

Business is blooming for local entrepreneur

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Published on Dec 21, 2007

Its fragrant, soothing scent intermingled with its calming, relaxing effects and healing properties make lavender a versatile plant with a plethora of uses. This is why a local Waterdown resident has decided to use lavender as the focus of her online business, Lavender-Blu.

When Ludmila Haynos-Owen graduated from high school, she planned to pursue her post-secondary education in the field of pharmacology. Taking her time before diving head first into her university studies, Haynos-Owen traveled to Germany and did an apprenticeship at a pharmaceutical company that specialized in homeopathic medicine and organic cosmetics.

This apprenticeship brought Haynos-Owen back to her childhood, in which her mother, an apothecary in Europe, treated sickness with herbs and natural remedies. While working for the company for three years, Haynos-Owen had an array of responsibilities. "I did all kind of jobs there, from working in the garden, cultivating the herbs all the way to mixing essential oils for the perfumes that they used in their cosmetics, as well as making the oils and making creams," she explained.

On her return from Germany, Haynos-Owen's career path took a different turn, in the direction of communications and public relations. While pursuing her bachelors and masters in communications, she spent her summers working for the pharmaceutical company. During this time, she gained valuable experience that would help her with her current online business.

When her daughter suffered from a severe diaper rash, Haynos-Owen admitted she had an "aha moment."

"I started to look for something alternative to cure that (the diaper rash)," she said. "I went back to my roots."

Trying to remember what she knew about the various plants she was in contact with in Europe, she recalled the multiple uses of lavender. Not only did lavender help cure her daughter's diaper rash, it also helped Haynos-Owen's business bloom into a resourceful, online lavender product store.

Haynos-Owen then set out to explore all that lavender has to offer. With lavender farms sprouting across the world, she discovered that the flourishing plant is currently experiencing a renaissance.

"I wanted to bring lavender out of your grandma's closet," she said, adding that her online store offers an array of organic lavender products.

Most commonly used to scent linens, lavender is also one of the keystone elements of a homeopathic first aid kit, explained Haynos-Owen.

"It has healing properties for example for burns and sunburns...mosquito bites, bee stings, any kind of wound," she noted.



SCENT-SATIONAL: Ludmila Haynos-Owen shows off some of the products carried by Lavender-Blu.

For culinary adventurers, lavender can be integrated in various recipes. Available on her website, Haynos-Owen sells tins of culinary organic lavender that originated from an organic farm in Washington State.

A member of the mint family, lavender is a versatile herb for cooking and baking. It can also be used in beverages, such as lemonade, gin and tonic and sparkling wine. Thrown on the barbecue, lavender adds flavour to pork, chicken and lamb.

Lavender fire sticks, which are available for purchase at Lavender-Blu.com, can be used to start a fire that emits the lavender fragrance, or they can be soaked overnight in cold water and used as skewers for scallops.

Haynos-Owen noted that lavender can be substituted for rosemary to add a twist to a traditional recipe. Lavender-Blu promotes The Lavender Cookbook by Sharon Shipley, a 192-page book that contains oodles of seasonal recipes, all with a hint of lavender.

Sachets filled with lavender buds are customarily used to scent closets or drawers, but Haynos-Owen has heard of some individuals decorating their Christmas tree with lavender-filled sachets.

Lavender-Blu also carries hand-made dolls filled with organic lavender from France. As lavender has a soothing and calming effect, these dolls are great for babies and children explained Haynos-Owen. The dolls, made in Germany, can be placed under a child's pillow to help promote a good night's sleep.

Through Lavender-Blu, Haynos-Owen aims to promote the individuals, including the farmers, who cultivate and harvest organic lavender. She has contacted many lavender farmers and visited a few locations where lavender is grown and cultivated. A Lavender Festival in Sequim, Washington, the Capital of Lavender of North America, takes place each July. Haynos-Owen hopes to attend the festival in 2008.

With a positive outlook, the local mom and business owner wanted to join the world of communications and pharmaceuticals together.

By creating Lavender-Blu, investing her time and research in her business, she has been able to combine both.

"I want to be the bearer of good news, I wanted to combine the two worlds," she said enthusiastically.

Haynos-Owen noted that the products she offers on her website make great stocking stuffers, or unique hostess gifts. For those hoping to make a purchase for a family or friend as a Christmas present, she said "I can be Santa this year," explaining that for local orders she can personally deliver the goods.

Lavender-Blu not only combines Haynos-Owen's wealth of knowledge on everything to do with lavender, but neat gift ideas, products and recipes. She encourages community residents to visit her website at www.lavender-blu.com.

Anyone looking for more information on lavender or Lavender-Blu can visit the web site or contact Haynos-Owen via email at contact@lavender-blu.com or by phone at (905) 320-8995.

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LAVENDER COCONUT MACAROONS;

Courtesy of Lavender-Blu.com

Makes 60 to 80 macaroons

Ingredients

1 3 egg whites

- | 210 g icing sugar
- | 1/4 zest of lemon
- | 1 tbsp of fresh lemon juice
- | 1 tsp of organic culinary lavender
- | 250 g unsweetened coconut flakes
- | 100 g of good quality chocolate to decorate the top of the macaroons

Instructions:

With a hand mixer, beat the egg whites until they are quite stiff. Little by little, add the icing sugar. Continue mixing while adding the icing sugar. Do not add icing sugar all at once as it will deflate the fluffy egg whites. When you are almost out of icing sugar, add the lemon juice. Stop mixing. With a spatula, add the organic culinary lavender and the coconut flakes. Carefully stir the ingredients together.

Bake at 335 F for 13 to 15 minutes to dry the macaroons. Pull them out of the oven while they are still white. Melted chocolate can be drizzled over the macaroons for an extra touch.



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