

humble beginnings 10 years ago ...

● A big hand

In a world of mass production and brand hype, it is a pleasure to find a company using traditional craftsmanship to hand-make French Provincial-style furniture.

Ashton Grove had humble beginnings 10 years ago in Christchurch, New Zealand, where founder Robert Hood made coffee tables in the spare room of his house.

Three years ago Robert crossed the Tasman to open a boutique store in South Yarra, specialising in furniture that is always in balance, is well designed, can be discreet or very powerful and is functional.

A hand-made product, crafted from French oak and American cherry wood, the timbers are enriched with layers of traditional umbers and tar, and finished with hand-rubbed shellacs and waxes.

The range of furniture is impressive. There are chairs, chests, large or small dining settings, buffets, book cases, coffee tables and cabinets, all made using traditional furniture skills – techniques that need a craftsman's affection for the task, which makes them a rarity today.

Ashton Grove's designers work closely with clients, helping to put form to personal furniture needs.

Ashton Grove, 336A Toorak Road, South Yarra,



Ashton Grove

Senior Mecca Cosmetics make-up magician, the flamboyant Tony Beaumann, has been dispatched to the new store to demonstrate the wonders of products.

"It's all about cosmeceuticals," says Tony. "Bringing together the best skin care from all over the world."

All the brands are exclusive to Mecca Cosmetics. There is a focus on in-store service, and every staff member is a trained make-up and skin-care expert.

Mecca Cosmetics also sells long-lasting scented candles, wonderful, heady fragrances, and a fake tan that doesn't streak.