



High profile businesswoman in town for charity

Charlotte Di Vita, UK-based and internationally renowned businesswoman and staunch promoter of ethical trading, will be appearing in Gallery Gifts on May 16th.

Di Vita has raised more than \$1.3 million for environmental projects in Africa and South America in the past, and will be selling individually handcrafted enamel teapots during her visit to further assist her charity work.

For more information call Gallery Gifts on (08) 8232 1144, or simply turn up on the day at Shop 3, Adelaide Arcade.





shopwatch

shopwatch@heraldsun.com.au

London Mail takes you through the shops of Melbourne

It's a little teapot, short and cute

THE ancient skills of Chinese artisans have been revived to re-create the prized trinkets of Georgian society.

Miniature teapots — handmade, handpainted and made from enamel — are sold worldwide via Trade Plus Aid, a fundraising organisation that employs villagers in northern China.

The 12cm teapots cost from \$69.95. The many designs include New World Symphony (left) and each is a numbered limited edition.

Trade Plus Aid founder Charlotte de Vita visits Melbourne today as part of a promotional tour for the collectable teapots.

Stockists are David Jones stores; Madeleine Hall, 349 Little Bourke St, city; Macleod Fine China, Macleod; Molino's Galleria, Caulfield; The Art Market, Beaumaris; The Body Orchard, Daylesford; The Garden Complex, Shepparton; Giftables, Cranbourne Park Shopping Centre; Kenny's Cardiology, Eastland Shopping Centre, Ringwood.

Meet de Vita today at Giftables, 11am-1pm, and Kenny's, 3pm-5pm.

Those who buy a teapot today from these two stores will receive a signed commemorative certificate from de Vita.



FRONT COVER OF EMPLOYMENT SECTION AT BACK (reduced 50%)



“Having set up the first contemporary successful charitable collectable brand, I’ll be living in Ho Chi Min City, Vietnam, assisting many of the thousands of street children.”

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– Charlotte di Vita, managing director of Trade plus Aid
– for her work story, see page 2

PAGE 2 (reduced 50%)

careernews

cover profile

raising funds for some of the world’s poorest communities is a rewarding career

Name: Charlotte di Vita. **Occupation:** Managing director of Trade plus Aid – a charitable organisation whose primary aim is self-sufficiency for some of the world’s poorest communities, which it assists. (To date Trade plus Aid has raised \$3,177,187 and returned this to producer communities to assist them to become self-supporting through ethical trade, while \$475,376 has been raised for rainforest conservation, to build and staff schools, to assist destitute children and to support mentally and physically challenged adults in 42 of the poorest communities in 12 countries in Africa, Asia and South America.) **Age:** 35. **Worst job:** Working in the January sale for clothes shop, Jaeger. It was awful. I was supposed to work there for three weeks and managed just five days. **Career highlights:** Being greeted by 1000 primary children in an African village where I funded the first school – it was an extraordinary experience. Opening a plain brown envelope, which I thought was a tax bill, to find a letter from the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, asking if I’d be willing to accept an MBE from Her Majesty, the Queen, in her birthday honour’s list. **Wise thoughts:** Remember that the word “impossible”



Trade plus Aid chief Charlotte di Vita

is there to let you prove people wrong, not to make you dance to their tune. Dreams can be achieved with focus, commitment and passion. You’ll spend the best part of your life, 40 to 50 hours each week, at ‘work’ so you owe it to yourself to try any idea you may have, however daunting, so that it is one of the most interesting

“Remember that the word ‘impossible’ is there to let you prove people wrong, not to make you dance to their tune.”

– Charlotte di Vita

parts of your life. **Best part of your workday:** Receiving reports from my field staff on the progress of the charitable projects funded with the profits of my business, Trade plus Aid. **Most unusual thing that’s happened to you in your working life:** Walking into the enormous throne room of Buckingham Palace to find that HM, the Queen, remembered my father, whom she met only once 20 years before, then discovering that she collects enamels and that she’s warm and kind. **How do you get the most out of your**

career: By giving all I can. **How did you get here:** Through persistence, focus, the support of friends, family and staff, and a great deal of hard work. **Where do you see yourself in five years’ time:** Having set up the first contemporary successful charitable collectable brand, I’ll be living in Ho Chi Min City, Vietnam, assisting as many of

the thousands of street children who presently fend for themselves as Trade plus Aid profits allow. Travelling through Mongolia to establish traditional ger villages to allow for the fostering of the children living in abject poverty in city sewers or housed in prisons, despite having committed no crime. Raising my own family, having found that elusive man. **Winding down:** I travel. I’ve just been to Burma, where I left my heart time and time again, and to Bhutan, where the pristine forests are truly the last Shangri-La.



Ethical business in Canberra



Charlotte di Vita MBE in Canberra. Inset: The handmade enamelled copper teapots made in her factory in China, which two lucky Valley Voice readers can win, entry details below:

Charlotte di Vita MBE, businesswoman and fundraiser was briefly in Canberra earlier this week to promote the benefits of ethical business and trade with the developing world.

According to Charlotte, the impulse to pursue ethical business practices came from a trip to Ghana over ten years ago. "I was travelling around with a back pack, and visited this village in the north. They had planted all their grain for the next crop, but drought had killed all the seed, and this whole village was facing starvation," she said. "Having plenty of money I wanted to do something, but when I offered to buy more seed grain for the village and give it to them, the head man refused to take it. They just felt uncomfortable about accepting a gift or charity."

So Charlotte thought about it, and eventually suggested that the village use their traditional skills to make something that they could give her in exchange for the seed. "They could make something, then sell it to me for the money to buy their seed," she said, "and I could then sell what they had sold me back in England."

That chance encounter changed Charlotte di Vita's life, and she has now built up an international company that has products made in the labour intensive countries of the developing world for sale in the affluent first world. "We make sure that we pay a fair days

pay for a fair days work," says Charlotte, "and that our workers can receive things like holidays, sick pay, and bonuses. In this way they can earn enough to improve their quality of life, and develop their village or community, while learning work skills. People who buy one of the products can get a unique hand made item that was made under fair and ethical work and trade conditions."

Now with communities in China, South Africa and Burma producing items such as enamel teapots, glassware and woodwork, the products that she makes and sells have become, in her words, a gift that gives twice. "It gives once when it is bought here in Australia or England", said Charlotte, "and again when the proceeds of the sale go back to China or South Africa to enable the workers to improve their standard of living."

Although she acknowledges that overcoming the gap between the developed and the developing world is an enormous one, she is quick to admit that she alone can't overcome all the problems. "I try and make the difference that I can as one person," she said, "and if everyone else did this then there could be a huge impact on some of the problems."

Charlotte di Vita's ethical enamel teapots are for sale at Your Habitat, Ainslie Avenue, Civic.

Win one of these two handmade enamelled copper teapots

The first two callers to Valley Voice on 6228 0200 between 10.00-10.15am on Tuesday 28 May will win one of these beautiful teapots compliments of Your Habitat and Valley Voice.



Sales that save lives

Founder of Trade Plus Aid, Charlotte di Vita MBE, has recently been in Australia to promote her exquisite range of unique hand-made miniature enamel teapots. Profits raised by Trade Plus Aid from these collections are donated to the Trade Plus Aid charitable trust in order to assist

third world communities help themselves to survive.

For Charlotte di Vita the sight of a starving child dying in her mother's arms while they waited for medical assistance in North Ghana was the catalyst for what has become an awe-inspiring fund raising organisation that has helped 42 of the poorest communities in twelve countries to become self-supporting through ethical trades and donations.

In recognition of these great achievements, just six years after founding Trade Plus Aid, Charlotte di Vita was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for services to Trade Plus Aid. "I strongly believe that we can find practical ways to improve the economic conditions of some of the world's poorest communities. By simply working together to share a common vision we can achieve a better life for the third world," commented Charlotte.

Since 1992 Trade Plus Aid has raised \$3,177,187 and returned this to the producer communities to assist them to become self-supporting through ethical trade while

AUD\$475,376 has been raised for rainforest conservation, to build and staff schools, to assist destitute children and to support mentally and physically challenged adults in Africa, Asia and South America.

The concept of Trade Plus Aid is brilliantly simple and its primary aim is self-sufficiency for the communities it assists. Traditionally, Trade Plus Aid helped communities to identify a local skill or resource which could be used by them to produce goods which were then sold all round the world. The key to success for this concept was that the international buyers sent a representative to meet the community so that a personal commitment was made. And once the contracts were in place Trade Plus Aid stepped out and left the communities and buyers to deal directly with each other. The profits raised by Trade Plus Aid have been invested into disadvantaged communities to buy seed, fund educational projects and to provide further employment.

Charlotte di Vita believes that, "Poverty does not exist because there isn't enough money in the world. Poverty exists because there aren't enough people using their moneymaking skills positively."

The Charlotte di Vita Collections™ miniature teapots are priced from \$69.95. If you are interested in helping this great scheme by stocking her products, call Philip Allen of Contemporary Collectables on (03) 9469 5388. ♦

More information about Trade Plus Aid can be found at www.tradeplusaid.com





Charlotte di Vita - Trade plus Aid

Originally a student of history and politics Charlotte di Vita went on a trip to Africa and was moved to begin Trade plus Aid by the sight of a starving child dying in its mother's arms, while they waited for medical assistance in North Ghana.

The concept of Trade plus Aid is simple - encourage communities to produce goods reflecting their local skills and find a way to help them market these goods to wealthier countries.

Along with providing interest-free credit, effective quality training and access to markets, the organisation trains communities on how to be independent by teaching them the rudiments of business. The organisation now supports 42 communities in 12 countries in Africa, Asia and South America.

We caught up with Charlotte at a function promoting her range of enamel miniature teapots, made in China. This range comprises 78 teapots in five ranges, including the 'Famous Paintings' collection - a wonderfully executed collection inspired by the masterpieces of Monet,

Gauguin, Toulouse-Lautrec and Van Gogh - through to The Clare Maddicott and Linda Edwards collection, carrying designs donated by two of England's most popular greeting card illustrators.

On show were examples of the 'Historical Collection' - teapots which are miniature reproductions of Chinese teapots found in the Royal Household of The Forbidden City of Beijing. Hand-crafting an enamel teapot involves 23 processes and more than 129 individual skilled tasks and interestingly, the making of the teapots involved reviving 18th Century enamelling techniques that had almost been lost in China.

Not incidentally, it also provides some 336 workers with employment and fair working conditions.

The miniature teapots start at \$69.95 and are available from a number of department stores and collectable retailers nationwide.

To find out where you can purchase Charlotte di Vita collectables, call Philip Allen of Contemporary Collectables on (02) 9469 5388.

Charlotte di Vita is a remarkable young woman. Only 35, she is founder and roving ambassador for an organisation that has raised over \$3 million for the poor in some of the world's poorest communities.

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TALENT KATE NANCARROW

Let's drink to that

Sales of collectable teapots are helping to fund community development.

AS A TEENAGE boarder, Charlotte di Vita made necklaces to sell to her fashion-starved classmates, donating the profits to the Guide Dogs Association. By her early 20s she was selling wooden pendants carved in Ghana to London's hip crowd and using the profit to fund projects in the developing world.

di Vita is the glamorous Anglo-Italian founder of Trade plus Aid. Since launching the charitable fund-raising organisation in 1992, she has been on the lookout for the perfect little something that could provide fairly paid employment to developing-world artisans producing the aforementioned "perfect little something", yet be so desirable to Westerners that they would spend repeatedly.

With her collection of miniature enamelled teapots, di Vita is reasonably sure she has hit upon that perfect something. The miniature teapots, made in an isolated corner of China, were introduced to the buoyant British collectables market in 1998.

Sales that year reached \$2.7 million, and by the end of last year more

than \$3 million had been returned to the Chinese enamellers and almost \$300,000 had been raised to initiate development projects in Africa.

All this without a background in manufacturing, marketing, art or charity. "I was 24 when I began Trade plus Aid so I hadn't really had time to develop a background," di Vita says. For Trade plus Aid to fund the development projects di Vita dreamed of, the crafts or artworks had to have broad appeal. And with enamelled miniature teapots she has found it, with minimum orders set at 5000 these days.

"The only way to make a difference is to appeal to Mrs Bloggs and to Lord and Lady Blah Blah," di Vita says. The teapots, in 120 different designs, stand eight to 12 centimetres tall and are handmade. Part of their appeal in Britain, di Vita says, is that they evoke an almost lost 18th-century art form. Each teapot is handpainted with images following a certain theme, such as Beatrix Potter, or works by van Gogh, Goya or Klimt and, with collectors being collectors, there is much repeat business.

She suggests that collectors see the miniature teapots as particularly good value when enamel trinket boxes by British companies such as Halcro Days and Crumhills can cost 10 times as much as the £25 (about \$70) teapots. Di Vita says many trinket boxes now use transfers rather than handpainting and if the teapots were made in the UK, they would cost hundreds of pounds. "Artists in Britain who can hand-paint would want £600 to



£700 a week. Each teapot takes four days to complete, so you can see how expensive they would be."

Following the success of the teapots, di Vita plans to add a range of miniature enamel tea cups and hopes to work with Paul McCartney's wife, Heather Mills, to help children injured by landmines. "We're talking with the holder of the Yellaw Submarine licence about a range because that's very hot in Britain at the moment."

And di Vita does not care if people buy her teapots without a thought for struggling communities in Africa and Asia. "They are not buying because it's a good cause, they are buying because they like them, but once they read the information about Trade plus Aid we get masses of e-mails from customers asking 'how can we help?' And it's not an expensive product; they might otherwise have bought a Tiffany key ring for a friend but now they'll buy one of our teapots."

Charlotte di Vita Collections miniature teapots are available from David Jones stores and selected giftware shops. Prices start at \$69.95. Inquiries: Philip Allee 9469 5388.

Above, Charlotte di Vita with the Countrywide teapot. "The only way to make a difference (to developing worlds) via Trade plus Aid is to appeal to Mrs Bloggs and to Lord and Lady Blah Blah," she says. Left, the Owl and Parakeet teapot (left) and the Peacock teapot (right), a reproduction of a teapot found in the Forbidden City in Beijing; each teapot is handpainted with a theme and made in an isolated corner of China.

PHOTO: ANDREA CLOPPART





Tiny Teapots make a Big Difference

Charlotte di Vita creates beauty out of hardship – using tiny teapots to make a huge difference to the communities in developing countries that directly benefit from their sale.

George IV first introduced miniature enamels to the Forbidden City in Beijing as a gift to the Chinese Emperor Kang Xi in the early 19th century. The Emperor was so taken with the miniatures that he summoned a Frenchman, Jean Baptiste Gravereau, to his court to oversee production of these enamel 'bibelots' as they were called.

Unfortunately, with the arrival of communism in the 1950s this highly skilled art was almost completely lost from China. Helping the Chinese communities, Charlotte di Vita, the founder of Trade Plus Aid – a charity which traditionally helps communities identify a local skill or resource which could be used by them to produce goods and ultimately become self-supporting – was able to track down a surviving master craftsman and revive the lost skills, establishing ethical manufacturing in China.

"This particular challenge came about as I was advised that it was impossible to trade ethically in China," says Charlotte. "I was determined to prove this wrong. I researched traditional crafts and came across the art of miniature enamels."

Right: Miniature teapots from top to bottom: *Desert Song*, *Watering Hole* and *Tyger! Tyger!* designs. **Top, left:** *Daisy Chain* design. **Middle, left:** *Van Gogh* inspired designs: *Japanese iris 1890* and *Wheat 1889*. **Bottom, left:** *Wenlock Edge* and *Magic Carpet* with two English teapots.

