



Jenny Garing of Ground used Lyttelton farmers' market to teach customers about exotic spice mixtures

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Ground

JENNY GARING openly admits her business, Ground, wouldn't have survived its first year without the Lyttelton farmers' market. In 2003 Garing and a partner began making hand-ground gourmet spice blends, sauces, marinades, preserves and pestos. When the farmers' market opened six months later, Jenny says they used it (and still do) to demonstrate culinary uses of Middle Eastern and Northern spices like Ras al Hanout and Baharat, which were virtually unknown here. "These products were unusual and it's hard to sell them without the education that goes with it. I couldn't afford to pay merchandising fees in supermarkets."

Garing runs a school training English-as-second-language teachers and, having no experience in the food industry, she learnt some valuable lessons at the market. The print on jar labels was enlarged when customers complained it was too hard to read, and Garing introduced colour coding to differentiate between products. Pounamu Dukka (macadamia nuts, kawakawa and sesame seeds) was so popular she added pounamu dressing and pounamu seasoning to the range. And when an Irish couple who had lived in the Middle East mentioned using spices in desserts, Garing devised a sweet spice blend based on dried rose petals.

Although she supplied delicatessens and sold via the internet, Garing planned to open her own shop in Lyttelton, and finally took the plunge in mid-2007. "I was going to do it two years ago, but I decided from the market there wasn't enough critical mass to do it, so I waited until the time was right. Once the market was established, it paved the way for Lyttelton to become a destination at weekends for people shopping for foodie stuff."

Moreover, a good deal of the stock on Garing's shop shelves is from market stallholders. "The philosophy behind Ground is similar to that of the farmers' market: local, organic where possible, cooperative." 5