



Baupal Park Farm. 246559

Hard work and new ideas bring fresh life to Queensland's native baupal nuts, as **ERLE LEVEY** discovers.

# Kate Rose: Born to cook



Kate Rose's love of cooking started early. As a child, she could be found selling lemonade at street stalls or choc chip cookies at markets.

Yet it could go back even further.

Now making a name for herself with Baupal Park Farm at Chatsworth, Kate's love of food is in her DNA.

A great, great, great grandmother sold beautiful foodstuff at her greengrocery store in Poplar, near Canary Wharf in East London.

That has rubbed off on her with a love of growing organic fruit and vegetables then turning it into artisan baked produce.

Born in Canberra but having travelled the world with her love of cooking and having served in the British Army, Kate has found her home on a 40-acre property at Chatsworth.

"In my head, this is about where I wanted to go," she told me while we shared a snack at her market stall.

"It was about finding the right location.

"I found it in 2016 and took ownership two years later.

"I've always been able to see myself doing something like this.

"I have a bit of a genetic grocery line I suppose.

"My great, great, great grandmother did all sorts of lovely gourmet things.

"I like to think there's maybe a strong genetic link there.

"I have this sensation that it's part of me. Something in me is doing this without trying very hard.



Ghost chilli chutney from Baupal Park Farm. 246559



The Baupal Park Farm shop is set to open in December. 246559

“ I could talk food til I'm blue in the face.”

"Who put this thought in my head? Who knows.

"But I've always enjoyed making things ... it's part of my make-up.

"I just took to it more than most other children did.

"That's probably what made me become a chef.

"I was a chef before the army.

"The army instilled in me a discipline in me how to make my passion go further."

After finishing school in Canberra, Kate moved into the catering industry in Sydney.

Having trained as a chef, she was offered a job as pastry chef with the late restaurateur Tony Bilson, often referred to as the "godfather of Australian cuisine"

Kate was to work under renowned British chef Marco Pierre White, but turned it down and went to London.

After finishing her training as a pastry chef, learning from the masters Michael Nadel and John Huber, Kate worked at the Royal Garden Hotel, Sloan Square, Kensington, SW2.

Then in the late '80s-early '90s, Kate moved to Somerset, in the West Country, as chef de

parte in patisserie for the Relais & Châteaux hotel group at Ston Easton Park.

She opened a bakery in Wincanton before joining the British Army.

That saw her travel the world and focus her mind on self-discipline, and she accredits that to her business success.

Returning home, Kate transferred into the Australian Army and was based in Brisbane and Townsville.

Ten years later, she decided on a change of scenery and became a farmer.

"Well, I wanted to grow things but did not quite know what.

"I had a good business model in my head."

Kate was looking to move into horticulture and once she found the run-down Chatsworth farm knew that with some sheer hard work it would be her dream come true.

The idea was to turn the macadamia orchard into a farm gate property selling gourmet, value-add products using the native baupal nuts.



Kate Rose of Baupal Park Farm. 246559



Macadamia nougat at Baupal Park Farm. 246559



Produce from Baupal Park Farm. 246559

Baupal means macadamia in the indigenous language, the word originating from the Wide Bay area of the Butchella and Gubbi Gubbi peoples.

It stretches to the Gympie region - in particular the Bauple area which is known for the macadamia tree.

The residential community sits in the foothills of Bauple Mountain which takes its name from a legendary Butchella man named Baphal.

So the nut is really a true native.

The Aboriginal people congregated on the eastern slopes of the Great Dividing Range to feed on the seed of two evergreen trees.

Macadamias were not staple fare; they were considered a delicacy and were treasured and collected wherever they were found. They were also traded between tribes and used as special ceremonial gifts at inter-tribal corroborees.

It wasn't until the 1850s that Australian macadamia trees growing in the Queensland rainforests attracted the attention of European botanists.

While the first plantation was established in the 1880s, it wasn't until the development of successful grafting techniques and the introduction of mechanical processing that commercial production of the tough nut became feasible.

Kate's dream of producing bespoke gourmet goods was realised when she established a commercial kitchen on site.

Starting with markets in Mary St, Gympie, she is now a regular stall-holder at Maryborough, at Pomona on a Saturday morning, and Gympie Showgrounds each second Sunday of the month.

All the market structure has been designed to fit into a farm shop to run four days a week from December 12.

"The really ironic thing is I did not know the history of baupal nuts," she said.

"It was just a holistic grower's dream. I could have done just as well with oranges, lychees or bananas.

"The fact it's a macadamia farm is a bonus. It's a high quality product and I instantly could see the benefits.

"It has exceeded my expectations of development.

"It was not until after I found the property that it was going to be called Baupal Park Farm."

Gympie chose for location ... the range up spine and soil particularly good ...

The farm had about 1800 established macadamia trees but Kate has planted another 200, with big plans to expand and incorporate other native crops.

Forty truffle trees have been planted and a solar-powered bore installed.

Mulching comprises the cut grass in between the rows of trees - there no need to add anything else.

Baupal Park Farm was certified organic last month and has been awarded the Slow Food Snail of Approval as recognition for adopting earth-friendly practices in the production and preparation of food.

One of the first things Kate did at Chatsworth was adopt Korean Natural Farming (KNF), a process of renewing the microbiology in the soil.

"I came across it through TAFE in Townsville, and when I looked into it knew that it was exactly what I wanted to do.

"It has been the backbone to improving the farm.

"It was run down and would have failed if I had not come along when I did.

"All plants need microbiology in the soil to take up nutrients. It's the key in the lock.

"Without it, they cannot take up the nutrients."

Korean Natural Farming was developed more than 500 years ago, and is the cultivation of living soil biology and bacteria to enhance soil fertility and cation exchange capacity.

CEC is an indicator of soil fertility through the supply of three important plant nutrients: calcium, magnesium and potassium.

The process helps stop erosion, leaching of nutrients and chemicals, and the use of industrial chemicals.

Kate was well aware of the benefits her long-term plan to achieve the certified organic practices standard would bring.

Not only will the soil be repaired, but the trees will recover, and the yields increase.

This has already started to occur, with the first harvest since change of ownership resulting in a 74 percent increase in crop yield from 2017 to 2018 just through using the natural farming practices.

"Everything I make is either sourced 80 percent organic from the farm or from organic sources and orchards," Kate said.

"My product is only constrained by the numbers of hours in a day, what I can grow in one season and what I cook at at any time."

Kate sources three fruits from one farm north of Gympie - mandarines, satsuma plums and feijoas.

"Satsuma is the princess plum of jams," she said. "I make a conserve, as it has four times fruit to sugar rather than two to one of a jam ... it's just packed with fruit.

"I've got lots of ideas, it's about sourcing the

fruit and ensuring it's quality.

"I want to make a persimmon pate ... because of the texture and the way it feels in the mouth.

"There is a lovely smoothness to it.

"I could talk food til I'm blue in the face."

Developing the Korean Natural Farming process led to a rather personal coincidence for Kate.

With the friction between North and South Korea she wanted to get her sister out of Seoul, the capital of South Korea.

"I had the farm and was able to offer accommodation, and a job for her husband.

"He came and settled in as farm manager.

"Eventually my sister got her career off the ground and they returned to Seoul.

"It was a good connection that I was practising natural farming with a Korean, and he eventually went back and was teaching it in his mother tongue."

Initially taking over the Chatsworth property meant a lot of infrastructure repairs were needed.

Yet Kate is now at a point where she does not have to break her back with the work.

"I've got staff to help.

The bacterial washes are brewed on site and added to a fertigation system which is pumped out across the orchards.

They are used to feed the protozoa in the soil (amoebae, ciliates and nematodes), which in turn synthesise or digest the bacteria into naturally occurring nutrients for the trees to be absorbed with the help of ecto and endomycorrhizal fungi.

This cycle occurs naturally, but when there was a heavy historical usage of chemical pesticide this cycle was seriously damaged.

Since the inception of this farming practice Kate has held Korean Natural Farming conferences on the farm, as well as travelled to Hawaii to certify in KNF Level 2 of the farming practice.

Her conferences are held twice a year and aim to teach the everyday gardener/farmer how to improve their soil through a simple program of nutrition and healing.

"The key is in the fermentation process.

"By understanding how to apply microbe top dressings into a solution, how to grow a bacterial wash, or how to make a fish amino acid liquid, you will see the soil heal itself under the microscope...and all with not purchasing any commercial chemicals." "I've got a fledgling business that's growing week over week, even through a pandemic.

"I've been putting 150 percent every day into the farm for the past three years.

"The whole region is coming into its own because of the pandemic.

"It comes from a generation of supermarket shoppers and they do not think a thing of it.

"Now they are thinking: Who made the apple sauce, where did it come from, who grew the apples?"

"That's a question a lot of consumers are asking themselves.

"I've just taken it to another level and promoting the product direct from the farm gate.

"The model is designed so profits come direct to the farm and from that I can grow the business, employ more people."

The soil, the fresh produce, the climate and the people of Gympie have been the appeal and inspiration for Kate.

Developing her staff to the full potential is prime importance and satisfaction.

"I have a great small team here and am committed to supporting them through the Covid crisis," she said.

Expansion will come with the farm shop/cafe concept she is planning.

"It's a traditional bouchon style cafe that will focus on local seasonal produce, mostly grown on my farm."

That means a French/Italian themed menu with cafe food cooked by the farmer with their own products - the result is a convivial atmosphere and a personal relationship with the owner.

Planned for the future is an on-site training school to teach local and long-term unemployed all about natural farming, which is the backbone of our organic practices at Baupal Park Farm.

Kate is involved with the Wild West Farm Trail, generally held on the third weekend in August around the townships of Widgee, Kilkivan and Goomeri.

She is also looking to be part of the Cooloola Farm Trail which has taken place on the first weekend of May and September each year but is looking to become four times a year due to its popularity.

It is a chance for families to visit farms from Kin Kin to Wolvi and Goomboorian, and to take a behind-the-scenes look at how food is grown.

"The move to Chatsworth and buying the farm were the two most beneficial choices I've ever made," Kate said.

In the process she has made Baupal Park Farm famous for macadamia banana bread and bespoke artisan macadamia shortbread biscuits as well as such lines as Kenilworth camembert cheese and macadamias.

Yet I also hear her fudge is to die for.