

## one+one Jude Lawrence and Rachel Giacomini

**CAREER CHANGE:** Jude Lawrence and Rachel Giacomini have opened their own chocolate shop in Woodlark Street, Lismore.



# These business partners and friends know that two heads are better than one

Jude Lawrence and Rachel Giacomini met seven years ago when they both worked for the Southside Pharmacy. They became friends quickly and now own and run a chocolate shop business together. They say that despite their different cultural backgrounds, they usually manage to complement each other and haven't yet had a major disagreement.

**Jude:** We became friends through work. Rachel had already been there four years before I started. It was much more social then (at the pharmacy). Our boss, Michael Herrmann, was a great encourager and so once we left we didn't hesitate spreading our own wings.

**Rachel:** The main difference is that before we were working for someone and now we have to make all the decisions and learn to compromise.

**Jude:** It was actually my 16-year-old daughter who said "why don't you open a chocolaterie?" and it evolved from there. It required lots of research because we thought that if we did it we wanted to do it really well so we've got the best chocolate we could find. We're two individuals, so we don't think the same all the time, but that's the

beauty of it. You put your heads together when you've got two different ideas and come up with something better at the end of it.

**Rachel:** I try to teach Jude that there are easier ways of doing things. She likes to do things the hard way!

**Jude:** I've got an Irish background, so I've got that stubborn streak. Rachel's got an Italian background so she's very colourful and flamboyant. You don't have many secrets from each other when you work so closely together. But we've got to remember, sometimes we forget because now we're in business together, all we do is talk shop and we forget that we're friends as well and you're meant to talk about your private life and your social life. You have to make a concerted effort to maintain both relationships.

**Rachel:** And we've taught each other things along the way...

**Jude:** ...like cooking! She's a great cook! And she makes a great muffin. With two different influences from the Italian and the Irish, it's very obvious when you look at our menu, who cooks what dishes.

**Rachel:** Jude's very good at marketing compared to myself and is also very good with words, whereas I'm more of a manual worker. Coming from a farming background, I've always dealt with machinery, so I'm good on the coffee machine and things like that. Jude's also really good at organising events like 'Mother's Day' and things that I'd normally think, 'Great! A day off!' But if it pays off, it works well.

**Jude:** We alternate days off so we have a day apart from each other and we're friends with each other's families. It's got a nice community feeling here. We haven't had any major cat fights or anything! If we don't agree on something we sort it out until we find something we can agree on. You have to do that if you want to succeed in a business. It makes it simple when we've both got the same goal.

**Rachel:** We're only about six months old, so we're still finding our feet. But we're starting to see a light at the end of the tunnel...

**Jude:** We're here for the long-haul, my word. We want to make the Chocolate Bar a landmark place in Lismore.