Showtime

Royal Queensland Show draws record crowd for annual country showcase

ALSO INSIDE:
- Rural News & Events Guide
- Talking Turkey on Big Issues
- Profiles of Rural Characters
- Trader machinery marketplace

www.shadesheds.com
Ph: 1300 667 433

FARMER’S SPECIAL

Transportable

Compact Freight

SECONDS SALE
* LIMITED STOCK

Slip Fit Connections
REGULARS
4. Editorial
6. Your Say
8. Ya Reckon
20. Gone Bush
58. Country, Blues & Roots
   Music with Bushy
60. Robyn's Books
62. Country Humour
71. Blue's Classifieds

SPECIAL FEATURES
56. Kicking Heels
65. Communications
66. Remote Power

NEXT ISSUE
OCTOBER
2010

REGULAR CONTRIBUTORS
Lyn Battle, Greg Bush, Cliche Morton

ADVERTISING
GROUP SALES MANAGER
Azania Guinalda
Phone: 0415 667 014
Email: azania.guinalda@traderclassifieds.com.au

ACCOUNT MANAGER
Rebecca Rogers
Phone: 0415 667 034
Fax: 07 3407 5234
rogers@acpmagazines.com.au

SYDNEY OFFICE
Keith Sandell
Phone: 02 9873 2444
keith@nssw.com.au

MARKETING
MARKETING ASSISTANT
Molly Kinnane
Phone: 07 3168 2304
Fax: 07 3168 2309
Email: mmkinnane@acpmagazines.com.au

SUBSCRIPTIONS
Visit: www.magnorpc.com.au
Email: infomagnorpc@nsw.com.au
Phone: 1300 467 656 between 8am - 4pm (EST)
Mails: PO Box 5283, Sydney, NSW, 2001

EXECUTIVE GROUP
Editor-in-Chief - Graham Gardner
General Manager of Sales - Garry Byrge
Marketing GM - Trevor Goldman
Operations Manager - Carol McNulty
Executive Web Producer - Nigel Dean
Chief Executive - Keith Faller
PRINTED BY AFR Print

FREE CALL: 1800 26 33 05
FAX: 1800 26 33 52
www.ozsheds.com.au | info@ozsheds.com.au
GIVE US A CALL OR CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE FOR OUR MONTHLY SPECIAL DEALS
Glenol (QLD) 07 5469 5054

FARM SHEDS | ARENAS | INDUSTRIAL | COMMERCIAL | BARNS | WORKSHOPS | GARAGES

www.bluescountry.com.au
Canadian imports Kim and Lesle Kanigan are delighting tourists and locals alike with their take on the old-fashioned sweet called a 'kiss', Paul Oliveri reports
As kids growing up in cane country we were never short of a sugar fix. All you needed was a pushbike to ride out to the nearest paddock and a bit of muscle to squeeze the juice from the stalk.

This Burdekin nectar was usually accompanied by a bucketload of cane fibres and an aftertaste from whatever had clung to the stalk last, but as kids this was the least of our worries.

Thirty years on and now living in suburban Cairns I've had to refine my taste to more socially acceptable and readily available sugar fixes.

Earlier this year, while interviewing for another story, I had the good fortune to stumble across Stillwater Sweets in Kuranda, between Cairns and Mareeba. Owned by Canadian imports Kim and Leslie Kanigan, Stillwater specialises in producing the old-fashioned sweet called a 'kiss'.

Using tonnes of food-grade raw sugar from the recently upgraded Mossman Mill, the couple produce a distinct version of the soft-textured kiss based on flavours of the north and ancient recipes.

"This area is full of cane fields; tourists drive past sugar cane, maybe do a mill tour then come up here for the finished product," Kim says.

Kim has gone as far as designing the sugarcane kiss, which has the natural raw sugar taste. "Tourists love it. They can take it home or send a little bit of the north to wherever they want. Many people have never seen sugarcane and for them it becomes a very regional and distinct experience," he says.

This distinct experience doesn't rest with tourists alone. Like many boutique or value-adding producers the Kanigans have interesting origins. Kim, a toolmaker by trade in Canada, decided to collect a Package Machinery Company (PMC) model-K kiss wrap machine.

PMC's model-K is the grandfather of sweet cutting and wrapping machines. "It cuts a single piece of wax paper from a roll and a single sweet, from a rope like length before wrapping it using a piano wire style set up. The model we have will wrap 120 kisses per minute and the tourists and locals are fascinated by the old-style machine," Kim says.

"In the US they were used from around 1913 to wrap chewing gum, saltwater taffy and penny candy. These machines are some of the finest examples of early mechanics and I had to get one.

"This first purchase of a 1930s vintage model-K led to an interest in both collecting and restoring the machines and producing our own sweets. There was only one problem, I needed to learn to cook."
While still in Canada Kim sourced cookbooks from the 1890s-1920s to gain an insight into sweet production to suit the model-K and began experimenting.

"Everyone says things always tasted better in the past so I went back to those origins, but I found the recipes too sweet. I like flavour rather than sweetness and kept putting more flavour and less sweet into the recipes till I was happy," he says.

These recipes worked well until shifting to the other side of the world where humidity and temperature averages had no resemblance to Canada.

"I cook using an open copper kettle at very low temperatures. This means the sweets are affected by humidity and ambient temperature.

"We had some real disasters with test batches prior to learning to cook in Australia. The perfect days for us are those cool, dry days which can be a rarity in Far North Queensland," Kim says.

Apart from perfecting a recipe to suit the environment and the mechanics of the vintage model-K, this husband and wife team had a long list of modern considerations.

"Whether for health or personal choice a lot of people don’t want to eat animal products these days. For this reason all our recipes are vegan. We don’t use any artificial colours or flavours, eggs, dairy, gelatine, preservatives gluten, cholesterol, peanuts or soy, and they are 95 percent fat free and low in sodium," Kim says.

"These are all ‘helpers’ which the majority of the
larger companies use to make it cheaper and easier to produce their sweets.”

To produce the light and fluffy textured kisses Kim uses a second 1930s vintage machine, a puller to aerate the base mixture. This carefully controlled process introduces air into the mixture to give the desired texture while he adds the natural colours, flavours and fine natural oils.

“We have 21 flavours so we are constantly chasing our tails to keep up. While some of the traditional flavours like chocolate, strawberry and vanilla are popular, so too are some distinctly northern varieties.

“These include a Kakadu plum which has a really good sweet and sour balance and the quandong or rainforest blueberry which the tourists all know from learning about the cassowary.

“We have also produced more mainstream tropical flavours such as mango, lime, banana and pineapple,” he says.

From a 10-kilogram batch Stillwater Sweets yields around 1,440 lollies under ideal weather conditions.

On average it produces between 6 and 10 batches per day, which adds up to a heck of a lot of lollies.

“At the moment I spend around 80 hours per week cooking, rolling out and wrapping the sweets,” Kim says.

“All the wrapping is done in our shops (Cairns and Kuranda) where the public can watch and witness anything that goes wrong.

“It’s a bit like dairy farming you have to be there all the time and as soon as you look away something will happen.

“Both Lesle and I are working full time on top of full time. We couldn’t get any further round the world than where we have moved and it cost us plenty to do it but we couldn’t be happier. “We’re like kids in a lolly shop”. 