



## Ray and Delphine Archer the story of Olive Leaf Australia

BY MARK BERRIMAN

**When Ray Archer began building gym equipment in the late 1960s and early 1970s, he probably had no idea that he would end up planting the largest olive 'grove' in the world and pioneering research into the amazing health-giving properties of the olive tree.**

**R**ay was interested in body-building, so building gym equipment led him into opening a gymnasium in Brisbane in the early 1970s. As his interest in health grew, he opened a health food store in Ipswich, about 40 kilometres south-west of Brisbane, and later opened three others in Brisbane. He began to realise that building muscle was not simply about eating meat and that there were many other nutritional factors involved, particularly those from fresh plant foods. This was counter to the government-sanctioned health advice which still equated meat with muscle. As he investigated further, he and his wife, Delphine, turned to eating vegetarian and later vegan.

So strong was Ray's interest in health that the family moved to the country to live a more 'back-to-earth' lifestyle. In 1974-75 Ray and Delphine began planting olive trees for fruit and oil after realising their importance in the healthy Mediterranean diet.

During their travels through Mediterranean countries, they had noticed that people would make an infusion from the leaves of the olive tree. When asked why they drank the tea, they said that their families had been doing so for centuries both for good health and to fight diseases by strengthening the immune system. Olive leaves have many times more antioxidants than the oil of the olive fruit, and infusing the leaves was an easy way of extracting them.

In his typically inquisitive way, Ray investigated the ingredients of the leaves and isolated the active constituents which confer good health. Chief among

these is *oleuropein*, a tyrosol ester of elenolic acid (tyrosol is a phenolic antioxidant present in a variety of natural sources). Oleuropein is a natural antibacterial, anti-fungal and anti-parasitic substance which is also a powerful antioxidant – with around twice the antioxidant capacity of grape seed extract or green tea. Its anti-fungal properties are so strong that it destroys fungal yeasts and moulds which cause conditions such as athlete's foot, tinea, ringworm, thrush and vaginal infections. It is also regularly used for colds and flu.

Scientific research shows that olive leaves manufacture around 100 natural compounds which not only produce food for the tree but also provide a very powerful year-round defence system. This defence system is so powerful that it enables the olive tree to live longer than any other fruit tree on Earth. Known as 'the tree of life' and the 'tree of blessings', the olive tree has provided sustenance to humans for 6,000 years. There are trees still living and bearing fruit that are 2,000 years old. After researching the different types of the European Olive Tree (*Olea europaea*) from different countries, Ray settled on a particular variety and went on to plant over 400,000 olive trees – the largest olive tree plantation in the world – and established his company, Olive Leaf Australia, which harvests the freshly-picked leaves and extracts the broad spectrum of naturally-occurring compounds.

Being a devotee of natural health, Ray fertilised his trees using huge worm farms, and irrigated from a dam filled with both natural spring water and rainforest run-off. He established an extraction process on the farm to make his flagship product, *olive leaf extract*, as well as a variety of other natural products which utilise the leaf.

Ray and Delphine Archer lead the rest of their family by example as they proudly wear their "Adventure before dementia!" T-shirts and race around following all sorts of adventurous pursuits. Ray likes

to tell people, "If you want to stay young, you need to do the things that children do". For some, an adventure might be a train or bus trip to a part of your state that you haven't visited. Others might not feel truly adventurous unless they're jumping off the Eiffel Tower with a parachute (I hear that the security guards have a shift change at 4.00pm daily!). "But, whatever your definition of adventure is, I challenge you to get out there and do it."

After running and walking 60 kilometres non-stop to celebrate his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, Ray achieved another life goal by climbing Switzerland's famous Mount Matterhorn. After a week of delays caused by bad weather, he reached the 4,478 metre summit at 10.30am on 26<sup>th</sup> August, 2008. "It was the fulfilment of a long-held dream," he says, "but now that I've done it, and seen how dangerous it is – especially for an old bloke who knew nothing about climbing ropes and even less about using ice crampons – I think I'll stick to less technical adventures like trekking, jogging and gym".

Immediately after the Matterhorn climb, Ray and Delphine travelled to Morocco in North Africa for some isolated trekking. They completed the gruelling High Atlas Mountains route along the north-western border of the Sahara Desert by trekking 10 to 13 hours every day. It is a beautiful but extremely arid part of the world. They are both very happy to be back in the peace and serenity of the olive grove in South-East Queensland.

Today the farm is managed by Ray's son, Julian and his wife Melinda, both of whom eat vegetarian and follow Ray and Delphine's natural health lifestyle.

### For more information:

*Olive Leaf Extract* by Dr Morton Walker (Kensington Books, NY 1997)

*Olive Leaf Extract* by Jack Ritchason (Woodland Health Series. Spectrum Marketing. Nunawading, Victoria 2000) ◆

Websites [www.olea.com.au](http://www.olea.com.au) and [www.EnviroLea.com.au](http://www.EnviroLea.com.au)

