

Salad days are here for Amanda

By CHRISTINE McNEIL

When Mullumbimby woman Amanda Bannatyne was looking for a name for her about-to-be-marketed salad dressing, she realised she couldn't go past "Mullumbimby Magic".

"I thought, I'm a Mullumbimby girl, born and bred," she said, "so I think I can appropriate it."

She wanted something that would point to the magic that happens when ordinary ingredients are transformed into something special.

And Amanda had been transforming ordinary ingredients into a scrumptious salad dressing for years, to the delight of family and friends.

So much so that she was often urged to produce commercial quantities.

But it wasn't until her oldest child started school this year that Amanda began to look at what she would like to do beyond the home. It was then she began to seriously consider her friends' urgings.

Her background in hospitality and a business degree helped, but it was looking round and seeing the gap in the market that was the deciding factor.

"There really wasn't anything in that line made in Australia that was all natural, with no thickeners or preservatives," she said.

"I thought that if I like eating like that, there must be others too."

Amanda uses only natural ingredients, including herbs from her own garden and local lemons and honey.

She would have liked to use only organic ingredients, but decided to choose local over organic produce, which often has to be shipped in, because it would mean "fewer food miles".

So far Amanda does everything herself, from preparation to bottling, from sticking on labels to delivery — although her five-year-old proved an invaluable lemon squeezer during the season.

But she's sticking to just one variety, a classic flavour that goes well with everything, in keeping with her philosophy of doing one thing well, although there are plans for a lime version to come out in time for Christmas.

The product is attractively packaged so it can be used as a gift or souvenir as well as an everyday kitchen item.

It's been selling well, but Amanda's best product endorsement has come unsolicited.

"So many women have told me that their children had refused to eat salad or vegetables," she said, "but with a pool of Mullumbimby Magic to dip into, they were tucking in for the first time."

Amanda emphasises that it is a versatile product, however, which can be used with other food items besides salads and vegetables. To reflect this, it is available at local seafood shops and organic butcheries, as well as fruit and vegetable and health food stores.



Amanda and her Mullumbimby Magic salad dressing: 'I love thinking I've made someone's tastebuds zing.'

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