A BLAST FROM THE PAST IN OLINDA

BY ELLE CECIL

THOUGH the first thing you may want to do out of lockdown is travel, far-off destinations such as France seem a world away. However, there is someplace close to home where you can feast your eyes and get your hands on some French goodies.

Madame Rae Rae French Antiques in Olinda stocks a wide range of diverse original antique and vintage items sourced directly from France. Stock includes one-of-a-kind furniture, linens, vintage kitchen items, antique copper items, ceramics, artwork and lighting, curiosities and vintage, antique jewelry from France.

Store owner Rae Torres takes pride in the fact that her business only stocks original items and no reproductions.

"The antique and vintage items are all genuine... the shop is a little bit like a museum with many curiosities which spark great conversation," Rae explains.

"I am happy for people to come in and browse, there's no pressure to buy."

Rae Torres took the dive into small business ownership after 40 passionate and fulfilling years in the education sector. With expertise in literacy and a passion for story, Rae has based her business around this passion.

"I believe I have been able to combine my two passions, namely story and antiques, to offer a new concept in antique trading," Rae says.

"Our stories shape who we are, and every item in the shop carries its own unique story. Some of these stories we know, and some we do not, but they cause us to stop and wonder, 'Who sat at this table? Who cooked, probably over an open fire, with this ancient copper pot? Who looked into this antique mirror?'"

In its fourth year of business, Madam Rae Rae French Antiques is a history lesson in itself. Rae has had to engage in deep research to determine the background of many items on the shelves of her store.

"In essence, the business is not solely about selling - it is about sharing stories, respecting the stories and craftsmanship that has come before us," says Rae.

"[It's about] preserving things in our own modern stories, rather than purchasing mass-produced products churned out on a noisy production line and destined to further pollute our fragile environment."

Outside of lockdown, Madame Rae Rae Antiques is open Thursday to Monday from 10.30am - 5pm. For more information, pop into Shop 4, 47-53 Olinda-Monbulk Road, Olinda, or visit www.madameraerae.com.au.

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*closed Christmas Day

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