

A blast from the past in old Bangalow

Real treasure trove of collectables awaits

WHEN Ross Heath leaves for the day to purchase items for his old wares business, he often finds a note from his wife on the steering wheel.

"Buy wisely," it reads. Indeed, My Heath is on the road the day I visit, and his wife Eva is busy arranging items in the front yard of their shop.

The Heaths have found a space at Bangalow - a village, a storage shed, the shop and even for customers - for the past 21 months. For 11 years they ran the business out of Ballina Industrial Estate, but just turned out.

"We took four years' break, but I always knew we'd do it again. We pinch ourselves every morning that we have this wonderful space in Bangalow," Eva Heath said.

Browsing through the shop is a true delight. Wares are lovingly arranged and the variety of goods is astounding. Outside are watering cans, ladders, outdoor furni-

SECRETS OF OUR SUCCESS

ROSS AND EVA HEATH,
HEATH'S OLD WARES & COLLECTABLES
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ture, giant boilers and other goodies.

Inside are mirrors, bins, light shades, books and a stunning collection of Australian pottery.

The Heaths have compiled a map of old wares dealers from Christchurch to Ulmarra, and don't see them as competitors.

"The best thing that could happen to us is three more opening in the street. People will come to town for five shops more than they will come for one. The best thing in the world for any antique shop is to have a beach nearby. It's not competition, it's enhancement - so yes are the same."

Ross Heath's private passion is his dairy collection. He has displayed it to the public through the Dairy Spectacular.

"He has a chronolog-

ical history he is compiling on the dairy industry on the Northern Rivers. His ability to source things and put them together is amazing," Mrs Heath said.

"This business is Ross's baby. My passion is tourism and I'm in the process of doing a diploma. My dream is to work in tourism a few days a week."

As I leave, Mrs Heath recalls a story about the first collectable Ross found at a local tip.

"It was a little Pterodactyl and when things were tough a lady offered us what was then a lot of money for him. Well, we had a board meeting - me and the kids - and we voted not to sell him," Mrs Heath laughed.

"We still have him somewhere, he's like our mascot."



BEST THING: Ross and Eva Heath, of Heath's Old Wares and Collectables in Bangalow, believe competition is a healthy thing for business. Picture: DAVID WILKIN