

Udderly beautiful



Issy, the founding goat of Make Mine Milk.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"]A
[/dropcap] **RATHER GORGEOUS** looking goat called Isabelle is the silent partner behind the skin creams, soaps and lip balms of Make Mine Milk.

Make Mine Milk, based in Colac, grew from challenging circumstances several years ago, when sisters Donna Manders and Marlene Holohan were searching for gentle skin products that could be used by their terminally ill mother.

“It seemed that everything we bought had a bad reaction,

because of the chemicals and additives in many commercial products,” Donna said.

“Once we started to read labels and ask questions, we began to wonder why you would put some of these things on your body.”

At about the same time, Donna decided to leave her highly paid, full-time public service job for a complete treechange and the sisters, together with their families, moved to western Victoria.

This is when Isabelle, a British Alpine, came into their lives after Donna spotted her in terrible condition at the saleyards and demanded she be allowed to take her home.

“I had no idea about goats at all but that is really where it all began,” Donna said.



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"]T[/dropcap]he combination of Issy and the search for skin products came together, with Donna and Marlene deciding to make their *own* soaps and creams using Issy’s goat’s milk. There was just one catch: they had no idea how to do it.

"We aren't industrial chemists, that's for sure, but we spent a lot of time on Google, a lot of time asking other people questions and a lot of time making mistakes through trial and error," Donna said with a laugh.

After months of experimentation – and testing on humans – they cracked a winning formula that is based on each product being made up of at least 50 per cent goat's milk and using only ascorbic acid as a preservative.

Not long before their mother's death, the pair decided to go public with their products and held a small market stall at the Birregurra Festival in 2010. Their wholesome, ethical approach to production struck a chord and they have been part of a western district market circuit ever since.

"Our motto is 'we grow it, we milk it, we make it' and that pretty much sums up our philosophy," Donna said.



The soap test: does it hold together in the shower?
Yes!

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"]W[/dropcap]hile the goat herd had expanded considerably in recent years, from a single goat to 23, Make Mine Milk is mindful of staying small.

"We only take orders that match our resources because, to me, there is a fine line between expansion and exploitation," Donna said.

There are plans, however, to introduce a milking sheep to the herd. One wonders what Issy will think of that...

For more information on products, please visit the Make Mine Milk [website](#).

[box type="download"] Make Mine Milk will be at the Birregurra Festival on October 12-13. [/box]