



## Koala Country Contracting Pty Ltd

### All drainage work:

- septic tanks
- absorption trenches
- house and yard drainage

### All concrete work:

- driveways
- footpaths
- slabs and footings
- retaining walls

### All small excavation work

#### 'KOALAFIED TRADESMEN'

A light-hearted look at a serious subject

Full liaison and compliance with all council requirements

**Contact Bolj: 0410 534 057**

SMS your number if I'm out on a job.

Facebook: Koala Country Contracting

NSW Contractor Licence No. 284484C



CAROL AND CONRAD. A PETER HERBST PORTRAIT, 1988.

busy about lunchtime, slows down in the afternoon, then picks up again when the mums and dads go and pick their kids up from school. When they come past I'll offer them a free cucumber, beans or something else to munch on. We loved raw vegies when we were kids.

When the farmers market started on Saturdays at the National Theatre they invited us to come along and join them, but we regretfully declined because Friday is our day and we couldn't do both. Also I thought, well, leave Saturday to other growers.

**Carol:** We can't sell wholesale to big markets. It just doesn't work, we don't get enough to make a living. With some of the big city supermarkets, the farmers aren't getting enough to cover their costs. It's very hard for them.

*Staying local and small meant we didn't have to go into big debt which, now that we're older, is a great relief.*

There are many more farmers markets these days.

**Conrad:** We're lucky with the climate variation between Braidwood and Araluen. We have an extended season either side of other growers so often we have what they don't have or vice versa.

**Carol:** We like getting to know them. It's our social thing, so it's really nice to get to know new people and see our long time friends.

Sales wise one difference is that back in the early days ladies used to make heaps and heaps of sauce and bottle it, so they'd buy big boxes of tomatoes! People don't do that in those quantities so much now. However, other produce such as garlic ropes, coriander and basil etc are more popular now.

This year I've been saying, "Oh, I'm going to retire next year," but I probably won't. We bought a couple of little machines to make the weeding easier and we now work out what is easier for us to grow and what is very labour intensive as far as physical work goes. We have to be aware, pare down and rest when we need to.

But we love living here and we love the lifestyle.

**Conrad:** Many thanks to all the lovely people who have supported us as customers and friends over the last nearly 40 years. It's a great community. ■

### GOODNESS

CHRISTINA AND KAILISH TENDING THE VEGIES WHILE JOHN [BELOW] FINDS A HARD ROW TO HOE.

Christina and I met in a yoga ashram in 2012. I was running the vegetable garden there (Mangrove Mountain) and Christina was leading the yoga courses and retreats. After a few years we left to live at Christina's home town on the Mornington Peninsula.

In 2015 we found this property in Monga that ticked all the boxes. We were looking for acreage, a main road, easy access to a major city and a great community. We bought a kit home, built it then started our market garden. On the Peninsula we had grown vegetables in the very small backyard of our unit. We were selling tomato plants and Christina's interest in skin products without chemicals was ignited. The creation of Prana Produce began. We started with products we couldn't buy. I wanted muesli that wasn't heavily processed and didn't have stacks of sugar in it and Christina wanted soap and moisturiser without the garbage. Before long we saw the demand and started selling our products.

I've spent 22 years as a chef working kitchens. In that time I've noticed that to evolve as a society we need to regress. To explain this I will tell you a story.

I was working at a restaurant in London. We ordered ten boxes of green beans. They came from Kenya and were perfectly packaged. When I opened the box the beans had some dots on them and the head chef turned around and said, "Send them back." So I rang up the fruit-and-veg shop, said "These green beans are marked. Can I get 10 more boxes please?"

*I asked, "By the way, what happens to these beans?" He said, "We just throw them in the bin."*

This highlighted how crazy the system is. We are shipping in from other countries, then throwing it away if it's not perfect. So much food is wasted. I want to grow great food that is used and enjoyed with minimal food miles. My intention is for the vegetables, produce and products to be filled with as many nutrients and prana (life force) as possible.

**Christina:** At the end of the day we have this body for our whole lives. It



## Prana

Christina Jagusiak and John Carroll are the energy behind the field force

makes sense to give the body the very best you can give it. We want our family, friends and community to have the opportunity to eat, use and nourish with produce that's wholesome.

Our skin is the largest organ in the body, and many commercial products contain plastics and chemicals in them, the skin then absorbs that. I don't want to use moisturiser or shampoo that I can't even pronounce the ingredients that are in it. Creating products without additives, products that work, and are good for you, that's a passion of mine.

**John:** We're also working on reducing the impact of disposable packaging.

**Christina:** Yeah. So our beeswax wraps — the replacement of cling wrap, you just keep reusing them. All the local businesses that buy our products, like our chai, bliss balls or bulk muesli, have been given reusable jars and containers, we simply exchange them to limit the cardboard and plastic.

While being small we can do this. This is why we want to stay small. We don't want to need machines to do everything, my experience with machines is you can lose touch with what you're doing. ☺☺☺

