

HILLS PEOPLE



VERA ROSS

THE TRUEST

Verissima House turns one year old on the tenth May this year. Many readers will remember the grand opening a year ago, but for Vera Ross, whose brainchild this was, this is in fact the culmination of many years of hard work, commitment, energy and networking within the local community.

Vera says, 'When I first came to Australia from Germany fifteen years ago, I stayed in a "posh" suburb near the beach. My children were little and had never lived in their own home before.

'I used to "sshhh" them all the time. I remember my husband reminding me that we were no longer living in a flat, that we didn't have immediate neighbours and that it was OK for the children to be themselves.

'I remember hearing the splashing of swimming pools - we didn't have one. I also remember my neighbour asking me what my husband did for a living and whether we were renting or buying the house. When I told her we were renting, she wasn't interested in me any more!! I couldn't believe it and knew then that I didn't want to stay there any more.'

Vera continues: 'One day we went for a drive to the hills and I watched my children climbing rocks and playing in the stream. I fell totally in love with the landscape. It was like a homecoming for me.

'I was raised in Bavaria, a mountainous part of Germany, and although the plants and the blackboys were very different from what I knew, I also knew that I was incredibly happy and excited to be amongst trees and nature. I knew that this was where I wanted to live.

'We started looking the following weekend and soon the hills became our home. That was in 1987. My [then] Australian husband and I had met in Munich and established our relationship

before moving to Australia.

'The decision to migrate was brought about by the Chernobyl radioactive disaster in May 1985 and we both knew we wanted to raise a family in a safer environment.'

In hindsight, Vera feels that the disaster strongly influenced her belief system and continues to make an impact on her both professionally and philosophically.

Given this, it is no wonder that Vera felt drawn to natural medicine and the modality of aromatherapy.

Her aversion to the use of harmful chemicals and petrochemicals in any aspect of her personal and work related life is, inevitably, an inheritance of Chernobyl.

However even before then, and from a young age, Vera says she was exposed to this type of commitment. She recalls marching for peace as a young child in Europe.

Her mother, who had studied formal medicine, was also always very much "at home" with herbs, homoeopathy and natural medicines.

'My mother healed us with compresses and herbal products. She always knew about these things, so in hindsight, it was natural

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