

work hard PLAY HARD

MR GREEN FRANCHISEES ENJOY LIFE TO THE FULL

➔ Such is the reputation of the Mr Green franchise in Southland that local master franchisees Bruce and Lynn Morton have clients as far away as Auckland and Sydney. 'No, we don't fly there every week with a lawnmower as cabin baggage,' laughs Lynn. 'Those clients own holiday or rental homes here and we look after them. But it does say a lot about the trust they put in us, and that is something we are very proud of.'

Bruce and Lynn are master franchisees with Mr Green, which has 28 masters around the country who appoint and train new recruits and help them develop their businesses. Two years ago, when Bruce and Lynn decided to leave their former careers in building and banking respectively, Lynn says the choice was obvious. 'My parents, Jill and Wal Templeton, had been running Mr Green in Eastern Southland for eleven years previously,' says Lynn. 'They had established the brand in the area and we had watched them reap the rewards of their hard work over the years. We had helped out on occasions too, so when they came to sell we knew what we were getting into.'

'We started small but stable with just three franchisees and ourselves. One of our franchisees had been in the business for eleven years, which shows how good it is. But an indication of the growth in this industry is that in the last ten months we have taken on two more franchisees. We have a very simple method of recruitment – we ask those who are seriously interested to talk to those who have been in the business for a long time. That way, they get an accurate picture of what they should do and can expect. The result is a diverse selection of people as franchisees. One was a farmer, another was a business owner, and another joined because of the flexibility the system offers. He plays golf one day a week, and works hard for the other four. We enjoy the benefits, too – we have two children, five and seven, and love being able to go to school sports and concerts without asking anyone for time off.'

POPULAR, RELIABLE AND EFFECTIVE

Mr Green Home Services is a locally-grown Kiwi company that was first established in 1992. Over the intervening years, it has established a strong reputation both as a popular business model for franchisees and a reliable service provider for its customers. Owned by Julian and Judith Smith of Christchurch, the company is one of New Zealand's leading home service providers with over 200 franchisees and regional owners nationwide offering lawn care, office cleaning, home cleaning and property management services.



BRUCE AND LYNN MORTON (SECOND FROM LEFT) WITH THEIR FELLOW MR GREEN FRANCHISEES: 'WE ALL WORK HARD BUT IT'S WORTH IT'

Whatever the service they choose, new franchisees benefit from a work guarantee as well as thorough training, advertising support and considerable buying power on everything from equipment to insurance. Investment levels start at \$24,000 +gst and include uniforms and the Mr Green trailer system which, apart from keeping the business tidy and efficient, is also a very effective form of advertising.

CONTINUED GROWTH

Lynn says that having made the leap themselves she and Bruce fully understand the nervousness that many people have about buying their own business. 'Although we knew a great deal about the business it was still a big step,' she admits. 'We felt confident because we knew we would have the support of the franchise, but we were still nervous. However with my banking background I quickly felt very comfortable with the admin side of it and Bruce as a builder did not find the physical side daunting. At the end of the day, though, it doesn't take new franchisees long to catch on and build their expertise and fitness levels to the point where they can service more and more customers.'

That's just as well, as Lynn and Bruce are confident of continued growth both in Southland and nationwide. 'Society is so busy today that people simply don't want to spend their weekends cleaning and doing maintenance, recession or no recession. We believe that the key to our success has been the reputation of Mr Green Home Services. We take great pride in looking after our franchisees and they take great pride in looking after their customers.'

'We are looking for people who are self-motivated, disciplined and have good people skills. They will be dealing with clients from all walks of life so the ability to get on with people is vital. If that appeals, we will train you in every aspect of the business whether it's cleaning, gardening or property maintenance. We will pay you for three weeks of your initial training, there's an ongoing guarantee and we will always be on hand to help in every way we can.'

'Mr Green's reputation is not just built on the service it offers; it's grown because our franchisees have a viable business, plenty of work and support whenever they need it. Yes, we all work hard but it's worth it. Here in Southland, we have an off season mid-winter when most of us head overseas for a treat – and we leave the tools behind. It really is a great business.' ■



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