



Star status: her new-found fame as a 'covergirl' has taken Joy Evans by surprise.

Coastal getaway her pride and Joy

Claire Heaney

VICTORIAN tourism icon Joy Evans is bemused by her new role as covergirl.

The multi-award winning tourism operator is one of the stars of this year's *Energise Enterprise* small business festival magazine.

To be included in next Tuesday's *Herald Sun*, the magazine has details of the more than 400 events featured in the festival, starting later this month.

Ms Evans is included because she was one of the entrepreneurs in last year's Small Business Heroes Photographic Exhibition.

The energetic Ms Evans launched the business with her late husband, George, 24 years ago.

The couple had bought out relatives in the family dairy farm and were looking to diversify by having a tourism offering.

Her husband died suddenly from cancer and she had to look at ways "to hang on to the farm".

Johanna Seaside Cottages began with one house and over the years she has added to the Great Ocean Road tourism business to make it a huge success.

"It was the first accommodation on an operative farm," she said.

Ms Evans said the destination allowed visitors to see a working farm, spy whales and enjoy free range eggs and vegies.

There is a focus on sustainability.

Ms Evans also runs Holiday Great Ocean Road, a specialist property management and accommodation booking service.

The business has 50 properties on its books and employs 24 people.

The highlights

Fast Times Ahead: Invigorating Ideas to Prepare Your Business Regional Roadshow. Expert Rob Hartnett delivers workshops in Bendigo, Traralgon, Alexandra, Benalla, Colac, Daylesford, Maryborough and Swan Hill, August 3-24.

Small Business Heroes Exhibition: The Designers. Free. The Atrium, Federation Square, Melbourne, August 6-14, and Stockland Traralgon Shopping Centre, Gippsland, August 19-26.

Business By Design Market: A one-day exhibition and market with a designer theme. Explore a career in design, be inspired by design businesses or just buy a stylish gift from some leading Melbourne design brands. Exhibitors are welcome to apply to show their wares by phoning 132 215. The Atrium, Federation Square, 10am-4pm, August 13.

Net link: www.business.vic.gov.au/energise

Ms Evans said the personalised touch had contributed to the success of both businesses.

Her Johanna Seaside Cottages have 87 per cent occupancy and many are repeat customers.

Word of mouth is a strong driver for the businesses.

"Most people kill for that sort of occupancy," she said.

■ Look out for your *Business Owner Energise Enterprise* guide in Tuesday's *Herald Sun*.