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Wendy has a passion for fresh organic food



"I believe in quality food, full of nutrition and flavour – looking after our bodies is the best investment we can make," says Wendy Bobsien. "I was brought up in the 60s when my parents grew our own fruit and veges. We had a big vegetable garden and fruit trees and didn't have sprays like they do today. It was a wonderful environment – my grandmother and mother were beautiful cooks and food was a pleasure, not just a necessity to eat."

Wendy travelled extensively overseas and along the way, worked as a fundraiser in London, organising catering for big events – including important royal occasions. Her fundraising and organising skills took her to the United States, where she helped a friend with an organic business by catering and organising events. From there, it was a life on the high seas, as chef on Superyachts sailing between Europe and the Caribbean.

"We spent six months in each, with clients from all over the world, so there was a very mixed cuisine. I had an unlimited budget, so searched the local markets in Europe and West Indies for the freshest, the best products. I always looked out for organic and bio-organic foods. I met a New Zealander when I was catering for the yachts at Newport in Rhode Island. Garry Pervan was an adventurer in aviation, predominately large helicopters and then large Superyachts. I had been away for 20 years when Garry and I came back to New Zealand, buying a property on the Awhitu Peninsula. When I took over and expanded Café Berne 10 years ago, I hooked up with local organic growers because I believe in homegrown produce as part of a healthy lifestyle – no pre-mixed or preservatives."

Wendy promotes Fairtrade, an international organisation seeking better prices and working conditions for farmers and workers in the developing world, selling Fairtrade coffee, teas and chocolate. The organisation is community focused and cuts out the exploitation that often keeps farmers in impoverished conditions and puts money back into local community development. Wendy also is enthusiastic about Women for Girls, an organisation she formed with friends in New York to sponsor young girls in Africa, supporting them and giving them an education. "I have a huge passion for Africa, and would like to form a New Zealand chapter of Women for Girls. It opens doors for girls who have no future, and by educating and training them, gives them the chance to hand on their skills in the traditional way. This is part of how you live your life, by passing on what knowledge you have to others in all forms. We have to start small, by choosing just six little girls a year to have this chance. Through the education of women, we can eventually change the world. My reason for working so hard is to be able to support projects like this."

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