

Mrs Thomas's Mint Syrup™



The Cherry's live a vegan-ish lifestyle on their 15-acre farm located between Amberley village and the beach. They use organic animal manures, but don't use fertilisers such as blood and bone or fish meal. Both gave up their full-time careers (Michele was a midwife) to concentrate on the business - and they sold their first produce in December 2006. "It is our aim to increase the sustainability of our business every year while walking lightly on the planet," says Michele.

Kindness in a bottle

As a young girl growing up in Oamaru, Jan de Voer would collect lush mint with her parents at the river that they would take home and make into mint syrup, using a recipe gifted to her parents by their kindly neighbour, Mrs Thomas, at the time of their wedding (now 50 years ago). Many years later, Jan started making mint syrup as birthday and Christmas gifts for her friends and family, who thought it was so delicious that they encouraged her to start selling it. So, in October 2006, she obtained a licence to manufacture the product, which she calls Mrs Thomas's Mint Syrup in honour of her favourite neighbour. Jan grows the spray-free mint on her North Canterbury property, and says that only the best mint finds its way into the bottle.



As well as the traditional malt vinegar version, she also has a gluten-free, white vinegar product. Both are perfect for pouring over roast lamb, beef or chicken, using as a dressing for salads or vegetables, or to enhance waffles, yoghurt, ice cream or fruit salad, she says. Jan sells the product through Farmers' Markets and selected reseller outlets.

"Recently I visited my parents in Oamaru and popped over the fence where Mrs Thomas's house still stands - although it is soon to be bulldozed. I managed to rescue a clump of her original mint which was very special."

This little piggy went to market

What is it about markets and pigs? If you don't know the rhyme, *To market, to market to buy a fat pig*, you're sure to know, *This little piggy went to market*. So it seemed rather fitting to meet Jan Tinning who, with her tasty range of Barnswood Pork products, regularly makes the trip up to Oxford from Geraldine to attend the Farmers' Market. Jan and her husband raise free-range Saddleback pigs specifically to make their products which include patties, roasting joints, steaks and chops, bacon, and their world-famous-in-the-South-Island sausages, which have such delectable flavours as pork with leek and blue cheese, pork and apricot, smoke and spice, and Canterbury Cumberland.

