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U on Sunday, My Queensland



Interview with Lihua Song, Skincare Developer

'Mount Tamborine is just paradise on Earth'

On the picture: Lihua Song travelled the world, but says nothing compares to living on top of southeast Queensland mountain.

Lihua Song, 53, lives and works on Mount Tamborine. Her organically crafted skincare and beauty products – Jasmin Organics – have received global acclaim and proved popular with the lucrative Chinese market. Lihua's vision has been to create the world's best and healthiest skincare brand.

When did you come to Queensland?

I came out on a holiday in 1993. It was a pleasant surprise. Before I came, I thought Australia was just a mountain with sheep. I quickly discovered it was far more sophisticated and the people are so friendly. I have lived in quite a few cosmopolitan cities around the world in the UK and Hong Kong, but I still find Queensland the best to love and work.

What prompted your permanent move?

In 1993, I came with my father for cancer treatment and I took him on his last holiday. After that trip, I made a permanent move in 1999. At first, we were based in Sydney and then we decided to move to Brisbane as we liked it a lot more. We found that the people were friendlier; it was less crowded and the house prices were more affordable.

What do you love about where you live?

Mount Tamborine is just paradise on Earth. When I wake up, I drink the most beautiful spring water and hear the birds singing. There are flowers everywhere and the climate is amazing. It is also close to the Gold Coast.

What do you think makes Queensland a great place to live?

I think firstly it is the people. They are so friendly. I live in London for seven years in a very tough suburb and I never knew my neighbours. When I moved to Indooroopilly (on Brisbane's westside),

a neighbour knocked on my door and gave me a beautiful home-baked cake with flowers from her garden. I was moved to tears. When I left for Mount Tamborine, the whole street threw me a party.

Is there a 'hidden gem' in Queensland that you can share with us?

Mount Tamborine – I just think it is so eco-friendly and it has lot of world-class accommodation and cuisine. The whole mountain is just breathtaking with the rainforest and organic farms. The mountain also hosts hundreds of weddings every year, which shows how beautiful it is.

What is your favourite holiday destination in Queensland?

I like holidaying in Southport on the Gold Coast. I find it relaxing, you're right next to the beach and there are high-end hotels, restaurants and shopping to keep you occupied. The atmosphere and climate are second to none.

What would be on your "must see/must do" list in Queensland for visitors?

I think when you come to Queensland you must see the Great Barrier Reef and go snorkelling. The rainforest in Mount Tamborine is also a must, along with seeing the koalas at Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary. I think visitors should also go to as many beaches as they can, try deep sea fishing and visit the theme parks.

You have offices globally, how does Queensland stack up?

We have offices in China, Japan and Europe; however, Queensland will always be our home for the brand. Although I grew up in China, I became a citizen many years ago. I love this country and our roots will always be in Queensland.

Who do you share your life with?

My son (Damien, 20) is working in Hong Kong and my daughter (Jasmine, 18) is studying in London. But I have a lot of international volunteer workers who live with me.

What are your plans for the future?

I hope to remain based on Mount Tamborine, but live on the Gold Coast at the weekends. I also want to travel around the world to promote our products.

How does it feel to come back to Queensland?

Every time I come back, it is always a feeling of home sweet home. I am always happy to come back and feel at home.

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