


THE AUSTRALIA COUNCIL'S 1997 GUIDE ON CULTURAL PLANNING AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT, *BETTER PLACES RICHER COMMUNITIES*, STATES THAT "COUNCILS PLAY A CENTRAL ROLE IN LOCAL AREA PLANNING, PROVISION OF SERVICES AND ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT. ACCORDINGLY, THEY HAVE TO BECOME AWARE OF THE FULL RANGE OF LOCAL COMMUNITY NEEDS AND ASPIRATIONS, INCLUDING THOSE CONCERNED WITH CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT".

attracting interest of local government

This guide looks at some project examples that focus on industrial areas, natural environments, urban development, reconciliation, facilities development, public environments and urban places. This process of linking community and council in Narrogin, Western Australia, has been instrumental in generating social, cultural and economic growth for this town with its population of 5,300. Community Arts Network Western Australia has learnt from the Narrogin process and have further developed cultural mapping and planning methods. To date, the organisation has worked with ten other local government authorities in Western Australia through their Demonstration Council Program. Sandra Kreml, Executive Officer of Community Arts Network WA, says, "Our organisation places a great emphasis on increasing the awareness of the role arts and cultural activities play in growing community spirit and sustainable outcomes for both the arts and the community".

Local government, an important market for artists and arts organisations, needs to be kept informed and must recognise that the involvement of local people can contribute significantly to the success of an area.

DESTINATION: Mount Alexander Vic	
COMPANY: Mount Alexander Shire Council	

“THERE IS A VERY HIGH POPULATION OF ARTISTS IN THIS LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA WHO HAVE A WEALTH OF TALENT AND MANY ARE EXPORTING. THE SHIRE IS DEVELOPING A RANGE OF STRATEGIES TO RECOGNISE THEM AS A SIGNIFICANT PART OF THE DIVERSE LOCAL ECONOMY.”

As part of the recent local government reforms throughout the state of Victoria, a series of public workshops were held during 1996 in Victorian centres north of Melbourne near the old goldfields, like Castlemaine and Maldon, to discuss the implications of the amalgamation of four shires into one - the new Mount Alexander Shire Council. These produced some interesting results, particularly the very high number of local artists who attended the meetings and had a strong voice in the planning sessions in identifying the issues and future needs facing both artists and the broader community.

This confirmed what Sandra Bunce, newly-appointed Manager of the Economic Development Unit of the Shire (a position won under the new compulsory competitive tendering processes), was quickly getting a fix on: “There is a very high population of artists in this local government area who have a wealth of talent and many are exporting. The shire is developing a range of strategies to recognise them as a significant part of the diverse local economy.”

In what is a rare commitment for local government, the shire is integrating the marketing of the arts as part of its overall strategies for local business growth. Overall, the shire has a fairly scattered population of 16,600, with the largest concentration of 7,600 in Castlemaine. The economy is very diverse, ranging from apple and smallgoods production to a leading automotive parts industry; tourism is significant, with more than 40 bed and breakfast establishments operating in the shire. This diversity may have helped to create an environment that has been open to acknowledging artists as a mainstream part of the local economy.

Some of the development initiatives specifically designed to develop and promote the cultural sector are:

- Local craft was featured prominently in the highly successful *Shire on Show* promotion, which attracted thousands of visitors at the Royal Melbourne Show. “We were the only shire at the show and the response was fantastic.”
- The aim was to promote *Shire on Show week* - which takes place during Melbourne Cup Week each year - and which in 1997 featured strongly a crafts showcase at the Old Castlemaine Gaol, attracting more than 1,000 visitors per day.
- The Economic Development Unit is collecting data on artist-run businesses along with other local businesses, and, although it is proceeding slowly with gathering financial data, the database is already useful for statistical and contact purposes.
- As part of the Area Consultative Committee, Sandra makes useful connections with the wider region. An art incubator is being explored, in tandem with Bendigo, and a New Enterprise Incentive Scheme (NEIS) program specially for artists is being run, also in Bendigo.
- When the Economic Development Unit is relocated beside Castlemaine’s Tourism Information Centre, a showcase of local craftwork at the information centre will become a reference point for studio visits, as well as a retail outlet.

This is only the start of what Sandra is confident will be a long-term integration of the local cultural industries into heart of the Mount Alexander Shire economy.

FINE BLUES, BREATHTAKING VIEWS AND COUNTRY HOSPITALITY IS THE PROMISE OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA’S PREMIER MUSIC FESTIVAL, BLUES AT BRIDGETOWN . . .

DESTINATION: Bridgetown WA	
COMPANY: Blues at Bridgetown	

designing an event that makes a long-lasting impact

And it fulfils that promise with a well-developed program which builds on important planning processes and has strong support within its community, devised by a dedicated and mostly volunteer committee, including festival co-directors, Sheila Howatt and Pip Mills, Joan Krauze, Doreen Harkins and Michael Pearce.

Background

From roots in a small town in southwest Western Australia (pop. 4,000) - once best known only for its annual apple harvest - Blues at Bridgetown, a four day music festival held annually in November, is a growing event, attracting audiences from interstate and internationally to a festival that offers a huge variety of styles, electric and acoustic, tracing the evolution of the blues and its influence on other music along the way.

Although Bridgetown was the home of the jug-, folk- and blues-influenced band Bungarra in the ‘70s and has become home to many artists, potters and musicians, live music could not be heard there until six years ago. A small group formed to develop a festival that would re-establish and empower the arts in the region through music. Progressing in an ad hoc fashion until 1993, the WA Tourism Commission offered support for the development of a blues festival that could be promoted as an attraction to interstate and international visitors. The community now has a strong subculture of music in the town, with 25% of students taking music courses at schools.



Accommodation in town has reached capacity, so transport bus shuttles from adjoining towns have been arranged.

A confidential financial impact survey in 1996 revealed that the town makes an estimated one million dollars over the festival weekend.

Blues at Bridgetown is the largest single employer of blues musicians in WA, employing nearly every one of the 150 to 200 in the state. A greater number of Western Australian blues musicians are starting to get their product out in the market and distribution is assisted by the festival. Retailer Brashs has approached a number of the festival performers to sell their product.

Keeping the product fresh

Committed to the long-term survival of the blues, as well as to an emerging Western Australian contemporary blues genre, the committee has identified three key elements in strategic marketing:

- widening audience base
- widening performance base and artistic skills
- encouraging the creation and performance of new and original blues works

These strategies include development of a special festival focus each year to complement the mainstream program, such as the 1997 "Youth in Blues and Jazz". The Lottery Commission and the Gordon Reid Foundation for Youth and Arts WA provide financial support for interstate travel for national exchanges, youth acts and performance fees.

Management Issues

While the support of the community is critical to the success of the Blues at Bridgetown Festival, the organising committee of five, an appointed sub-committee of the Bridgetown-Greenbushes Tourism Association, is responsible for management decisions. Until 1996, event management was voluntary and a number of positions with discrete responsibilities have been created; some are on an honorarium basis, others salaried. Committee members receive an annual honorarium averaging \$3,000 and a part-time assistant is employed. There are two festival directors, a special services coordinator, a catering/bus/street party coordinator and a treasurer.

Planning

Organisers looked at how to develop an event that would position itself as a leading music festival and attract large enough audiences, but not too large for the town, over a four day period. Issues included:

- quality of acts
- the venues - both free and ticketed
- promotion through the local tourist centre as a principal ticket outlet
- targeting the right market
- timing

The second weekend in November was chosen as it falls in the shoulder period of WA Music Week and Australian Music Day. As well as being the off-peak tourist accommodation period for Bridgetown, timing takes into account interstate music festivals and opportunities for sharing travel fees for artists. Scheduled after several music festivals in the region, it is able to access and target a music consuming population with marketing initiatives such as:

- distribution of fliers and newsletters
- information, including photographic displays
- stalls staffed by volunteers at regional events, festivals and shopping centres in Perth

The event was carefully designed to target an audience of families and over-25s. This audience was targeted as one that would not be in conflict with local residents and whose spending power is recognised as considerable - an important factor in developing an appeal for sponsors and local businesses. Timing and pricing of events continues to be modified around a commitment to pleasing the target audience.

Measuring results

The inaugural event in 1993 attracted approximately 5,000 people with the audience growing to and staying at 12,000 people the following year.

In 1997, attendances were at 12,000, with 2,000 weekend tickets, 1,500 day tickets and 6,000 headline concert tickets sold. The free fringe festival is subsidised by the mainstream festival.

The 1997 festival cost \$320,000 to produce; 40% of income came from ticket sales; profit was \$8,000; \$30,000 has been accumulated over five years. Surplus funds have been used to purchase capital equipment to save hiring costs and to add new merchandising ranges, which, to date, have realised \$40,000 in profit.

A three year business plan to facilitate the introduction of a professional management structure is in place. "Although we started out with a management goal of eventually employing a full-time paid event coordinator (and were encouraged towards this by funding agencies), we now believe that it is too big an event for one person to handle. Instead of paying one person say \$70,000 to try to do the job, we believe we are better to continue with the committee honorarium structure, maintaining community involvement and ownership and spreading local event management expertise. The trick is to achieve this without jeopardising the personal and financial situation of committee members," says Sheila Howat, co-director of the festival.

The Blues at Bridgetown Festival Committee recognises the importance of ensuring that ongoing generations acquire the skills and expertise to stage major music events of quality and credibility. To achieve this, they have introduced sound workshops and hands-on progressive experience opportunities for young people in the region.

Resources

The Blues at Bridgetown Festival is an exemplary model of a sharing approach to growth and consolidation, having developed an ongoing and evolving program from \$600 in seed funding in 1993.

Their partnership with WA Tourist Commission and subsequently Events Corp prompted a plan to attract audiences from eastern states, using direct mail and inserts in an industry magazine. In-flight fliers for western destinations were distributed through a holiday package retailer.

Within an advertising budget of about \$10,000, maximum results have been negotiated, including dollar-for-dollar deals with television station GWN and Radio West, ABC support in 1996, and contras with individual newspapers. ABC regional and metropolitan radio stations provide valuable support through live interviews; approximately 100 giveaway weekend tickets valued at \$60 are provided.

Corporate sponsorship has not come easy and remains a challenge. In 1997, the committee received \$95,000 in cash and \$90,000 in-kind. Well aware of economic problems in rural Western Australia, sponsorship was not sought from the local community, placing great value on their contribution to hosting the event.

The committee has found that identifying those who may be appropriate, who share ideals, who can be profiled and who can achieve real coverage from the event works best. The owner of the largest corporate sponsor, Rossi Boots, is a blues lover, and heard about the event through the musicians' network. The director of the longest standing corporate sponsor, Marlows, once lived in Bridgetown and was pleased to support the town.

"Don't forget to thank them; it's easy to forget this when you are in full-scale production," stresses Sheila Howat. The committee has now appointed someone to look after sponsors during the event.

Planning the timing of a festival can be complex, as Blues at Bridgetown organisers found when they had to answer questions such as:

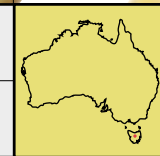
- when does the town need tourism business?
- will accommodation be available?
- will artists be available?
- will committee members be available?
- how much lead time is required to organise and promote the event in a professional way?
- will the weather be suitable?
- do we want the event on a long weekend or a normal one?
- do we coincide with school holidays? and so on ...





works by Peter Adams

DESTINATION: Launceston Tas
COMPANY: Tasmanian Wood Design Collection



making a vision work

- a big vision
- international from the outset

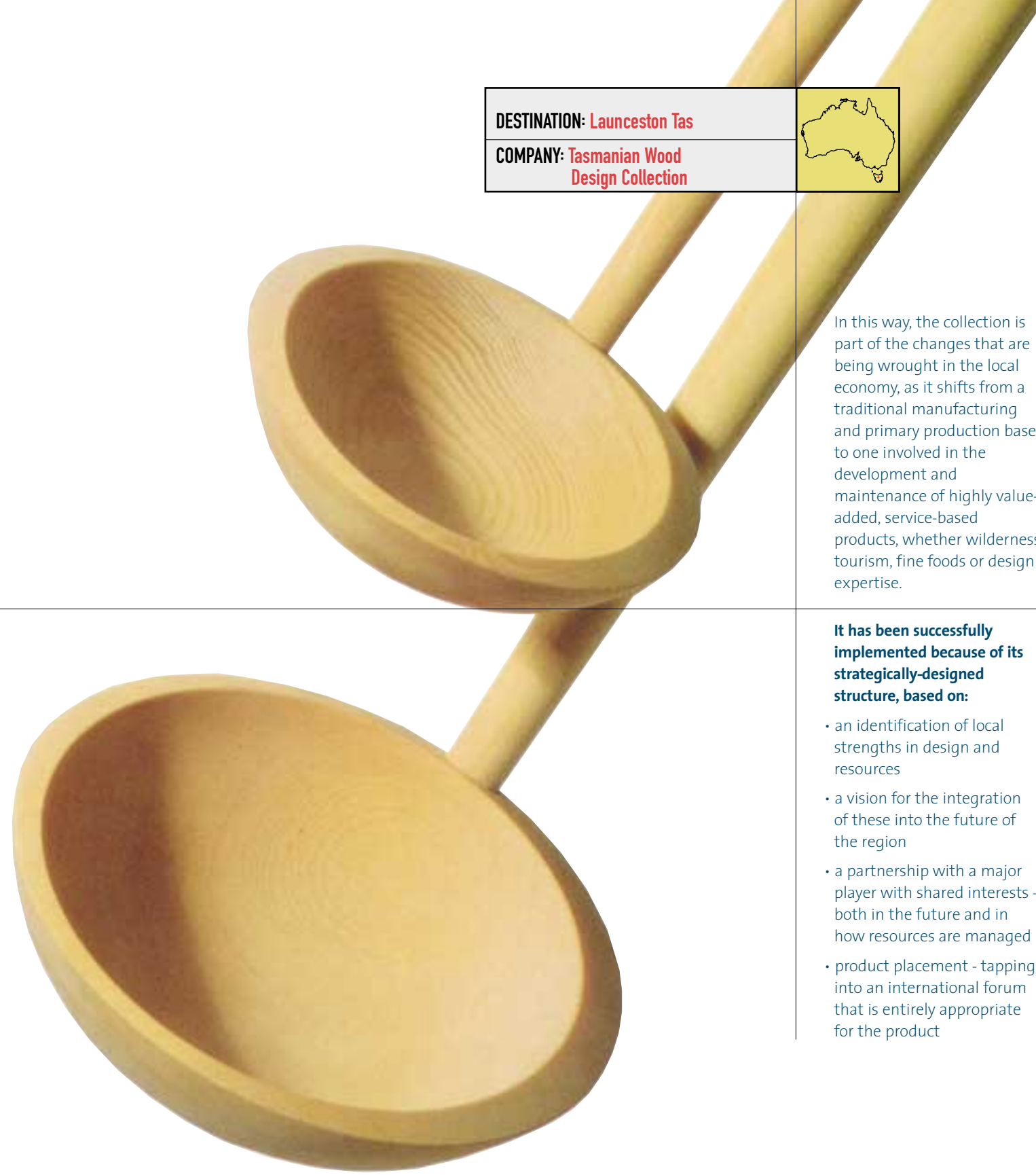
Without Gary Cleveland's professional and tireless commitment, it is highly unlikely that the work of Tasmania's leading designers in wood would be seen en masse in the European capitals of design in 1998 - in southern Germany, in Finland and in Sweden. But that is how the Tasmanian Wood Design Collection has been conceived from the start, and, along the way, Gary has collected strategic partners to work with and widespread government and design community support.

"The collection is gaining its own momentum," reflects Gary, who has run the Tasmanian Design Centre in Launceston since 1976, following a career in the textile industry. Gary may have initiated the concept of the Tasmanian Wood Design Collection, but he has worked to ensure that it does not depend in the long run on the efforts of one or two key people. "It always had a big vision at its heart and we have never lost that. Tasmanian designers and the timbers they work with are amongst the best in the world, and showcasing that is what we've always been about."

The Tasmanian Forestry Commission has been a principal player in the life of the collection. The Commission conducted the Tasmanian Wood Craft Competition in 1988 and 1989 and supports development of the collection as an independent, non-profit body - The Tasmanian Wood Design Collection. The Commission is instrumental in helping manage the biennial displays and its support allows the purchase of items for the collection. The collection continues to be added to through a biennial exhibition held in Tasmania, at which \$10,000 worth of selected pieces are chosen by a prominent judge to add to the collection.

The Tasmanian Wood Design Collection also manages the international tours of the collection to strategically chosen design fairs and museums across the world. It has always been part of the plan for the collection to "carve out" a niche in the competitive international wood design market for Tasmanian designer/makers.

This is a case where thinking big and maintaining a clear vision, with the product to match, and the drive to pull it off, is working. The collection does not work on the basis of an immediate return in terms of sales and commissions, although these have resulted from the exhibitions overseas. Rather, it plays the role of a sophisticated cultural ambassador, working as a long-term and subtle marketing strategy to position Tasmania, and Tasmanian resources and design talent, at a world-class level.



In this way, the collection is part of the changes that are being wrought in the local economy, as it shifts from a traditional manufacturing and primary production base to one involved in the development and maintenance of highly value-added, service-based products, whether wilderness tourism, fine foods or design expertise.

It has been successfully implemented because of its strategically-designed structure, based on:

- an identification of local strengths in design and resources
- a vision for the integration of these into the future of the region
- a partnership with a major player with shared interests - both in the future and in how resources are managed
- product placement - tapping into an international forum that is entirely appropriate for the product

"IT ALWAYS HAD A BIG VISION AT ITS HEART AND WE HAVE NEVER LOST THAT. TASMANIAN DESIGNERS AND THE TIMBERS THEY WORK WITH ARE AMONGST THE BEST IN THE WORLD, AND SHOWCASING THAT IS WHAT WE'VE ALWAYS BEEN ABOUT."

A DISTINCTIVE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE WINE, FOOD AND CERAMICS INDUSTRIES OF MUDGEE, TABLESCAPE STARTED AS A KEY ATTRACTION OF THE 1996 MUDGEE WINE FESTIVAL AND IS RAPIDLY GAINING STATUS AS AN ONGOING BUSINESS.

DESTINATION: **Mudgee NSW**

COMPANY: **Tablescape**



making links with other regional industries

Tablescape had its genesis in a vision for the Mudgee-Gulgong district of New South Wales, which includes olive oil production and a local maiolica ceramics industry in its ambit, as well as the longer-established local grape growing and winemaking industries. Michael Creighton, who manages Tablescape, has applied a background in theatre and the film industry to a craft event, which may account for its success. Tablescape has also drawn on the considerable talents of many local residents, including chefs Peter Howard and Kim Currie, Sue Fairlie-Cunninghame of *Vogue Entertaining*, ceramic artists Janet Mansfield, Cameron Wilson and artist Margot Stephens.

The Mudgee Tourist Office also pitched in with whole-hearted support for the concept, which began with a ten week series of workshops for 30 local potters and painters to learn maiolica techniques, producing tableware and prototyping olive oil containers. This was followed by a week-long series of seminars, talks and fabulous meals during the Wine Festival which helped to achieve another objective - to bring more people into Mudgee during weekdays when the Wine Festival was on, as attendances tended to cluster around weekends only. The Mudgee Wine Grape Growers' Association has been another strategic supporter of Tablescape.

Topics ranged from issues relating to contemporary ceramic production to olive growing facts and figures to wine blending. The event culminated in The Feast, attended by 250 eager diners, attracted to attend the \$70 dinner largely by word of mouth, to eat Mudgee produce on Mudgee ware . . . the event was a sell-out, and the auction that followed it achieved very good prices for local artists.

"The long-term future of Tablescape is still emerging," comments Michael Creighton, who has been joined by Adele Wilson, formerly of the Mudgee Tourist Office, in managing the project. State & Regional Development NSW has supported the planning for the long-term vision for Tablescape as it pursues its vision of integrating local strengths in food, wine and ceramics, with ceramic industry development as a particular focus.

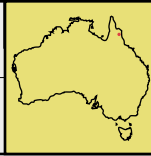
Tablescape has recently reviewed its achievements over the past two years. Realising that too strong a focus on events such as dinners was very time-consuming in terms of management, as well as limited for long-term and larger scale marketing of products, it has recommitted itself to its original concept. Large scale events such as the initial Tablescape seminar week and feast will occur every two years - 2000 is the next one, while smaller workshops will continue to be held at regular intervals.

Resources are being increasingly directed towards marketing attractive and innovative products such as Cameron Wilson's Mudgee Bush Oven. Made at the Lithgow Pottery, where Cameron is based, the Bush Oven has been taken up for sponsorship by Land Rover and is being marketed through menswear retailer Gowings. Demonstrations and displays will also take place during the Wine NSW event.

At the core of the project remains the development and promotion of maiolica ware as a viable, high profile industry, but, as Michael says, "the key to Tablescape's success has been its unique blend of the three arts - wine, food and ceramics. Each element depends upon the other, and the whole business has been designed to create products that respond to the marketplace. That is what makes Tablescape so special - and such a singular example of craft marketing".

DESTINATION: Kuranda Qld

COMPANY: Kuranda Arts Cooperative League



“OH YEAH, GO TO KURANDA, GO TO THE ARTS CO-OP UP THERE”
-TOURISTS LIKE TO GO TO WHERE THE LOCALS ARE

never underestimate the power of word of mouth

Background

The Kuranda Arts Cooperative League (KACL) has recently opened a large showroom in the village of Kuranda (pop. 720) in a region of about 2,000 people where 16% of visual artists in Far North Queensland reside and work. Their primary aim is to provide a quality product, guaranteed service and longstanding commitment to the market, particularly to the local one.

Currently, there are over 130 members who pay twenty dollars for a lifetime membership. Some of these members are supporters, rather than artists and craftspeople. The showroom showcases and sells the work of about 60 locals. Membership is based on a two-tiered system of workers and exhibitors, with workers offered a lower commission rate of 29.5% versus the exhibitors' 37.5% of the retail price. Income from commissions cover the showroom 'foreman' of the day, workers and rent, with the remaining balance going back into the cooperative for overheads.

Cooperative member and jeweller Michael (Gonzo) Gompert says "We don't accept any imports, only local product. You have to be a member and that's it. Products from Townsville are imports. Our region is from Ingham or Gordonvale to Chillagoe".

KACL has strong roots in the Sunday markets. The Kuranda Markets were originally established as a venue for locals to sell their products in their own community without having to go up and down the mountain to Cairns. However, as there were no trains or buses operating on Sunday, they decided to rent the train and sell return tickets to Cairns. It was not long before Queensland Rail and private enterprise realised the value of such an enterprise.

The train has become one of the Australia's most popular train rides and a major attraction for the region - only now it costs ten times as much to use it.

The implications of this include the amount of money that visitors have once they reach Kuranda. Retail business has dropped 15% to 20% since the Skyrail, a new spectacular way to travel across the mountains, opened. Visitors do not have a reason to stay longer than a day and most of their money is spent on the journey. Research has also found that tour guides are dropping Kuranda from their itinerary because of the complaints from tourists.

On the wrong side of the street

Enter stage left - the Kuranda Arts Cooperative. KACL does not target the 700,000 tourists that visit the region. They do not try to compete with the advertising done to capture the tourist market to their region. Members of the cooperative have lived in the area for years. They know that the tourist is swamped visually with signs, brochures and in-house television advertisements. How do tourists know which one to pick - they all say they are the greatest. How do they know? In order to compete in that market, it takes a lot of money.

The cooperative decided on word of mouth. They also encourage the use of in-jokes that only a local would get, believing that the impact is much stronger if the locals first understand it. With the local market as their primary target audience, KACL strongly believes that tourists will find out about the showroom from them.

They tested the approach by not doing any conventional advertising and not having any signage. Located on the "wrong side" of the street, they worked towards making the building itself and its large streetfront windows attractive in such a way as to attract people from the other side of the street.

It was November 1996 when they first swept the floor in their new showroom and observed the one hundred people walking on the other side of the street to the one on their side. In eleven months, it became one hundred to fifteen. Tourists are on the other side of the street when they get off the Skyrail or train. A few pubs and a corner store offered little encouragement to cross the street until KACL opened its doors.

Their risk in taking on the space is diminishing as a new trading development, which boasts a "first fleet" three-masted sailing vessel, is being built next to their showroom.

When they opened on July 26, 1997, they chose to place an advertisement on the 6 o'clock news, which is the only truly local news program. They believed that it would reach all the locals (well, almost all). They did the advertisements themselves, saving considerable financial outlay, and personalised the content. It worked, and they knew this because they asked.

The way to the heart of a tourist is through the locals. Tourists want to experience the "real thing"! By appearing to be only for the locals, you can increase your general appeal (in much the same way people boast about the 'tucked away' restaurant they have discovered). Travellers love the sense of discovery. The Kuranda Arts Cooperative marketing approach is a brave, bold attempt to tap into the psychology of tourists who feel inundated with brash "souvenir" overkill.



Kuranda Arts Cooperative