



# Outa the Kitchen

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**J**UST THREE YEARS after being born in a suburban kitchen, No. 3 are making more than a name for themselves with a range of all-natural, plant-based products, including their trademarked Underbalm® deodorant. Now produced in a small but perfectly formed production facility in Pye's Pa in Tauranga, *Plenty* caught up with the husband and wife team to hear about how it all began, what's in the name, and why they're strictly against animal testing but have been known to draft in friends and family as guinea pigs.

Wayne and Cheryl - the proud parents in situ with child No. 3



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As light bulb moments go, the one that led to the creation of No. 3 is fairly inauspicious. Cheryl MacGregor is adamant the idea to produce their highly successful Underbalm® deodorant came during a family road trip; husband Wayne Lewis clearly doesn't remember. But whatever the providence of the concept it has proven to be a successful one. The innovative deodorant has turned into a best seller and validated the pair's belief that – like them – people wanted a simpler and safer line of skin care products that contained no animal products but still did the job.

The couple had always wanted to be in business together and had been considering buying in to a franchise of some sort. “We realized we wanted the business to be our story though,” Cheryl says. “When you create and design something yourself, it is your story and no one else's, which means you have a real connection to it, and when you have to put in all the long unpaid hours getting it going, it makes it easier when the journey is yours to tell.”

The couple initially started producing scented candles before settling on the idea for skin care products that, well, had less nastiness in them. “I'm positive it was while we were out driving with the kids,” Cheryl says, returning to the lightbulb moment, “that it just occurred to us that it seemed really hard to buy things like liquid soap that wasn't a chemical cocktail. There are just so many things added to liquid soap for viscosity and texture and the like, and deodorants aren't far behind, so we wanted to see if it was possible to make something that was still affordable and convenient but didn't involve all those chemicals. We wanted products that were functional – that just worked.”

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And so - after extensive research we should add - it was into the kitchen. In the best Kiwi tradition, prototypes emerged from the stove top as Cheryl used her cosmetic chemistry training, creativity and intuition and experimented for several months -so each evening Wayne could expect to be met at the door with a new range of liquids, creams and original No. 3 fragrances to deliberate on. "It's part science, part art, and really part intuition," Cheryl says. "You can follow all the rules but at the end of the day you also have to go with what feels right and trust your own judgement, especially when it comes to fragrances."

In addition to avoiding animal products, the couple also wanted to avoid any form of animal testing, so they rolled up their sleeves and, well, tested

it on themselves. "When you are using natural ingredients there is much less to be afraid of when testing," Wayne says, "and we always knew we were going to avoid animal products - we just didn't see the need - so when we thought we had a winning product we'd put it through its paces on ourselves! And then friends and family. I think we even tested our pet shampoo on ourselves first - if it's good enough for us, it should be good enough for Fido."

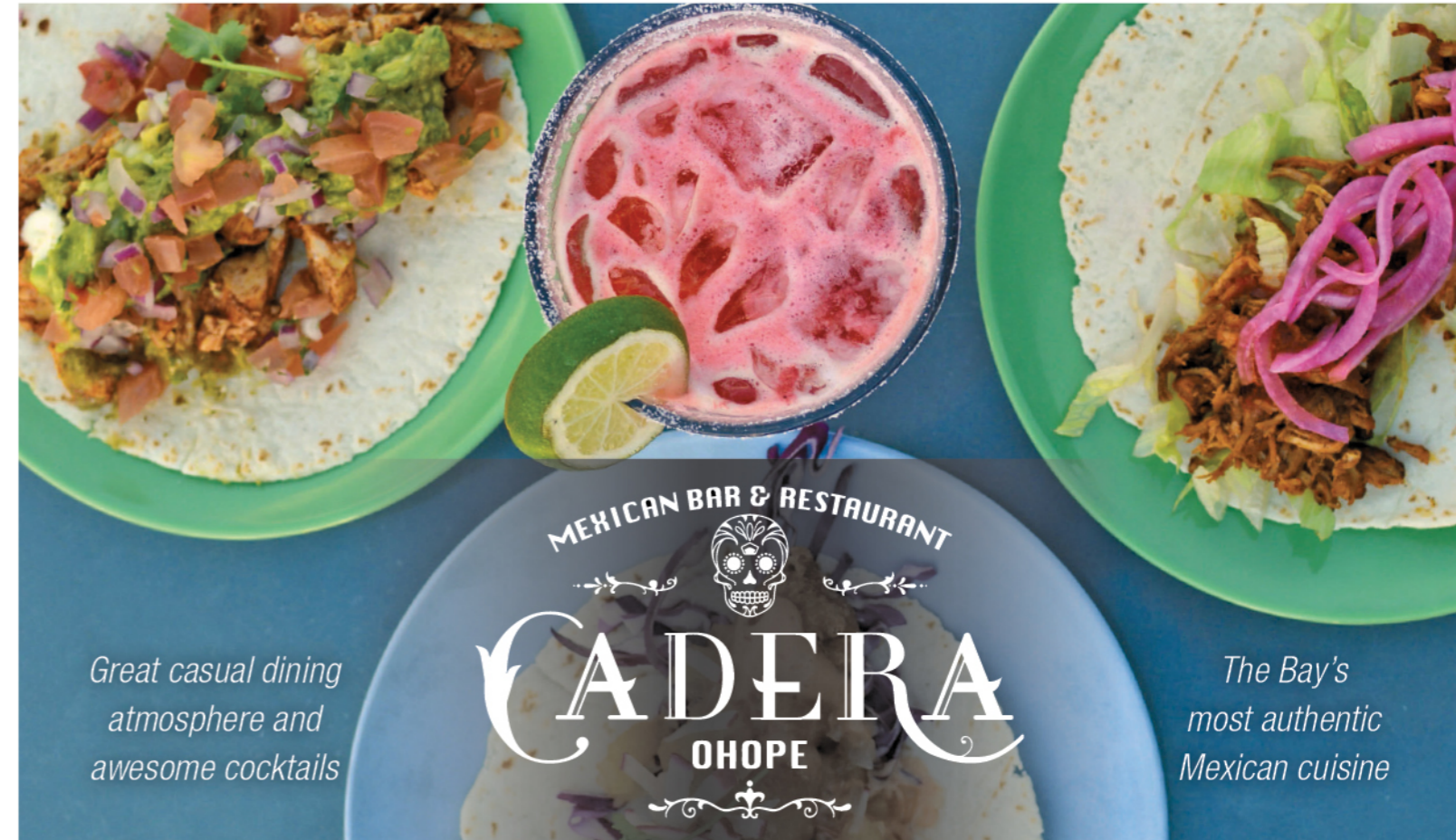
From this process a small range of standouts emerged and it was time to get out of the kitchen and into the market. "We have two boys," Cheryl says, "I wanted a third but Wayne wasn't so keen on that, so the business became baby number three. So settling on No. 3 as the name for our business was an easy decision - which has turned

out to be pretty accurate because it has been very similar to having another child!"

Part of the early years of No. 3's childhood were spent in refining the business model. With a strong social media presence and an online store in place, Cheryl and Wayne set about taking their message to the masses and employed the best spokespeople they could find: themselves. "We go to The Little Big Markets every month, and General Collective in Auckland," Cheryl says, "and it's basically a double act. I do the soaps and skin care, and Wayne does the deodorant - and he does it really well. People just seem to warm to a guy who tells it like it is about deodorant additives! But these markets also allow us to communicate directly with our customers and find out exactly what they

are looking for and that is really valuable. So, the Little Big Markets have been instrumental in growing No. 3 and providing a springboard for us. We also have a few amazing mentors who have invested so much of themselves into No. 3, helping to shape it into what it is," Cheryl says. "Business cannot grow without strong connections and relationships with fabulous people."

Like with any business, the transition from passionate sideline to replacement for the day job can be fraught with peril, and No. 3 are determined to manage their growth sensibly. "The main thing is we want to continue enjoying it," Cheryl says. "Designing and creating products is just so enjoyable, but we don't want our third child to turn into a rat bag!"



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