a few weeks ago. That impacted us, as did some subsequent huge paper price increases. But we are now back with the original printers we started with in 2003 and here's hoping the paper and print costs stabilize soon.

We know that you can't stay in business without evolving and so we're taking all these changes in our stride.

In short, we put a lot of time and work into Essence and it's a real team effort. The magazine you pick up each month has been given a lot of thought and dedication. And whatever else changes in the print business, you can be sure our professional commitment to the South Canterbury community will stay the same.

We hope you enjoy this issue – we have covered everything from Robyn Baldwins well deserved Queens Service Medal to the Waimate Theatre Company bringing the musical, Mamma Mia to town, Juliana Sargeants interesting career, we get a bit retro with an amazing Flying Saucer!

Our features this month focus on retirement, destination – Mackenzie, and we turn the spotlight on Washdyke.

Enjoy your month, Dorothy

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Perfect Cuppa!



Cover

This month's cover is supplied by Roundhill Ski Area, a family ski field with breathtaking views of Aoraki Mt Cook, the Southern Alps and Lake Tekapo.

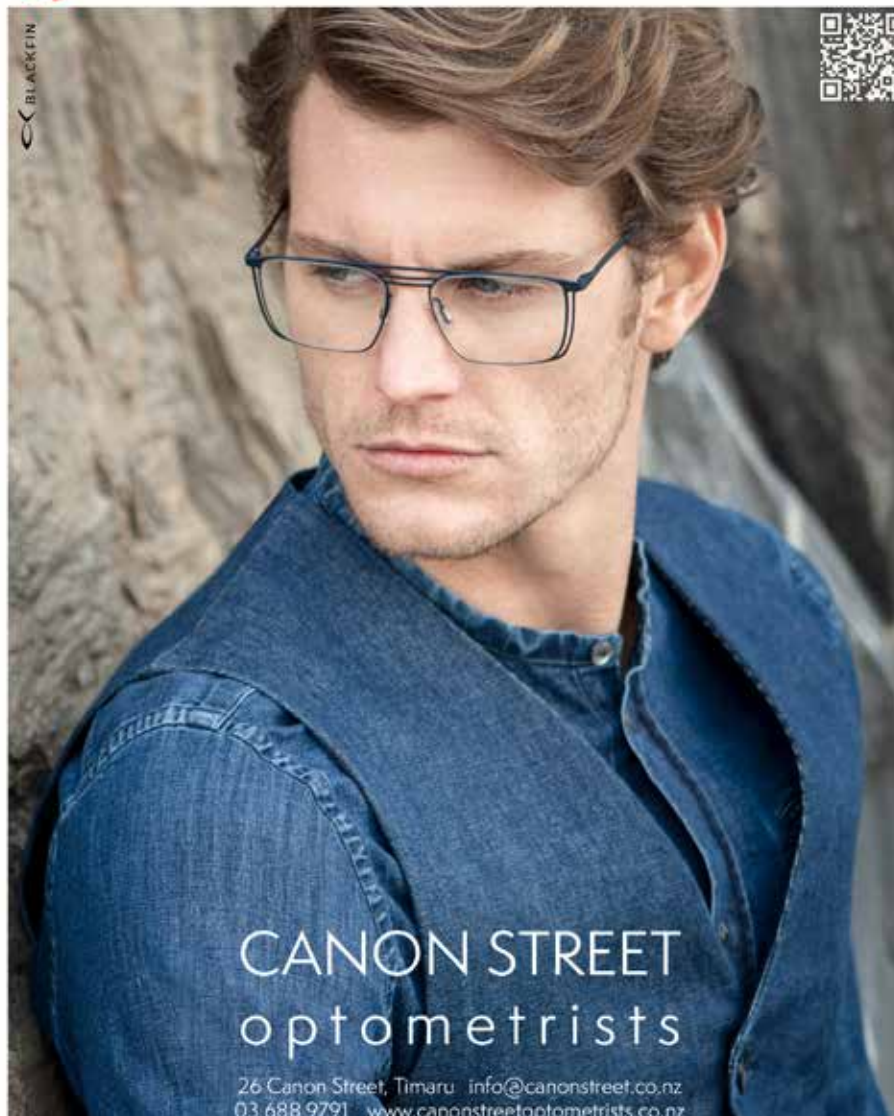


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Don't miss out on Mamma Mia!

The songs of ABBA and the success of the movie and theatre productions of Mamma Mia are well known. And next month the Waimate Theatre Company are bringing this exciting musical to Canterbury.

"It's quite a challenge for a wee town," says artistic director Helen Horsnell, "but everyone is throwing themselves into it."

The production has drawn from many local talents and a little further afield with some of the main leads coming from Dunedin. The skill and energy required to be on stage during this lively musical theatre is no small feat says Horsnell, who has been involved in theatre since she was a child and is also president of Musical Theatre New Zealand.

At the time of writing it's just six weeks till opening night and there's a lot to keep on track. The set, the costumes, the lighting design, the sound. "It's like juggling really, you get one thing going and then another and then you get everything going all at once," explains Horsnell.

The set is designed to transport theatre-goers to a Greek Island as soon as they walk in she says. Designed by Horsnell's son and constructed by local Waimate people, it even includes a boat ramp to really get the atmosphere right.

Whilst Horsnell juggles the many different aspects of directing, the music is overseen by musical director David Shea and the dancing by choreographer Shelley Wilson.

One of the main challenges, says Wilson, has been Covid and having to work around people missing because of illness. But she is enthusiastic and confident about the amazing work being put in by all

involved, despite the fact that only two members of the cast were experienced dancers.

"At the beginning I said I want a lot of energy, this production is all about energy. I haven't gone easy on them," says Wilson. "And they've risen to the challenge."

Rehearsals typically see cast members singing initially, then dancing. And then having to put both together. She is delighted with the effort and progress they have made.

Wilson started dancing as a child and ran her own dance studio in Dunedin. However, this is her first production in some time as her 'day job' as co-owner of a funeral home has always taken top priority.

"It's been quite emotional on a personal level, because for the last nine years my whole life has been about the funeral home," she says. "Now I have this wonderful team there and it means that I can get involved with choreographing Mamma Mia. I had missed the theatre."

Mamma Mia! Opens on the 22nd July at the Regent Theatre in Waimate. Tickets are available from Community Link, 1 Glasgow Street, Waimate.

words: **Pattie Pegler** photos: **Sharyn Cain**



Gordon Ronson (Bill), Dougall McLaughlan (Sam) and Harvey Wood (Harry)



Tim Blackler and Nyah Chittock

Pink Ribbon Breakfast

On Sunday 15th May a pink ribbon breakfast was held in Timaru to raise money for breast cancer with approximately 70 people attending. Local businesses donated prizes for raffles, members of the community donated and due to this we were able to raise \$2519. It was great to see everyone coming together for a good cause.



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- Thursday 28th July 7.30pm
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The Essence OF RETIREMENT

If you've recently stopped working and have some spare time on your hands then get out there and use it!
There are so many interesting and exciting opportunities in our local communities.



Time to sign up for that new hobby

Always wanted to write your memoirs or paint that landscape? Retirement is the perfect time to really get into that hobby and there are plenty of examples of late starters hitting the big time. The author of Pulitzer prize winning novel, *Angela's Ashes*, Frank McCourt started writing at 65.



Stay connected

Humans are social creatures and we all need a little bit of interaction with others during the day. So catch up with friends for coffee, pick up the grandchildren from school or join a club and make some new mates.

The typical retirement age in New Zealand is 65, yet nearly a quarter of people choose to continue working whether that's a part-time role or running their own business. Still others volunteer or take up new hobbies and some choose to spend more time with family and friends. There really is no one face of 'retirement'. It's absurd to suggest everyone over 65 has a particular interest or lifestyle. As people age they are as diverse as they are in their younger years and the people we spoke to and those we met whilst putting this feature together are proof of that.



Volunteer

So many local initiatives and organisations need help so why not give a little time and help out? From local op shops to meals on wheels, animal charities and community gardens – there are plenty of places where you can make a real difference.



Gardening for Seniors

"We don't stop playing because we grow old. We grow old because we stop playing."

- George Bernard Shaw

And indeed, what better place to "play", than in the garden! Good for the body, mind and soul - gardening is beneficial at all ages, but can be an especially positive hobby for retirees and senior citizens. It keeps the body active and the mind healthy, with many research studies confirming the physical and psychological advantages for the elderly of being in nature, and specifically of tending gardens.

The wonderful thing about gardening for seniors is that it is a completely adaptable hobby and can be modified to suit a large range of abilities! Be a smart senior citizen gardener - stay sun safe, hydrate often, and rest when needed.



Keep fit

Staying physically active is key to quality of life so get moving. You just need to find something that you enjoy – from walking to playing bowls; swimming to tennis – you'll find plenty of options locally.



Get a good night's sleep

To make the most of your days, you need to get a good night's sleep. So develop a healthy night routine to make sure you get those necessary hours of shut eye.

Upon doing some investigating here in the essence office around local community groups, clubs and activities we stumbled across so many options. A visit to the local Citizens Advice Bureau would be a great start if you are seeking information on how to volunteer, stay socially connected and exactly what group or club may be right for you – the ladies were so helpful, we came away with lots of brochures and booklets to peruse!

words: Gilly Oppenheim, photos supplied



Robyn Baldwin ADVOCATE FOR THE ELDERLY

Robyn's 26 years as the secretary /manager of the Timaru Senior Citizens was recognised recently with a well-deserved Queens Service Medal for her service to seniors. Robyn was 'blown away' by the award and said she accepted the award on behalf of the community and the people she had helped.

When she started working at the organisation in 1995, Robyn said there was negative stigma attached to ageing, so she set out to change this image. She did this by getting involved with many agencies and groups promoting the value of senior citizens. These included South Canterbury Neighbourhood Watch and Victim Support South Canterbury, Multiple Sclerosis, the Total Mobility Scheme and she also set up and chaired the Aoraki Positive Aged Forum and Active Retirement Expos in Timaru.

Many of our elderly live alone, often with no family members for support, so Robyn would arrange for friends to do the odd jobs they needed help with. She established the organisation as the first port of call for older people, who often didn't know where to access a particular service. She organised support services such as gardening, driving and nail trimming, as well as the provision of safety features such as life-tubes for households to store medical information for use by emergency services personnel and the installing of fire alarms. She also established the Timaru Cosy Homes project which donates heaters to households in need.

A highlight were the annual bus trip holidays she organised for 13 years. A group of about 38 seniors travelled all around the South Island for a week from Farewell Spit to Bluff. They went

off the beaten track, such as onto a marae at Kaikoura, to the Albatross colony on the Otago Peninsula, and on the River Queen paddle steamer in Blenheim. Robyn loved these trips.

Robyn is still on the Senior Citizens Board and she is the treasurer of Neighbourhood and Victim Support and she is also chair of both Multiple Sclerosis South Canterbury and the Total Mobility scheme. She has been a member of the Rotary Club of Timaru since 1999 and in 2020 she was awarded a Paul Harris Fellowship

She recently received her QSM award in person from Dame Cindy Kiro at Government House in Wellington. The only sadness was that she lost her husband Les just prior to the presentation. However, one of her sons and his wife and her only grandson James attended the ceremony, along with two special friends from Auckland. James, aged 9, was very proud of his nana and was presented with a special badge by Dame Cindy Kiro. Robyn said the investiture had "the most amazing atmosphere" with all the pomp and ceremony - the welcome powhiri, reading of the citation, the presentation, the official photos and the high tea to follow, complete with bubbles flowing.

Robyn was humbled to receive the award and she is very grateful to the community who nominated her for something she found so worthwhile.



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From bowls and petanque to darts, pool, and rock n' roll dancing, the club has a range of sporting groups for beginners right through to seasoned professionals, general manager Vince Gardner said.

"We have a lot of activities on offer ranging from the golf course, which is right beside us, to Four-Wheel Drive groups, and indoor and outdoor bowls. You can even go motorcycling if you want to. You don't have to be a New Zealand representative bowler to play, you might just enjoy a social roll-up with other like-minded people."

And if sports are not your thing, the TTCC also offers other social activities such as card groups, wine appreciation groups and friendship groups. The club is also home to the Retired Services Association, Zonta, and the Timaru Rotary and Lions Clubs.

The club boasts a bar, family restaurant, cafe, and a function area for special occasions. With a diverse membership base of around 4000, the Douglas Street club

is a great space for people to make new friends, Vince said.

"There are all sorts of opportunities for people to meet other people through the sporting and special interest groups. Some people just come for a coffee and slice, and meet other people while they are here."

The TTCC also offers a courtesy van which operates by donation from Thursday to Sunday.

"The courtesy van is not just for people who intend on consuming alcohol. We get a lot of people that perhaps have a mobility scooter and don't want to take it out after a certain time, so they will ring the club and we will pick them up."

For more information, pop in and speak to one of their friendly staff members today.

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- Brake, clutch and transmission fluid levels
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Plunket's Volunteer Home Visiting Service (GPS)

Parenting in today's world can be a challenge. Families may be apart from loved ones or find it difficult to access community support. Parents might be coping with changing family dynamics, parenting alone or juggling career and family commitments. This is where the Plunket Volunteer Home visiting Service or GPS (Giving People Support) can help.

This free in-home help is available to families with children under the age of five. Clients can self-refer, or any agency or Plunket staff member can refer you to this service. Volunteer home visitors are people who want to support other families in their community. They have experience raising children and managing a household and have practical skills and knowledge about a range of day-to-day activities. Together parents and volunteers set everyday parenting goals special to each family. These might include improving skills such as growing vegetables, meal planning and budgeting or linking families to community activities and support. The home visitors work alongside parents over a period of time to reach their goals.

GPS is only available in South Canterbury and Dunedin in New Zealand. Jane Denley is the overall boss and Juliana Sargeant is the local co-ordinator. Her area extends from the Rangitata to the Waitaki rivers and up to Twizel. Her role is to source and train volunteers, who she will shadow for their first few visits. The service is usually for at least three months depending on the family's circumstances. The service is not just for beneficiaries— some families suffer from mental health issues or a total overload which results in burnout. Sometimes both parents are working full-time and they still have to come home to cook and clean and provide childcare, and in some instances their entire salaries are spent on rent or food or petrol.

Covid has exacerbated family problems. Families weren't able to make contact and important family events such as Children's Day and Halloween were cancelled. However, GPS was seen as an essential service and so the help from GPS was given government dispensation to continue working with families in need. A problem is that many of the volunteers were retirees who couldn't work. Contact was maintained through phone and Zoom calls and groceries were delivered to those isolating with parcel drop-offs for necessities.

All young mums need to feel supported. Juliana learnt this first-hand when she was diagnosed with colorectal cancer around her 40th birthday and her three children were four, two and just five months old. The Cancer society was very helpful, but it was GPS who stepped in to really help her husband care for the children for twelve months whilst Juliana was in Christchurch undergoing intensive chemotherapy and radiotherapy. So when the job as the local GPS co-ordinator was advertised in July 2021, Juliana said, "I just had to have that job". She is trying to grow GPS by promoting its services at every opportunity. She can be contacted by email : Juliana.sargeant@plunket.org.nz or her mobile is: 027 4839609. Alternatively, you can just walk in to the Timaru Plunket Hub at 14 Woollcombe Street.

5 health consequences that stem from unrelenting pressure and urgency

For too many women, it doesn't seem to matter if they have two things to do or 200, they are in a pressing rush to do it all. Yet for most, it rarely feels as if they are in control, or on top of any of it. Many feel overwhelmed, stressed and rushed to the point where it is affecting their physical and emotional health. But what this rush is communicating to our body – in the driving of relentless stress hormone production – is changing the face of women's health as we know it. Here are five health consequences that stem from being in a pressing rush to get through a never-ending to-do list.



Dr Libby Weaver (PhD) is a nutritional biochemist, speaker and best-selling author of 13 books.

1. Hormonal havoc

Whether during the menstruation years or in the lead up to menopause and beyond, the rush impacts on our body's sex hormone balance – you may experience heavy, clotty periods, sore breasts, mood swings, period pain, PMS, cravings, bloating, fluid retention and brain fog, hot flushes, irritability, night sweats, sleeplessness and/or vaginal dryness. These symptoms are a sign of hormonal imbalance in the body, contributed to by ongoing stress hormone production.

2. Irritable bowel syndrome

Food isn't supposed to bloat us, and yet for around one in five women in New Zealand and Australia, it's common to regularly experience cramping, alternating diarrhoea and constipation, bloating, and nausea. Stress hormones resulting from stress, anxiety or constant worrying are often key players driving this.

3. Unexplained weight gain

Many women share with me the frustration of gaining weight no matter

what they eat or how they move. Or maybe, despite significant efforts to shift body fat, nothing seems to budge. Cortisol, our chronic stress hormone, breaks muscle down and as a result, can slow our metabolic rate.

4. Fatigue

We've grown accustomed to feeling listless and lethargic and using caffeine and sugar to prop us up to get through the day. If you are feeling wired yet tired or have a bone deep fatigue, this is most likely your body protesting to the pace you're asking it to live at without sufficient downtime and nourishment.

5. Poor sleep

Whether a busy mind prevents you from falling asleep, or you wake up through the night repeatedly, sleep challenges are a sure sign that your body is too wired to let you rest. Your body simply won't let you get true restorative rest if it believes you're in danger (which stress hormones signal).

Small steps can result in large pay-offs when it comes to your sense of calm, wellbeing and your happiness. Take a step in the direction of the change you want to foster in your life – sometimes other bigger shifts will stem from that.

Dr Libby's brand new online course **Overcoming Rushing Woman's Syndrome**, launches on 1st June 2022. The 30 day course is designed to teach you how to truly reduce your stress—and the negative health consequences it can elicit—while living a full and thriving life.

www.drlibby.com/courses

Do you have Rushing Woman's Syndrome?

How a never-ending to-do list could be harming your health.



Are you constantly one step ahead or behind yourself at any given moment, always feeling a bit frantic, with thoughts that race and jump between tasks? We asked Dr Libby why women rush and about the ways this can have a profound impact on our health.

What is 'Rushing Woman's Syndrome'?

Rushing Woman's Syndrome describes the biochemical effects of always being in a hurry and the health consequences that urgency elicits. This isn't a real medical diagnosis, of course, it is a term I phrased over ten years ago as I was first witnessing a momentous change in the pace of everyday living and the resulting effects on women's health. Back then it was an emerging trend, whereas today it's accepted – expected almost. In today's world, it doesn't seem to matter if a woman has two things to do in her day or two hundred, she is in a pressing rush to do it all, in a daily battle to keep up.

Why do so many of us tend to 'rush'?

While most of us will tend to blame our busy schedule, rushing is most often driven by a perception that we will be judged if we don't get enough done. And so, we rush because we believe that any time not spent accomplishing a task is time wasted, and we do this because we perceive that our worth is tied up with our achievements. We also do it because we care, yet we also care what others will think of us. This usually isn't conscious, however, peeling back the layers to examine what's driving rushing behaviour, usually reveals some variation of worrying about what others think and avoiding what we perceive will be their disapproval.

What are some of the common health consequences stemming from the 'rush'?

Rushing, and the pressure and perceived need for constant urgency that accompanies it, is driving a relentless production of stress hormones in our body, which can have many health consequences long-term. These can include hormonal imbalances resulting in mood swings, period pain, PMS, cravings, bloating, fluid retention and brain fog through the menstruation years, and hot flushes, irritability, night sweats, and sleeplessness in the menopausal transition. They may also include irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), unexplained weight gain, fatigue, declining thyroid function, poor sleep, and the list goes on! Thankfully, there is much we can do to address this.

Why is it so important that we retire the rush?

The pace at which we are living is only problematic if it is not working for us. We need to ask ourselves, are we really happy to give up our health for our lifestyle? If the pace of your life stresses you out, then I encourage you to consider what might be driving your rush and take steps to slow down. This might initially seem unachievable, yet it is possible to have a full and thriving life without compromising your health.



Scan this with your phones camera:



Join Dr Libby for her new course **Overcoming Rushing Woman's Syndrome** and learn how to reduce your experience of stress and get to the heart of why you rush.

Across 30 days she will teach you the impact that this constant state of rush has on your body and show you practical tools and techniques to overcome this.

You can find out more about Dr Libby's Overcoming Rushing Woman's Syndrome course here: links.drlibby.com/essenceorws

Ask the expert



NYSSA WILLCOCKS Associate, Gresson Dorman & Co, Timaru

I have been working as a Solicitor for Gresson Dorman & Co since 2011.

Based in Timaru, I specialise in Family Court work – I act as Lawyer for Child, and in matters involving family violence, childcare, and relationship property.

A large part of my work involves advising clients on relationship property, often alongside other issues. There are some common misconceptions about relationship property and entitlements in accordance with the law, in particular the Property (Relationships) Act.

What are some of the common misunderstandings?

Often, people come into relationships where one party owns the family home. A common misunderstanding is that the non-owning party does not have a claim against this asset. The Act provides despite who is the registered owner of the home, or whether it was someone's property prior to a relationship commencing, these are not relevant factors if there is a qualifying relationship of three years duration.

Another misunderstanding is when one party holds a significant superannuation scheme balance, what the other party's entitlements are. In the case of a qualifying relationship, the value of entitlements accrued during the relationship are a joint asset under the Act.

Another common myth is regarding student loans. Many people have these loan balances, although rarely are they captured as relationship property if the funds were used for the purpose for which the loan was obtained.

The Act also recognises a party may have separate property if it was acquired before the relationship, but if the other party has maintained this asset either by applying their own property or through the application of relationship property, then any increase in value of the separate property may be jointly shared under the Act.

What about family trusts?

Depending on when the trust was established [or 'settled'], and the details of how it was intended to operate, these may not protect assets from division in the event of a relationship ending. Trusts are complicated, so it pays to obtain legal advice as to the implications of setting one up or, upon separation, what it means for division of relationship property.

If you would like more information on these matters or require personalised legal advice, please contact me on 03 687 8004, or nyssa@gressons.co.nz



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For any further queries contact: **Juliana Sargeant (GPS Coordinator)**
Email: Juliana.sargeant@plunket.org.nz | Phone: 027 483 9609





A SPOTLIGHT ON Mackenzie



Overnight Stays

With so much to see and do in the Mackenzie District it's worth booking an overnighter. We love the character and country charm of the Silverstream Hotel Kimbell, a historic country pub with rooms. Or head to the Musterers' Huts near Fairlie where newly-built, self-contained units offer the perfect place to relax after a day in the outdoors. Units even have private hot tubs where you can sit back and be amazed by the night skies. Or if you want to explore the beauty of the Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park, splash out and book into the iconic Hermitage Hotel with its amazing alpine views and facilities.

Reading in Tekapo

Petronella's Gallery and Bookstore is just one more reason to love this beautiful, little lakeside town. An unexpected delight, it's packed with the latest titles and some fabulous reads for young and old as well as a quirky selection of gift items, it will have book lovers browsing for hours as they choose their next read.



Nature

Stunning countryside and spectacular natural views are some of Mackenzie's big attractions. But try to check out the amazing Haupapa/Tasman Glacier in the Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park. It's apparently one of New Zealand's longest glaciers and is around 300 to 500 years old. Check out the DOC website for short walks that take you to a viewing point or if your dollars are flowing freely - there are boat tours and even helicopter trips that will land you on the glacier.

Star-gazing

In 2012 a 4300 square kilometre area was declared the Aoraki Mackenzie International Dark Sky Reserve. With light pollution strictly controlled in the area it's one of the best places in the world to see the night sky in all its glory. You can simply walk outside your accommodation and look up at the skies but if you head to the Dark Sky Project Base on the lakefront at Tekapo you can also find out about official tours to the nearby Mount John Observatory and other ways to learn about the night sky.



Mt Dobson

On the Fairlie-Tekapo Highway, Mt Dobson Ski Area or "Dobo" as the locals prefer caters for all levels of snowsport. From Learners to the more adventurous who can try trails like "Tekapo Steeps" and "Stack it".

The 15km gravel alpine road is well maintained and suitable for all vehicles, just make sure you carry snow chains and know how to fit them.

On the mountain Rental shop has quality gear to get you kitted out. Try the "EASYPACK" if you are a first timer, it includes all you need for a great day out.

With 4 lifts, large terrain, 300 carparks there is plenty of space to enjoy a day at Mt Dobson.



Fairlie

Often described as one of the gateways to the Mackenzie but there's a lot worth stopping for in this wee town. Grab a hearty pie or barista coffee at Fairlie Bakehouse. Check out the local stores or discover a little history at the Fairlie Heritage Museum. And don't miss the Garage Gallery as you head out in the direction of Tekapo, there are some beautiful works depicting iconic NZ landscapes.

FROM THE Mayors Desk

Today as we look out at the majestic Mackenzie, it transforms into a winter wonderland. With this comes the change in landscapes as we gear up for an early start to our snow season.

We are also very proud of, and unapologetically boast about the global recognition of our Aoraki International Dark Sky Reserve, one of the largest in the world and which holds the accomplished Gold Star Status.

This reserve of 4300 Ha in the heart of South Island was declared in 2012, a decade ago now. I am very proud of our dark sky and admire the Boards work and efforts, with Council maintaining focus on protecting any light spill in its work also. Our unique skies are now so clear, millions of awe-inspiring stars appear like nothing else in NZ, or in many places around the world for that matter.

With the support of Christchurch New Zealand Tourism, we were able to secure some funding over a three year period to develop an event that recognizes, appreciates and celebrates Matariki in Takapō. The appearance of the Matariki group of stars is significant, as in mid-winter it marks the end of the previous year and the beginning of the new year in Maori culture.

With the support and in consultation with our 3 Rūnanga, they have put a program together over the weekend of the 24th - 26th of June to understand and connect with Matariki and will be further developing this in the coming years, so we would be grateful for you to come along and show your support, whilst also enjoying a wonderful winter festival.

Thanks to our incredible environment, the Mackenzie truly brings out the beauty of every season and the ability to enjoy nature at its best, so I encourage you all to visit throughout the year and participate in the amazing experiences our region and communities have to offer.

Wishing you good health and a safe winter.

Graham Smith
Mackenzie District Council



MT DOBSON

Mt Dobson Snowsport School has lessons to suit all levels. For children, the NZSIA Fundamentals programme or NEXT LEVEL for the more experienced.

The café serves a range of food and drink, the perfect spot to kickstart your day with a barista-made Halo coffee, grab a famous Fairlie Bakehouse pie for lunch or get a snack for the drive down.

Don't forget to stop at the Silverstream Hotel for some great hospitality to finish off your day.

Visit www.mtdobson.co.nz or follow us on Facebook for information



SILVERSTREAM HOTEL KIMBELL

Located right at the base of Mt Dobson, this historic country pub is the stop after a great day up on the mountain.

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Photo credit: Neat Places



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Ohoka's Fixing Saucer

words: Pattie Pegler Images: Essence and Supplied

When the cabin you want is hidden away on the West Coast with no road access – well, that sounds like one for the ‘too hard’ basket. Not so for entrepreneur Nick McQuoid – who came up with a plan and had a Futuro home helicoptered out in pieces before transporting it to Ohoka.

That was back in 2018. Then it was just a basic flying saucer shaped shell with no windows and no internal floors.

Futuro homes originate from Finland, where architect Matti Suuronen designed the first one in 1968. A family friend had asked him to design a ski-cabin and he came up with this flying saucer - small, cosy and domed so that heavy snow wouldn't accumulate on it. Only 100 Futuro homes were made and only about 60 have survived and they seem to pop up in strange and unexpected parts of the world. They have developed a real following due to their collectability and their unique style aesthetic.

“I have always wanted to restore one,” explains Nick. “I honestly have a genuine passion for these things, I love the colours, the design, the style.”

Today that shell has been restored to its full 1970s glory - walls are painted in a vibrant purple Resene Daisy Bush, carpets are red, curtains are purple, cushions are vibrant oranges and yellows.

And there's some sleek design going on – the seating area runs around the circular wall, a distinctive moulded plastic yellow Zocker chair is one of the genuine 1970s pieces, the double bed tucked in the corner slides away to reveal more room space. It is an utterly unique space – with a 1970s futurist vibe that puts you in mind of old sci-fi movies or that vintage cartoon The Jetsons. It's really fun.

But restoring it was a big job. “I didn't understand the magnitude of it,” says Nick. Luckily a team of friends, families and tradies Culmer Construction and RJP Electrical supported him through it. A friend, Jason Berger, helped with the joinery, particularly the tricky curved wall inside the Futuro which is made of layers of MDF. Nick's mother turned her hand to sewing and made the curtains and



Image Supplied



Image: BNZ Heritage

Nick has brought four Futuro houses in his time (and since sold two on), including the BNZ ‘Futuro Branch’ located at the 1974 Commonwealth games – which he has exciting future plans for.

cushion covers. His uncle helped with landscaping. And Nick himself put in work wherever it was needed.

It might have been hard work but it was also not cheap and in order to finance the restoration Nick turned his hand to all kinds of jobs to earn extra funds. He charged Lime Scooters, drove for Uber, cleaned jail cells and offices and ran an Airbnb from his own apartment in Christchurch.

“I am quite driven. I always saw my mum and dad working really hard,” he says.

Nick grew up in Ohoka and the family home, unfortunately destroyed in an electrical fault fire, stood where the flying saucer now is.

It was a terrible time he says but now it feels like “a rebirth here, making something good out of something bad.”

Today the flying saucer looks right at home on this rural section. A patio area with concrete pavers leads up to the steps and there's a spa, a sauna and a swimming pool in the outdoor area. Colourful chairs and tables make it perfect for an evening glass of wine al fresco and the outdoor lighting display is truly atmospheric with its changing colour.

This is the perfect spot for a getaway so it's not surprising that the Futuro home is now a successful Airbnb space. The guest book is bursting with enthusiastic comments and kids and grown-ups alike are enchanted with this dazzling space.

Nick spends a lot of time promoting it on social media and working on the space.

“If I get a booking at 3 in the afternoon, I get in my car and drive out to the property,” he says.

And future plans include a games room and some extra accommodation in a vintage caravan.

You can check out Nick and his Area 51 Futuro house resort on Facebook. And you can book in for a night in this quirky accommodation on Airbnb.



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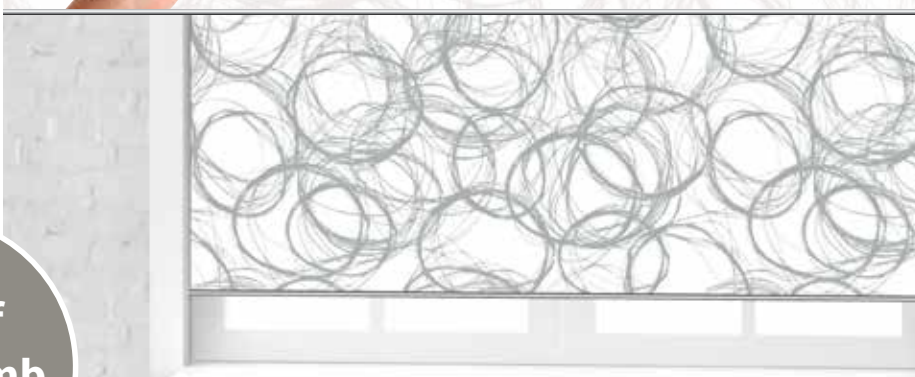
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- 10 mins preparation
- 20 mins cooking
- Serves 6

INGREDIENTS

- Mulled wine
- 3/4 cup (185ml) brandy
- 3/4 cup (185ml) water
- 1 orange, zest cut into strips
- 1 lemon, zest cut into strips
- 1/4 cup (55g) brown sugar
- 3 cinnamon quills
- 8 cloves
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 2 bottles (1.5 litres) merlot



METHOD

1. In a large saucepan over medium heat, place the brandy, water, orange and lemon zests, sugar, cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg and bring to a simmer. Allow to simmer for 10 minutes so all the flavours can infuse.
2. Add the red wine, bring back to a simmer then remove from the heat. Allow to cool slightly and serve warm or at room temperature.

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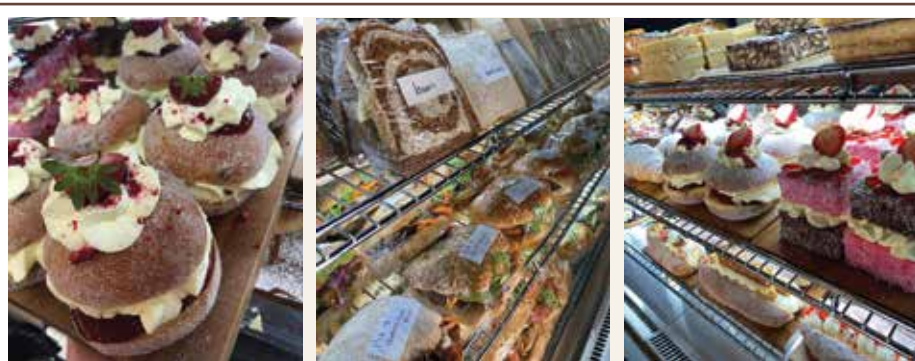
Next, designs are drawn up and viewed at a subsequent consultation, with further refinement of designs as necessary. At this point, an assortment of stones may be ordered to compare and contrast, and a selection made after viewing.

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Getting Your Power From The Sun

words: Pattie Pegler images: supplied

Look around and the chances are that someone nearby has solar panels. It's no surprise, the technology has come on in leaps and bounds and is more affordable and efficient.

Solar panels generate power that can be used directly at home with excess sold back to your electricity retailer. Realistically, says Proctor, you want to be able to use the power as it's generated – because the buy-back rates paid by electricity providers are quite low. This means that solar panels are currently most cost effective for those that are at home during the day.

But it also makes sense for commercial premises. At the Essence magazine office in Rangiora there are eight solar panels on the roof and it means that much of the energy used during the day is drawn from them.

“It's good for the planet, easy to do and cost competitive,”

says Andrew Thompson who made the decision to get the panels installed. He estimates that the panels will pay for themselves within 8 to 10 years and says he is already seeing savings on power and is able to easily keep track of consumption via an easy-to-use app on his phone.

Caravan renovator and auto-electrical specialist, Brian McLintock, went a step further and decided to make his



home in Ohoka off-grid. He had spent some time living in a high quality caravan with his wife and recreating this self-sufficiency in a home seemed like a no-brainer.

“If we could do it in the caravan why couldn't we do it in a house?” says Brian.

No reason at all, it seems. At Brian's house they have 5.4 kilowatts of solar panels and those feed into battery storage. Whilst batteries are expensive, they provide the storage needed so that, if you are off-grid, you can use that solar generated power 24/7. If there is a day or two without sun then the battery will come into play and they do have a backup generator which charges up the battery too. It's a system which he came up with himself drawing on his professional knowledge and experience and having thought carefully about their power usage and lifestyle.

“We have two fridge freezers, a dishwasher and a washing machine and heat pump - we use all those things and we're off grid and it all works fine. Living off grid is not the difficult exercise it once was,” says Brian.

And there are clear benefits. No power bills every month and no unexpected price increases as well as environmental benefits. Plus you're self-sufficient – so if the gales are howling and there's a power outage, your system is not necessarily effected.

But if going off-grid feels like a big step then staying tied to the grid but getting solar panels is a great starting point. The first thing to consider says solar installer, Proctor, is how much power you use and when you use it as this will help you decide on the type of system you need. A good installer can advise you on how many panels, where to place them and other points to consider such as how the panels can charge your hot water supply and save you money.

“I'd advise others to look around at options and understand what they're getting into,” says Andrew Thompson at the Essence office. “I liked the idea of renewable energy but I also did the numbers and it really made good sense.”

Think Trees This Winter

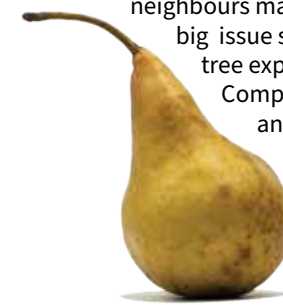
It might feel like winter is the time to stay cosy indoors and leave outside to its own devices but if you're thinking about adding some fruit trees to the garden, it's a great time to do it.

Fruit trees become dormant over winter, that is they drop their leaves and stop growing. Think of it like hibernation, everything slows down. So, it's a less traumatic time for them to be moved and gives them a chance to establish in their new spot before spring bursts on the scene.

Trees, Trees Everywhere...Which One To Choose?

Think about what fruit you like to eat first and foremost. If you love pears and don't like peaches, that's right up there on the tree shopping checklist.

Then, keep in mind that you may need two trees so that they act as pollinators. So, for example, many apple trees need another apple tree of a different variety nearby – they are not self-fertile. In towns and cities where your neighbours may well have fruit trees, this isn't a



big issue says Narrelle Chand, resident fruit tree expert at Christchurch's Little Big Tree Company. But it's important in rural areas and on larger blocks because it might be a long way to the next pear tree. So, if in doubt, ask the question when you're buying the tree. If you're shopping for a small space then dwarf trees are a good option. They typically grow no more than 2.5ms and fruit well – so you cut down on size not on fruit.

Get It In The Ground

The site you choose for your tree should be on fertile, free draining soil. Then it's a case of get your spade out and start digging. “Always dig a hole twice as big as the root ball, then add compost and slow release fertiliser,” says Narrelle. The soil should be free-draining, so if it has a lot of clay in it then add some gypsum to break it up. Trees also need to be staked and this typically requires a stake on each side and some flexible webbing to support it. Once they are well established you can remove these.

Pruning

Most trees will need pruning when you first plant them and on an ongoing basis annually. It can be a daunting task for a newbie –but pruning will help shape the tree, encourage a good yield and new branches to grow.

There are plenty of instructions online about fruit tree pruning so look for some specific to your type of tree. More complex pruning is involved if you want to go for something fancy like ‘espaliering’ – this means training your tree along a wall or sometimes along wires between posts. It looks great and is a good space-saving technique but it requires a certain amount of confidence and research before you start snipping.

If you don't feel confident pruning then ask garden centre staff for advice when you buy a fruit tree. Often, says Narrelle, they will be able to prune the tree for you so you can simply take it home and plant it.






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