



Lee Suckling at The Cupcake Collection.

Open for business

Proud Cantabrian Lee Suckling wants us to know the shelves are stocked and coffee is brewing in many of the businesses around his city

After the earthquake, the city was depicted as a ghost town, likened to a war zone. The media told New Zealand, "Christchurch will rise up". However, in the weeks since February 22 it has become apparent the city isn't waiting – the rising has already begun. The CBD might be inoperable for some time, but suburban Christchurch has always been where much of the city's heart is. It is where the Sunday coffee brews and the best vintage wares hide. The village-like suburbs are home to many small businesses, shops and eateries that have reopened speedily for one reason: they're determined to survive. Christchurch is a city full of small businesses built on determination and courage. And as the CBD takes steps to rebuild, it is in the suburbs that the city will prosper. I talked to many businesses that have appeared in NZ House & Garden. Here are their survival stories.

LEE SUCKLING

SOUTH

According to Fiona Fidow of Colombo Street's **The Cupcake Collection**, (03) 332 8432, a prompt post-quake return to trading by stores in her area gave the entire neighbourhood a confidence boost. "Businesses have to support each other. Beckenham is a community and we're all sharing this tragic burden," she says, noting that a shopping destination like Beckenham Central is "no use" unless everyone is operating as usual. "We need each other open to get people in." Within a few metres from Fiona's shop is **The Reading Bug**, thereadingbug.co.nz, **The Mohair Store**, themohairstore.co.nz, and **Coffee Culture**, (03) 331 8100, all of which are working hard to provide usual services.

The Port Hills suburb of Cashmere is on form. "It's been a little bunker up here," says Kat Wilkinson of Dyer's Pass Road cafe **Emperor's New Clothes**, (03) 332 0131, which swiftly reopened alongside antiques and interiors store **Plane Tree**, planetree.co.nz. "We've been really busy; people come in and cry, laugh and experience all sorts of emotions," says Kat. "The neighbourhood cafe has become the place to share stories of the

earthquake." Down the hill, **Taste at Twenty**, (03) 982 1399, **Cashmere Gallery**, (03) 332 0652, and **Zeroes**, (03) 337 1033, are all welcoming customers. In Huntsbury, gift shops **Kaizuka**, kaizuka.co.nz, and **Bella Gifts**, (03) 337 0903, are both open.

EAST

It'll be some time before it's business as usual in Sumner, the seaside township that was severely hit. However, the cafes were humming as soon as water was flowing, with coffee-loving locals diving in for their caffeine fixes. **Tart Cafe and Deli**, (03) 326 7111, **Dot Com**, (03) 326 4000, and **Salt**, (03) 326 4774, are all brewing as usual; the 73-year-old **Hollywood Theatre**, (03) 326 6102, has its silver screens lit up and the doors are open again at **The Cornershop Bistro**, cornershopbistro.co.nz.



The Mohair Store.



Zeroes.



"The sooner we start trading, the safer our jobs are"

NORTH

North Canterbury was an immediate haven for Cantabrians, and many headed that way in the days following the earthquake, keeping businesses busy. "The week after the quake, our custom tripled," says Tony Clearwater of Rangiora's **Café de la Gare**, cafedelagare.co.nz. Other North Canterbury-based businesses such as **The Linen Collection**, thelinencollection.co.nz, **Emma's at Oxford**, emmasatoxford.com, and **The Gingerbread House**, (03) 310 6805, are pulling in day-trippers and those who have sought temporary accommodation nearby. Elsewhere in wider Canterbury, Akaroa has also greeted new business as restaurants such as **The Little Bistro**, (03) 304 7314, provide fine dining.

CENTRAL

At the time of writing, in late March, Christchurch's central city was still inaccessible. Many businesses **NZ House & Garden** has featured still have uncertain futures. While they wait, some owners are finding other ways to operate. "The sooner we start trading, the safer our jobs are," says Suzannah Tonascia of **Bolt of Cloth** on Madras Street, which is in the red zone but selling from its online shop, boltofcloth.com. "As the dust settles, the reality that we all need to buy groceries and pay our mortgages settles in too." While Victoria Street – the hub of Christchurch's design scene – is also

within the cordon, some of its stores are also trading online, including **Household Linens**, household-linens.com, and **Matisse**, matisse.co.nz. **James Dunlop Textiles**, jamesdunlop.co.nz, is at a temporary location but offers showroom access by appointment and plans to open fully by mid-April. "We remain focused on supporting our people, assisting our community to rebuild and ensuring that our systems are set up so that as little disruption as possible is experienced by our customers," says general manager Jonathan Reid. Similarly, **David Shaw Furniture** has relocated its showroom to its factory at 23 Te Rama Place, Wainoni.

WEST

Many furniture companies have found refuge in west Christchurch, including the former central city staple **McKenzie & Willis**, mckenzieandwillis.co.nz, now at 181 Blenheim Road. Down the street you'll find **Trenzseater**, trenzseater.com, **Davies Furniture**, daviesfurniture.co.nz,

and **Window Treatments**, window-treatments.co.nz. Nearby in Sockburn is **Mahootus**, mahootus.co.nz. **Warner Fences**, warnerfences.co.nz, in Papanui and **Fitzroy Furniture**, fitzroyfurniture.com, in Burnside, are also operating at full capacity. "The fundamentals of people having pride in their homes will remain," says Warner's Tim Austin, who sees Christchurch being transformed into a vibrant new city. "We look forward to being a part of that transformation."

Neighbouring industrial area Addington has an eclectic mix, including **Addington Coffee Co-op**, addingtoncoffee.org.nz, **Akaroa Salmon**, akaroasalmon.co.nz, and **Creative Junk**, (03) 379 4040. Other western suburbs such as Merivale and Riccarton offer foodie and homeware delights, including **Sweet Kitchen**, sweetkitchen.co.nz, **Corso de' Fiori**, corso.co.nz, Untouched World's **Native Garden Cafe**, (03) 357 9499, and **Little Britain**, littlebritain.co.nz. ■

ON THE HOME FRONT Ruurd and Rachael Bekema's gracious Cashmere Hills home, (NZ H&G, August 2010) stood up well to the February earthquake, though their brick chimneys will have to be removed and rebuilt. Luckily, Rachael packed their antique china, collected over 33 years of marriage, after the first quake. The rest of their vast collection of china and glass was in an open pantry – and all of it was destroyed. **For more on how Christchurch homes fared visit nzhouseandgarden.co.nz.** ■

