

GROWER PROFILE: MEET THE CAMPBELLS

BY AMANDA ROY

Ian and Joanne Campbell have been living in Murwillumbah, NSW for 18 years. Trading as 'I & J Campbell Passionfruit', they grow mostly the Sweetheart variety with a few A3's in the mix. They grow 3,000 vines and farm as a husband and wife team most of the time.

When passionfruit growing isn't keeping them busy, their 30+ cattle also give them something to do. We all know how much cows LOVE fresh passionfruit, so they have had to invest both considerable time and money into protecting the vines from the cows, with one rogue cow in particular that has been very determined!

Ian and Joanne have two grown-up daughters and neither have followed the farm lifestyle. For Joanne, the picking is relaxing. In fact, the best part of having the farm is actually living on it; the blend of being at home and working the property is the perfect balance for their family. Ian certainly appreciates not having to sit in traffic on the way to work every day like so many city folk do.

Of course, there is always a downside to farming and for the Campbell's it would be that they feel they can't go on long holidays. To leave the farm alone or in the care of someone else is a worry they would just rather avoid. So, for them, mini breaks and the odd weekend getaways are the way to go.

Both Ian and Joanne originally came from the police force. They policed the streets of Sydney for 20 years before moving to the Gold Coast for a further three years. After working on the Coast, they decided that Murwillumbah looked like a great place to continue raising their girls. They bought 100 acres and haven't looked back. In fact, they almost wish they had started their farming journey a whole lot sooner.

Ian likes to think outside the box and one great example of this is how he uses his drone to move the rosellas on when they get into the orchard. The birds have been very destructive in the past both with the flowers and early fruit. Flying the drone moves them on and keeps them at bay for a while. It doubles up as a little bit of fun while saving the crop!

Everyone has a travel destination that they would like to visit, and Fiji is not only the Campbell's dream spot, but somewhere they have already been four times. It's such a friendly and relaxing place that draws them back time and again.

While they wait for their next trip to Fiji, they both enjoy a game of golf. Joanne has been playing for ten years now and Ian an awful lot longer than that. He loves his golf so much that he even gives up some of his valuable spare time to serve on the board of Murwillumbah Golf Club - the venue for our AGM in October this year.

Thank you, Ian and Joanne, for sharing your life with us.

