



BLACKWELL BUGLE

MRS BLACKWELL'S
Village
BOOKSHOP
ESTD. 1981

‘CYCLING LIFESTYLE’ MERCHANTS
BLACKWELL
& SONS Est. 1911

FAKE NEWS AND ADVERTISING DISGUISED AS JOURNALISM



Mrs Blackwell never tires of the joy of the win.

GAME ON, LOVERS

Like most 1980s teenage boys, Mr Blackwell redirected most of the money collected from his newspaper delivery job into the slot of a *Space Invaders* machine. *Galaxy* was another favourite and *Indiana Jones* pinball was played when he remembered to bring his Ventolin inhaler because *Indy* required him to use both hands on the flipper buttons at once and that could bring on a mild asthma episode.

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Blackwell Press Jigsaw puzzles celebrate the Wairarapa towns and attractions that make us famous.

\$39.90
each



Heirloom Monopoly Set

\$899.90



This luxury edition of Monopoly will be the envy of moguls everywhere. It features a handsome burl-finished wood cabinet with a diecast metal plaque and drawer pulls. The gorgeous game surface features luxurious gold foil stamping and a recessed faux leather rolling area.

Heirloom Chess/ Multi-game Set

\$899.90



SEARCH: 'Puzzles'

www.blackwellandsons.nz

By the time the first Playstation was released, Mr Blackwell had a mortgage and other mouths to feed so he mercifully skipped the generation of young men who donned headsets most evenings and used a lot of foul language while shooting everything that came at them.

Today, Mr Blackwell dons a martini and uses a lot of foul language with every ruthless hand of 500 his beautiful wife plays to bring him to his knees. He really isn't good at cards or, let's face it, anything actually. But that doesn't matter because, like most analogue leisure activities our parents and grandparents spent social hours enjoying, the game itself was really just a mechanism for bringing people together.

Blackwell and Sons has built its whole reason for being on the idea of enjoying a slower, simpler life. "We call it 'slow motion', because it embodies the ideas around slow travel, slowing down to read a book, create a garden, cook a meal at home or go for a relaxed bike ride somewhere with your love," says Mr Blackwell. "There is activity there but it's gentle and not deadline-bound. Kind of the opposite of fast food, convenience stores and frenetic updates to social media."

Shorter, cooler days spent inside are a good excuse for table top activities. While a rainy forecast might trigger excuses for a binge on that new streaming series everyone else is posting about, investing the time indoors to communicate and interact with the people you love is a good alternative. "Playing a game of classic Monopoly with Millie opens up all sorts of entertainment options," recalls Mr Blackwell. "I've been known to play the whole game impersonating a former New York property tycoon turned president turned criminal. Of course, she always wins but I declare the win as 'stolen' and the accusations of criminal banking activity a 'witch hunt'."

One of the most anticipated forms of dating enjoyed by the Blackwells in both their courtship and now married romantic adventures includes a portable pack of Bicycle branded playing cards in Mrs Blackwell's handbag. "Being outplayed in a game of 500 by my wife at home is one thing, but total annihilation at a fancy bar, near an open fire,

in public whilst sipping a well shaken martini in a chilled glass? The ultimate humbling, especially if the bartender asks how it's going," confirms Mr Blackwell. "And because it is a physical experience we both control, you can pause the game to request a sustaining bowl of duck fat agria fries, and then go back to the massacre once the order is placed."

Simplicity of mission and the satisfaction of completion is what keeps the jigsaw industry thriving post-pandemic. "I look at a freshly opened box of jigsaw pieces randomly scattered on the table as a metaphor for my life," claims Mr Blackwell, pathetically seeking some level of empathy from you, dear reader. "But Trish, one of our customer care superstars and professional grade puzzler, confirms that jigsawing can be completed as a focused project for an afternoon or an open-ended pastime over several weeks. You set the rules, the timeframe and the pace, and it can be a team or solo activity. That's a perfect slow motion idea in action."

A slow motion approach to winter indoor activities can be resourced through the *Blackwell and Sons* online store under the *Games and Puzzles* category. TV and phone off. Game on.



Playing Cards and books; these analogue rainy day entertainment solutions have been with us for hundreds of years.

SOLSTICE SELECTION SENDS GIN STANDARDS SOARING

After conducting a recent gin tasting experience, full of amateur theatrics and improvised comedy, for a couple who oohed and aaahed over the Groundbreaker gins that launched the new *Greytown Distilling Company's* range at the end of 2022, Mr Blackwell was then made aware that the tasters included one of the country's most famous gin makers, while the other was a judge on the NZ Distilled Spirits Award Panel.



Mr Blackwell, Co-founder, Taster and Very Little Else
at the Greytown Distilling Company's Tasting Shed,
inside Blackwell and Sons.

“Are you ok?” she asked? “Hello? Do you need me to call someone?”

Mr Blackwell remained frozen to the spot, his face seemingly smiling but completely still and even more vacant than usual. Elvis had left the building.

“Well, the gins you are producing have just raised the bar of gin making in New Zealand by a substantial percentage and er, we, um – we wish you well,” she offered, tentatively backing away. “All the best.”



Mr Blackwell suddenly thawed out and sprang back to life. “May I interest you in a GDC three pack?” he shrieked, instinctively attempting to close the deal before it was too late.

“I’ll take two of those,” confirmed the judge, stepping forward.

After smashing all sales projections and being inundated with praise for the elegance and distinctiveness of its inaugural range, the *Greytown Distilling Company* has released an all new selection of Solstice gins, crafted for cold weather consumption.

Frostbite, Festival and Apricity gins, each bearing a unique flavour profile, are designed to celebrate the cooler months of the year in Greytown.

“Frostbite brings an exciting mouthfeel to the gin sipping experience,” claims Mr Blackwell, obviously stealing this phrasing from Peter Warren, GDC master distiller, who actually knows his stuff. “Sharp and cooling on the tongue, Frostbite delivers what you’d expect and then surprises you with warming comfort as it works its magic.”

Official gin of the *2023 Greytown Festival of Christmas*, Festival brings strawberry, raspberry, vanilla and rose petals together to create a gin that feels like a celebration in your glass.

“And then we have Apricity,” says Mr Blackwell, with a grand finale tone in his voice. “This one – I’ll go out on a limb – is probably the best gin in our range so far. The word ‘apricity’ means the warmth of the sun in the winter, and that’s exactly what this gin brings to the refined tastebuds of our refined gin-buyers. We have designated our Apricity as a perfect martini gin with cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, orange peel and Greytown’s very own honey creating the flavour profile. In fact, that reminds me. I need a martini.”

Purchase it at www.greytowngin.com or taste it at the GDC Tasting Shed inside *Blackwell and Sons*, 110 Main Street, Greytown. Fridays, Saturdays and Holidays 10am to 4pm.

ONE SOAP TO RULE THEM ALL

Mrs Blackwell's ever-youthful epidermis can be partly attributed to the endless wells of love within her that Mr Blackwell is fortunate enough to hold extraction rights to, and also due to her liberal use of creams, oils and serums that are applied to her exterior surfaces most hours of most days. When he is requested to find her keys or any other item from her handbag, Mr Blackwell's visible panic is elevated with the need to unpack what appears to be enough beauty products to stock the shelves of a medium sized apothecary before finding the item required. The results of this investment are obvious and not up for debate. She's beautiful.

On his side of the equation, Mr Blackwell is currently in a rationalisation mindset when it comes to skincare. In his carefree years of youthful consumerism, Mr Blackwell enjoyed business travel packing an empty oversized toilet bag which he

would fill to overflowing with 'complimentary' hotel mini-shampoos, conditioners, body washes, soaps and if he was staying in extravagant three star accommodation, shaving creams. He figured this could save him around \$40 per annum. Today, he is a fierce eco-warrior and rejects these environmental timebombs with determination, seeking out venues that furnish their bathrooms with locked-to-the-wall refillable bottles.

Peering inside Mr Blackwell's toilet bag (you've always wanted to, right?) will uncover only the basics: a very large block of Duke Cannon Soap that can be used on every corner, crevice and follicle, a bone-handled shaving implement, a bamboo toothbrush and made-in-NZ toothpaste in a recyclable jar, and to ensure his love doesn't grimace and back away on days when he lifts a finger to do any real work, natural charcoal-based Duke Cannon deodorant.

As an aside, Mrs Blackwell is deeply concerned by Mr Blackwell's one-soap-to-rule-them-all theory.

"You shouldn't use soap on your face or hair," she sagely states. Mr Blackwell has thought about this. In his simplistic assumptive style, he believes different cleaning products for different parts of the human body is a marketing drive by Big Beauty to convince us we need to fill our bathrooms with an endless repertoire of items from their catalogue or we risk permanent ugliness. Duke Cannon products, especially their soaps, are officially and shamelessly recommended by *Blackwell and Sons*, who are New Zealand's official retailer of this brand. "But wait, there's more. One big block of Duke Cannon soap will last a minimum of three months with daily use," states Mr Blackwell, popping up like a one of those smiling pests in an infomercial.

We took our cameras inside Mr Blackwell's Greytown bathroom while he was preparing for a gruelling day ahead of coffee meetings at the local cafes. Take a look around as he uses his Duke Cannon grooming items to transform himself from a tired, unkempt, bed-grimey middle aged male into a slightly cleaner, fresher one.



"I am so ready for a date with Mrs Blackwell after I've splashed on a little Prescott in all the right places."





According to Mr Blackwell, Sweet Caroline is the greatest shower song of all time. And Campfire Soap from Duke Cannon is one of the greatest scented soaps known to humankind.



That face is no accident. It took 57 years and a lot of wear and tear to achieve that fine patina.



"Pro tip," shouts Mr Blackwell, "This product works. Don't let it get it anywhere except your thinning scalp."



We don't actually know who this guy is. But he can nail a pose in our tee shirts and we love how consistent he is.

MR BLACKWELL'S OUTFITTERS; UNIQUE APPAREL FOR THE BOLD AND THE BRAVE

In his first regular job fresh out of school in the 1980s, Mr Blackwell performed administration tasks for an insurance company and, to be honest, he is still unsure exactly what he did. But his boss seemed happy with his work and he presented himself in a business shirt, tie and sensible trousers to earn a starting salary of \$8,350 per annum. Somehow, he managed to save some of that.

A decade later, Mr Blackwell started his advertising agency and, tragically attempting a cool vibe, started wearing tee shirts to the office. The tee shirt thing really took off when he morphed the agency into a tech company and started pitching to Silicon Valley billionaires. Mr Blackwell's tee shirts were exceedingly cool but Mr Blackwell never reached the pinnacle of Mount Coolness. He instead loitered at the basecamp.

Two more decades later and Mr Blackwell feels his accumulated tee shirt wisdom can be shared with younger lads who are now attempting to carve their personal brand on the world by wearing edgy cotton billboards.



MR BLACKWELL'S THREE TOP TEE TIPS

1 You've got between eight and twelve months of weekly wearing before the tee shirt needs to move from workplace-wear to solo chores-wear. No matter how powerful your deodorant is, your torso and shoulders seep into the tee fibres and create what is known as 'presence'. The hottest wash and the most toxic laundry detergent cannot remove 'presence', which builds strength with every wearing. Wash all of your shirts together? It's like simmering the shirts in You Soup. Other humans, including best friends, can detect 'presence' before you can. As soon as they do, that shirt needs to be banished to the lawns / fence painting / leaf raking / spouting maintenance drawer and should never be worn in a social situation again.

2 If you were gifted a shirt at a convention or conference and it sports a slogan like *Breaking Barriers 2022* or *Anything is Possible '23* and it is 100% cotton? It is also 100% compostable. Do your garden and the rest of the universe a favour.

3 If you've decided to become a musician, joined a community theatre or are currently mid-detox, and want to impress someone new with how 'indie' you are, the mass market chain store tee shirt is not for you. The founder of *Blackwell and Sons* spends way too much time coming up with his own line of exclusive tee shirt slogans and graphic designs like the ones shown here, which are the opposite of mass market. In fact, so far, he is the only person who has bought one. His whole wardrobe consists of *Blackwell and Sons* tees.

Do a brother a favour and buy one for yourself or someone you are obliged to spend time with.



SEARCH: 'Tee'

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COMFORT AND JOY

Certain words uttered during the cooler months of the year cause Mr Blackwell to pause, turn his head and immediately seek their context or origin. These words include but are not limited to 'crumble', 'custard', 'cream' and 'cobbler'. Mr Blackwell is an open-fire, jazz, books and comfort food cliché and very few things bring forth his wide-eyed enquiry more than a baked apple and carb topped dessert, fresh from the oven.

To celebrate the comfort season, we have released the following products at *Blackwell and Sons* emporium and online stores to appease your excellent shopping taste.

INCREDIBLY CREAMY

"It's vitally important to complete extensive R&D on new products before they are released to the market," says Mr Blackwell, licking the remains of a new *Blackwell and Sons* Premium Toffee Chocolate off his fingers like some sort of animal. Having passed all pernickety standards of perfection Mr Blackwell only seemed to be applying to this product range, *Blackwell and Sons* has released their new 45g Milk, Dark and Toffee NZ made Chocolate Bars.



SMELLS LIKE GREYTOWN

According to this NEW candle range exclusive to *Blackwell and Sons*, our Victorian village exudes the tantalising whiff of "a stroll through the gardens of Greytown's finest homes." These stunningly beautiful soy candles are made by The Craft Yard right in the heart of Greytown. Martinborough's candle is the scent of "cycling past the vineyards on a warm summer's day" while Featherston's brings forth "fireside reading on a lush leather couch". This South Wairarapa collection of candles has a burn time of up to 45 hours each and features lovely wooden lids and heavy glass bases that can be reused.



NOTHING COULD BE COSIER

The temperature has fallen sharply. Waves of raindrops can be heard tapping furiously on the rooftop. Darkness seems to have arrived even earlier tonight.

Fear not. Mr Blackwell has turned up the air conditioning to a cosy 22C. He has vigorously shaken what could be the world's perfect martini using *Greytown Distilling Company* Tweed gin, garnishing it with a fresh lemon twist, the peel extracted from his own citrus grove's young fruit. An all-new Greytown Soy Candle has been positioned and lit to entwine the room with romance. And a Yorkshire crafted 100% pure new wool throw by Bronte Moon is ready to wrap around not one, but two pajama-clad bodies - that of him and his beloved wife - the ultimate snuggly blanket of warmth and comfort on such a night as this. We have over 20 colours to choose from. See the whole range instore or online.



SCARVES OF WARMTH AND BEAUTY

"Ok Millie, we have around 30 different pure wool scarves, some woven with cashmere, all from the Bronte Moon Mill in Yorkshire and every one exclusive to *Blackwell and Sons*. Can you hold that smile in this beautiful autumnal light to show off each and every classic scarf we have just released?" asked Mr Blackwell whilst brandishing a clipboard, wearing some thick framed glasses and pretending he was some sort of creative agency art director. We have over 30 styles to choose from. See the whole range instore or online.



WINTER WRAPPING

"She is the epitome of autumnal beauty. Her flaming red hair mirrors the fall colours of the leaves as they turn to gold, her sparkling blue eyes match a clear day's vivid sky and the warmth of that generously shared smile reflects the welcome of a glowing open fire that takes the chill off an almost frosty evening as a harvest feast is prepared in a farmhouse kitchen."

Inevitably, Mr Blackwell's poetic ramble about his wife ends with a food reference. In this photograph, Mrs Blackwell is wearing a 100% pure wool Mini Ruana, woven by Bronte Moon's Yorkshire Mill in England. We have over five styles to choose from. See the whole range instore or online.



GLOW IN THE DARK

Stylish, visible and warm on your ride! Our Luna Reflective Mittens have a waterproof topside fabric with a bright, reflective lamination print which makes you visible when cycling and signalling your turns. Luna Reflective Gloves are filled with 250grams thermal hyperloft insulation for warmth. A silicone print on the palm increases grip in all weather and an extra-long cuff adds maximum warmth and protection. Windproof, waterproof, warm, visible and stylish. Available in two sizes.



CONTAINS SOUP. LOL.

This High Camp Firelight 750ml Flask is a 3-piece bar set designed to be shared. It includes two 6-Shooter Tumblers and a 750ml Vacuum Insulated Flask - enough to fit an entire flask of GDC gin or a full bottle of wine. Comes in Copper or Gunmetal.



ROCKET SCIENCE

About the same time Mr Musk was developing the Tesla Model 3, Mr Kelly was developing the perfect electric assist solution for our range of beautiful British handmade Pashley Eight Speed Britannias, Princess Sovereigns and Roadster Sovereigns.

This latest iteration now includes a powerful slimline battery that locks onto the rear carrier, but allows plenty of room to add pannier bags and baskets to the carrier so you can still haul your precious items with you.

Mrs Blackwell recently test rode the all new e-Princess and gave it a five star review. "The e-assist solution not only looks like it was tailor made for a Pashley, it also performs well. If you are facing a hill or a headwind, the anxiety fades quickly as you let the motor do all of the hard work. And the large colour screen is bright and easy to navigate. This is one of the most comfortable e-bikes I've ever ridden. I would recommend this bicycle for all riders who want that extra power when its needed, combined with very simple operation. Technology should be easy. This is."



**MAXIMUM SPEED
UP TO 35KMPH**

(speed limited by software)

**FAST CHARGE SLIM-LINE
BATTERY DELIVERS INSTANT
POWER WHEN IT'S NEEDED**

**BRIGHT AND BOLD LED
SCREEN FOR BATTERY
AND SPEED MONITORING**

**24 MONTH WARRANTY
60-70KM RANGE**



SEARCH: 'Electric'

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EXTRA!

SENSIBLE AND PRACTICAL DESPATCHES FROM THE PROPRIETOR OF MRS BLACKWELL'S VILLAGE BOOKSHOP



NEVER SAVE THINGS FOR BEST, DEAR

In 2012 I was working on a charity event called Fabric-a-Brac where fabric and haberdashery items are donated by the public and the money raised reselling them at a giant — and frequently vicious — town hall event, supporting the work of the Mary Potter Hospice.

As part of the event organisation, a friend and I had agreed to drive around and collect some donations from elderly members of the community who couldn't easily transport them to the venue.

One warm and friendly lady gave us the most beautiful, hand-embroidered tablecloth to add to the sale. She said she'd worked on it during the second world war and saved it up as a special table treatment for the day her husband returned. But her husband never came home. It still brings tears to my eyes when I recall her words: "Never save things for best, Dear."



WHY WE SAVE THINGS FOR BEST

Johnny Gamber, Host of the *Erasable* Podcast, wrote an article last year suggesting that some of our reluctance to use our good stuff may come from a fear of regret.



"We might regret pulling out that pen that we paid too much money for because we could drop it, scratch it, lose it, or it could even be much less nice than we thought before we paid too much for [it]."

I've known this feeling. In the past as I've sharpened a pencil that's a bit rare (looking at you Blackwing 24, current value \$40-\$50), I remind myself that I'm here now, the pencil is here now and it was actually made to be enjoyed. A greater regret would be never getting to use it at all.

Gillian Dunn has a TED Talk and article on the same topic. She suggests that this desire to hold on to things usually comes from one of two feelings:

The first is "I don't have enough." In western culture, this scarcity mindset entered around the time of the Great Depression, when many people held on to scraps of everything and anything, in the hopes that it would protect them against loss. And, let's face it, capitalism thrives on telling us we need more, and more, and more. So when we have something we deem special, we might hold onto it, protecting ourselves from some vague future time when we might not be able to replace it or get more.

The other feeling is "I am not enough." This is the feeling that something about us or our circumstance doesn't live up to the promise of that special thing. The necklace is too fancy to wear every day, the china is too nice to put out just for family, the candle is too pretty to burn without a special occasion, and so on.

Dunn is an ER nurse, so she often sees people at the moment everything changes. And her message is, "Life is what you make it, so make it one that you enjoy." It's a mindset shift to remind ourselves that we have enough and we are enough to enjoy those special things right now, today.

Since losing quite a few possessions of my own — including many antique books and almost all of both grandmothers' "good" china — in the 2010 Christchurch earthquake, I've been pretty fearless about using the good stuff in my life, knowing that each item's time in my possession may be fleeting.

It's turned out to be a surprisingly useful outlook since I opened the bookshop. I frequently find myself helping customers wrap their heads around the idea that they should actually use the \$7 pencil, the \$50 notebook or the \$300 fountain pen that they're about to buy from us.

If you need a hand, start by considering how nice your day would be if you actually use the [insert nice thing in your possession].

For example, last year I bought Mr Blackwell a Burberry dress shirt (after a win on the slot machines in Las Vegas, but that's a separate story). It remained in the original bag, on the shelf in his closet for almost a year because he felt that it's "too nice" to wear. I suggested he take it out and iron it for Valentine's Day dinner, and not in so many words he told me later that such a nice shirt gave him a shot of self-confidence.

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR USING YOUR BEST THINGS UP

Here are some additional suggestions for overcoming this unique form of procrastination:

- Set limits around how long or how many. If you find you have a tendency to collect nice things, try setting some rules on how long you can hold on to them, or how many you can have before you use one up. For example, set a rule that you can only keep that “special” notebook for a year before you use it — or that you can only stockpile up to three notebooks at a time before you use one.
- Consumables help create experiences, and the memory of the experience will last longer than the consumable ever will. The memory of the pleasure you get setting the table with the fine china or drinking the fancy wine will last much longer than the objects will.
- Create your own special occasions! There’s no reason why a weeknight dinner isn’t a good enough occasion to burn the nice candles. Don’t wait for special occasions to happen when you can create them any time you wish.
- If you feel you have too much of something special you’ve saved up, why not give some away as gifts? You get the pleasure of giving and of knowing that the things will be appreciated and enjoyed.

In the grand scheme of things, chances are that the circumstances in your life are perfect right now, so use the thing! You never know when your circumstances might change.

So here's a reminder for anyone who needs to hear it today: **It is nice to have the good stuff, but it's even nicer to use it.**

WHOLE FOOD AT HOME

It started in 2017 with a used copy of *The Whole 30*, Melissa and Dallas Hardwig's best selling book, which I purchased for \$12 in a bookshop in Eureka, CA.

I'd heard about their whole foods eating plan and when I saw that this particular copy had a dedication in the front: "To Jill. Love from Grandma Lou." I decided it was time for me to have a copy of my own. I'm always a sucker for a book with a handwritten message!

The Whole 30 challenges you to eat only vegetables, fruit, meat, fish, eggs, nuts, seeds and some oils for 30 days. It's best to focus on what you CAN eat, but what's out is booze, dairy, legumes, grains and any other form of highly processed carbohydrate including sugar.

The book is not a "diet" designed to help you lose weight — although Mr Blackwell and I have both lost a few kilograms each time we adhere to it for an entire month — it's really a reset for your digestive system, and an opportunity to figure out which foods might be making you sluggish, spotty, sensitive, or any other food related issues you have going on.



We credit this book with not only our ongoing appreciation of whole foods, but also unlocking the doors to a world that has included gardening in a serious way.



JUMPING ON THE GARDENING WAGON

When you're creating so many meals with a foundation of meat and vegetables, you quickly feel limited by the choices at the supermarket. We made the decision to completely ditch our back lawn and replaced it with 12 large raised beds, fruit and nut trees, and last year the addition of a beautiful glasshouse. (That's a picture of me inside, making notes about our tomatoes.)

Supplemented by a weekly delivery from the Vagabond Vege CSA, this year we've purchased

only onions and citrus from the perishable part of the supermarket and citrus only until our own trees are mature enough. But this isn't about being anti-supermarket — although I think we've all had a wake up call in the last few years about our reliance on them as the sole provider of our food — it's just an opportunity to share the joy we've found in relying on ourselves and our own backyard.

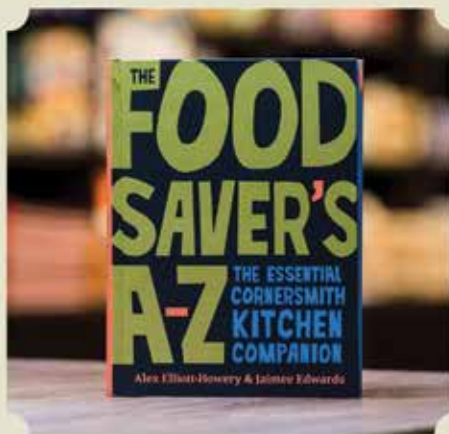
We're both getting a huge amount of satisfaction from gardening to feed ourselves as well as a few friends and neighbours. We find ourselves outside more often and like most things in our life, we get a boost from working together on another project. As an added bonus, our backyard seems to be full of life — the insects and the birds as well as the occasional rabbit! — and this life also seems to make us feel happier and healthier, even if it means we forfeit some of our fruit to the birds.

READ ALL ABOUT IT

This selection of books I can personally recommend as a starting point to changing the way you manage food in your own life.

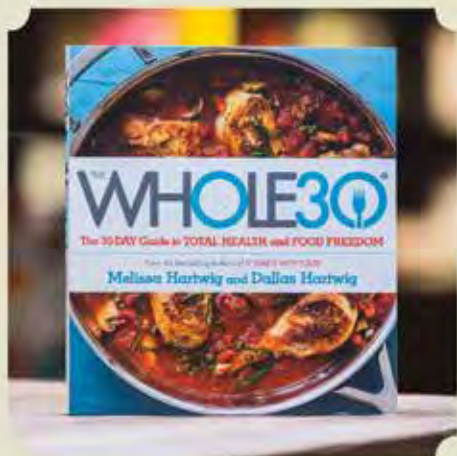
FOOD SAVER'S A-Z

These two Australians have been lighting up my kitchen since late last year! Dip into this encyclopaedic collection of fruits and vegetables whenever you're not sure. For example, the pages on Beets cover what this vegetable goes with, how to store it and where you can use it as a substitute for another fruit or vegetable. The book also has a focus on using every last piece of your produce. For example, do you know that the leaves and stems on your beets (normally chopped off and discarded at the supermarket) are actually usable? They're closely related to silverbeet, and can be treated in a similar way, stalks and all!



THE WHOLE 30

I believe I've said enough about this one. I'm sure you can tell if it's a challenge you'd be up for!



FOOLPROOF FREEZER

Preparing meals from the freezer doesn't have to mean an over reliance on unhealthy, highly-processed food-like substances. If you've ever felt that time and motivation is the barrier between you and healthy eating, you'll find some great tips and ideas in Foolproof Freezer.



WASTE NOT WANT NOT

Author Sarah Burtcher is on a mission to save Kiwi shoppers \$1.17 billion dollars! That's the amount of food waste our little island nation produces every year. Sarah's no-nonsense advice will relieve some pressure on the planet and your wallet at the same time.



If you're interested in growing your own, we carry a collection of New Zealand-specific gardening books including *The Abundant Garden*, *The Edible Backyard* and *Homegrown Happiness*, as well as many more.

If you're in the area, feel free to pop into the bookshop and let us direct you to our favourite resources. These books are all available in our online store, too.



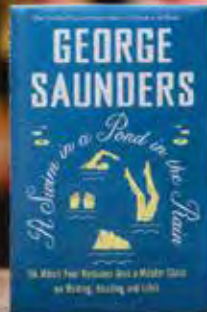
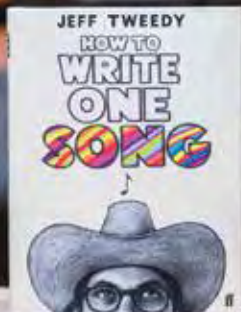
BROADENING OUR READING HABITS: SEVEN WAYS TO DISCOVER NEW BOOKS

Sharpening vocabulary, improving IQ, expanding emotional range, and igniting our creativity are just some of the reasons we're encouraged to push beyond our comfort zone — in life and in our reading!

In 2022, I set myself a reading challenge aimed at disrupting my own patterns: no Steinbeck or Hemingway, nothing that could even loosely be classified as a productivity book, and no new cookbooks.

And it worked out remarkably well. I read more than I would normally (which is already quite a bit) because I was frequently finding myself engaged with something that felt brand new. I often felt that exhilarating feeling when dormant parts of my reading brain opened up their heavy, dusty old doors and led me down a new passageway of surprises.

Maybe you're not so interested in dedicating a whole year to the task but if you're looking to mix up your reading life and broaden your reading list, here are a few suggestions that worked for me:



1. FOLLOW BREADCRUMBS

When I read Nick Offerman's book *Where the Deer and Antelope Play*, he shared a story of a hiking trip to Glacier National Park with author George Saunders and musician Jeff Tweedy. It's amazing to me now, but at that stage I didn't know who George Saunders was. I'd read Jeff Tweedy's book *How to Write One Song* prior and figured if George is friends with Jeff and Nick, he might just be worth checking out — and I was right. Have a think back to some other books you've enjoyed and who the author referenced. This could be a good starting point.

2. ASK YOUR FAVOURITE AUTHORS

Find interviews where authors you already like talk about their favourite books. A Google search will give you most of what you need for this one, or try podcast interviews with authors — I find *The Penguin Podcast* is frequently a good source of ideas, though obviously is limited to their represented authors.

3. GO ON! JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER

Walk around a bookshop and just pick up the covers that appeal to you. The meaning of this advice - not to judge a book by its cover - is meant to encourage you not to overlook a book because of its modest (or even unattractive) packaging, but you're on a different mission here. If you're in a smaller indie bookshop and you notice several books on the shelves that you already like, chances are the bookshop owner or buyer may have similar tastes to you. Their bookshop already represents a curated shortlist, as there are thousands of new books that booksellers could stock every month, so see what else they've chosen to sell.

4. ASK A BOOKSELLER

If you ever want to make a bookseller's day, tell them about your mission and ask them to suggest a few overlooked books that they wish they got to recommend more often. Watch their faces light up with joy! And don't worry, no bookseller

will be offended if you don't like their first few recommendations — either ask them to keep suggesting, or narrow things down to a 'favourite biography you've read in the past two years' or 'who in store is the most interested in nature writing?' Can we get their input?

5. ASK YOUR FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES

It's by no means unusual for me to have coffee with a friend and immediately enquire about what they're reading, what they're writing with, or what kind of journal they're filling up! But it's also a great icebreaker if you're chatting with colleagues, clients, or customers — see what's getting those around you fired up.

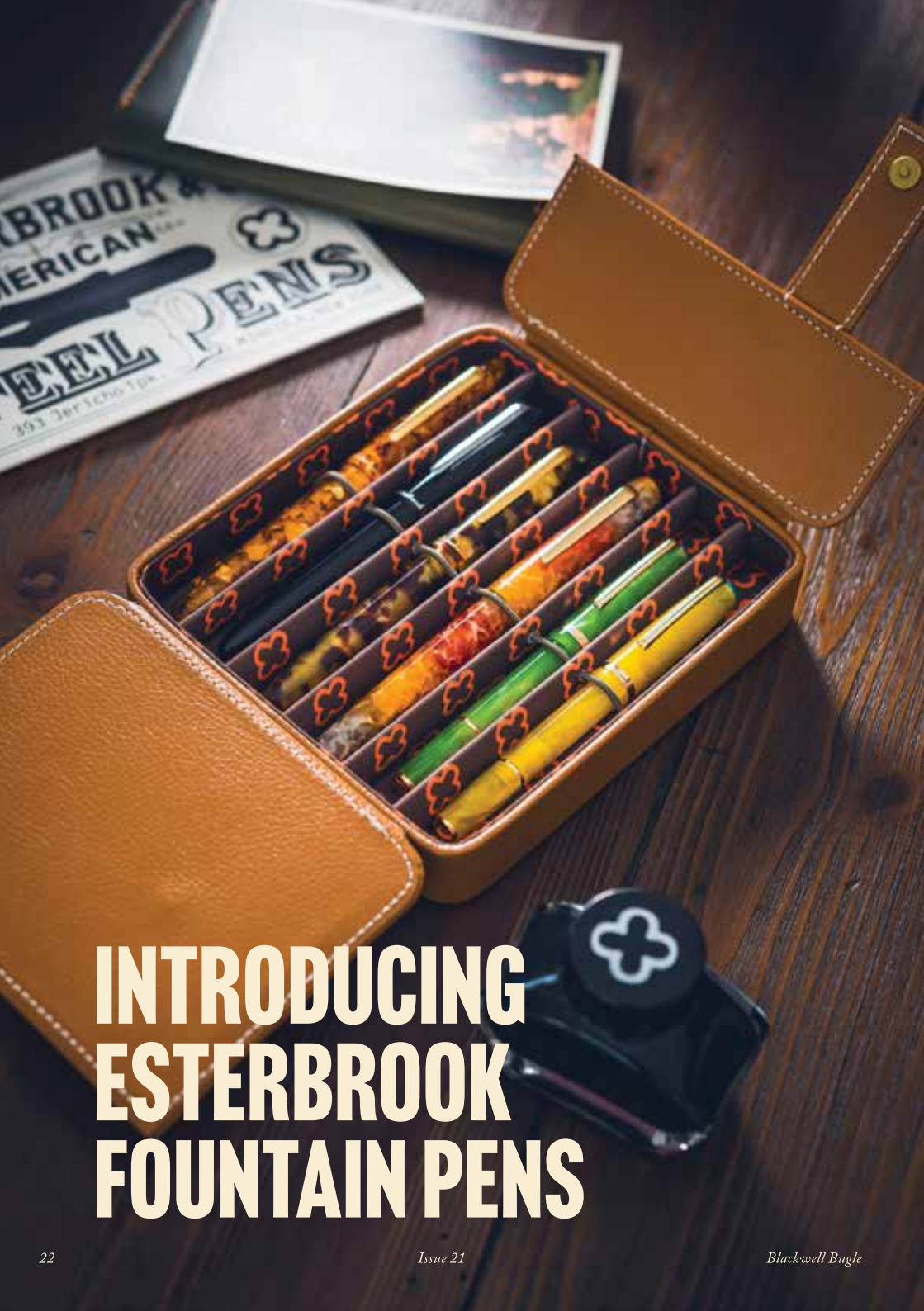
6. ASK AN APP

If you like to keep track of what you read, you might be interested in the StoryGraph website and app. It's similar to its better known competitor, GoodReads, but StoryGraph collects statistics on what you read — and then uses them to make recommendations of other books you might enjoy. (It's also owned independently, and not by Amazon, so that's a point in its favour, if you ask me.) If you get your friends on the site as well, you can see what they're reading and add ideas from their stack.

7. ASK THE INTERNET

There's a special universe inside Instagram called #bookstagram - where avid readers share reviews and pretty pictures of the books they're reading. The bookstagram scene does lean more into fiction and by the nature of the platform is a younger reader but if that's you, then this could be a great place to find ideas. There's also #booktok if you're on TikTok.

If you like the idea of broadening your reading list, create your own personal reading challenge. Either set some “do not read” rules for yourself as I did, or try challenging yourself to read a book from an indie publisher, a genre you wouldn't normally read, an author you've never tried, and so on.



INTRODUCING ESTERBROOK FOUNTAIN PENS



SO, WHAT IS A FOUNTAIN PEN?

By definition, a fountain pen consists of a metal writing tip, called a nib, and a refillable reservoir for ink. Doesn't really sound that intimidating, does it? Fountain pens are distinguishable from earlier types of pens by the reservoir, because earlier models had to be continually dipped into a pot of ink (and could be quite messy as a result).

Da Vinci included drawings of a pen with a reservoir in his notes and may even have created one for himself. A 17th century German inventor created one made from two quills, one inserted within the other. But the contemporary version of the fountain pen was created and patented in the early 1800s.

The Esterbrook Pen Company was founded in the U.S.A in 1858 and became, at one point, one of the largest pen manufacturers in the world. Their pens were used by presidents from Lincoln to Kennedy. And legends including Donald Duck and Snoopy were created with Esterbrook pens.

HOW IS A FOUNTAIN PEN DIFFERENT FROM OTHER PENS?

Most inexpensive, modern pens, including ballpoint, gel, rollerball and biro, work the same way; they use a small, revolving ball at the tip to dispense ink.

Apart from the different tips, the other main difference between fountain pens and other common types of pens is the inks they use:

Ballpoint pens use a thick, oil-based ink. It dries quickly and lasts a long time, but can provide a scratchy writing experience.

Gel pens use pigments suspended in a water-based gel. Gel inks are precise and vibrant, but they tend to skip more than other types of pens and take longer to dry than ballpoint ink.

Rollerball pens use a water-based ink that is most similar to the ink used in fountain pens. This ink flows more freely which provides a more lubricated feel while writing.

Fountain pens use a water-based ink that comes in a vast array of colours and styles. These inks provide a very pleasant writing experience, but take a little longer to dry than ballpoint pen ink.



WHY ESTERBROOK?

Why did we choose to bring the Esterbrook line of pens specifically into Mrs Blackwell's?

Esterbrook pens are best described as comprehensive but accessible. Their line of pens caters for new enthusiasts and experienced collectors alike. The world of fountain pens can sometimes be slightly snobby - some pens can run into five figures for serious collectors. But Esterbrook pens are priced in a range that is acceptable to first-time buyers and collectors alike.

HOW TO CHOOSE YOUR FOUNTAIN PEN

One of the things I've come to like best about fountain pens, and Esterbrook pens in particular, is you can customise your selection to create a pen perfect for you and the way you like to write.

First, you start by choosing the style and material of the pen body. We carry Esterbrook's core range of pen styles - the JR Pocket Pen, the Estie and the Camden - and each has a core colour range as well as seasonal colours and materials that are produced each year in a limited run.

Then you choose your trim colour; silver or gold. Most Esterbrook models are available in both colours.

Finally, you'll want to choose your nib, which will determine how thick a line you will get when you write. Esterbrook nibs come in a range of sizes from extra fine to stub as well as their specialist Journaler and Scribe nibs.

WHO IS A FOUNTAIN PEN FOR?

Fountain pens are for anyone who likes to write! Don't be intimidated or afraid to try one out, especially if you're the type of person who loves to journal, take notes, and write letters by hand.

If you want to try one out, feel free to come into the shop, where we have several that you can test. Our Superior Book Clerks can help answer any questions you may have (or, at least, direct you to the right resources to answer your questions!).

CONVERTERS VERSUS CARTRIDGES

There are two main ways to refill your fountain pen: ink converters and ink cartridges. The one you choose will depend a lot on your writing needs and habits.

An ink converter is essentially a small syringe or plunger that draws ink up into the pen from an ink bottle.

An ink cartridge is a disposable ink container that you load into the pen to refill it and discard when it's empty.

Both systems have pros and cons.

Using an ink converter can be a slightly messy process, especially when you're just learning. But ink converters are much more versatile, allowing you access to a huge range of different types and colours of inks. Ink converters are also more affordable overall.

Ink cartridges are more convenient and portable, especially when travelling. But they are much more expensive (if measured by the cost per millilitre) and less environmentally friendly, because you can't refill them. I hate the idea of throwing away all those little bits of plastic, so it's an ink converter for me.

CARE AND KEEPING OF YOUR ESTERBROOK FOUNTAIN PEN

Once you decide to buy your first fountain pen, you'll want to take a few minutes to familiarise yourself with how to care for it — because it's slightly more involved than remembering to recap your biro!

But in truth, filling and caring for your fountain pen doesn't take up that much time or effort. And, in my opinion, caring for your pen is one of those nice chores that requires us to slow down, be in the moment, and reconnect with a more relaxed way of life.



THE SIMPLE JOYS OF LETTER WRITING IN A DIGITAL WORLD

As often as possible, Mr Blackwell and I nominate the end of the week as Analogue Sunday.

Essentially, the only rule is no screen time; we put away our phones in favour of a bike ride, diving into a good book, or cooking up a traditional Sunday roast.

And one of my favourite analogue activities is writing notes and letters to friends and family around the world. As a fan of stationery and the written word, it's only natural that I'd gravitate toward rekindling this "lost art," even though it may require a bit more effort to post a card or letter than to send a text or an email.

Letters are special because they require effort. One of my favourite books, *Four Thousand Weeks* suggests *Convenience makes things easy, but without regard for whether easiness is truly what's most valuable in any given context.*

"Take those services that let you design and then remotely mail a birthday card, so you never see or touch the physical item yourself. Better than nothing, perhaps, but sender and recipient both know that it's a poor substitute for purchasing a card in a shop, writing on it by hand, and then walking to the postbox to post it, because contrary to the cliché, it isn't really the thought that counts, but the effort — which is to say, the inconvenience." - Oliver Burkeman



We only sell blank cards at the shop by design, but a lot of people are looking for cards with commentary inside. Maybe it's because it frees them from having to find the "right thing" to say, or because they're nervous about crafting a message left to their own devices, but for those of us who enjoy the challenge, that little blank canvas offers so much possibility.

FIVE EASY WAYS TO CULTIVATE A CORRESPONDENCE HABIT

If the idea of sending more notes and letters appeals, but you aren't sure where or how to start, we've got a few suggestions.

BUY SOME BEAUTIFUL CARDS OR STATIONERY

While this could seem a slightly mercenary suggestion from someone who sells stationery and cards, I do wholeheartedly believe that beautiful tools will inspire you. I tend to think of this like new running shoes, and how much more motivated I am to get out for a walk with new shoes. Pick up some quality note paper, a fine pen, or a few blank cards and you'll be more likely to find reasons to use them than if you have to run out to purchase a card at the last minute.

FEEL FREE TO WRITE SHORT

There's no need to feel daunted at the prospect of crafting a lengthy letter when a few short sentences will do. I can vouch for this as we often put a little handwritten note in all our online orders, and we receive feedback about how it was appreciated. Imagine how much more impactful it would be from someone who actually knows you.

IF YOU DON'T WANT TO WRITE – DRAW

One of the letter writing prompts I saw while drafting this article suggested illustrating your day — and if you're artistically inclined, I think that would be a fantastic alternative to writing. Additionally, you can decorate your envelope for even more personalisation and joy.

DON'T LET PERFECT BE THE ENEMY OF GOOD

While fancy paper, beautiful envelopes, and Mrs Blackwell's stamps are delightful, I promise that your recipient would be just as excited to receive a note scrawled on a scrap of lined notebook paper or a sticky note. The point is to create meaning rather than spend a ton of time, money, or effort and you can create meaning for someone in your life with the simplest tools and supplies you already have on hand. The point is to actually send the note rather than obsessing over it.

No matter what you write, it's a very special kind of analogue connection in our busy digital world. That's why they stand out from a text or an email.

Historical letters give us such an intimate glimpse into what we know about people from the past, and while I suspect social media may in some ways serve this purpose in the future, think of the difference between what you post for the masses to see and what you might share in a personal letter.

In fact, there's a whole genre of literature and epistolary novels that have sprung from letters and letter writing. If you're feeling inspired, don't wait; pick up a pen and send a letter to someone today.

To help you get started on letter writing, bring this page into the bookshop and get

**20% off cards when
you buy five or more in
the same transaction.**

Buying online: add five or more cards to your cart and use the code FIVECARDS at checkout to get your discount.

MAY 2023

Sunday, 14th:
Mrs Blackwell's Mother's
Day Afternoon Tea

Join us for Featherston Booktown's ever-popular and delightfully old-fashioned High Tea, proudly sponsored by Mrs Blackwell's Village Bookshop. This year's featured authors include Hinemoa Elder (Aroha and Wawata), Stacey Morrison (Māori Made Fun), and Emma Espiner (There's A Cure For This).
www.booktown.org.nz

MAY 2023

Greytown Distilling Company
Winter Gin Release

The Solstice Selection launched early May consisting of three distinctive gins especially formulated for winter sipping. Try these special limited edition FROSTBITE, FESTIVAL and APRICITY gins before they all sell out.
www.greytowngin.com

JULY 2023

All Month Long
July 1 - 31st

Greytown's Main Street comes alive for our Annual Festival of Christmas. Visit Greytown throughout July for evening light shows, food trucks and late night shopping Friday and Saturday!
www.greytownvillage.com

OCTOBER 2023

Saturday, 7th: Wairarapa
Bookshop Hop

Celebrate NZ Bookshop Day with 13 booksellers across the Wairarapa. Visit bookstores, collect stamps (and other surprises) with your purchase for a chance to win \$1000 in bookshop vouchers!
www.bookshopshop.nz

DECEMBER 2023

JANUARY 2024
Saturday 20th: Greytown's
Annual Sidewalk Sale

Truckstop, Greytown's popular outdoor foodtruck dining camp reopens on the first Friday of December with live music, a variety of dining options and space at our picnic tables for up to 120 guests. Plus cornhole for the kids!

If the idea of a Huge Sale Event fills you with more dread than excitement, you'll love the Greytown Village version. At our annual Sidewalk Sale, you won't find anyone brawling over a discounted TV, but you will find some sweet deals on one-offs, samples, and overstocked merchandise from a great range of locally-owned small businesses.
www.greytownvillage.com

MARCH 2024

Blackwell & Sons
National Tweed Ride

Join us Easter Saturday as Greytown's charming leafy byways once again resound with joyous hoots, bubbly bonhomie and tinkling bicycle bells as riders from all over fair Aotearoa take part in the fourth National Tweed Ride.
www.blackwellandsons.nz

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