



Wherever I roam, the Coast is my home

Meet Marj and Tony Allan and Cranberries Westland 🐼 🐼 🐼 A MUST IN THE PANTRY 🐼 🐼 🐼

The Coasters Club 26-05-2015



Meet Marj and Tony Allan Coasters:

Marj and Tony Allan have been local business owners on the West Coast since 2001 when they began Kawhaka Lodge, a fly fishing lodge outside of Hokitika. The team have hosted guests from around the world to enjoy the beautiful area and the comfort of their cosy lodge. Avid gardeners, they put their ten acre lifestyle block to use as a commercial growing project... and created **Cranberries Westland. 🍷 🍷 🍷 A MUST IN THE PANTRY 🍷 🍷 🍷**



Now Tony's no ordinary critter he has done lots of things. For 28 years he went to the States selling fly fishing rods that he had developed with units sold in Europe, the States, and Japan.

Tony was the recipient of Export development awards presented by Prime Minister Jenny Shipley.

Hailing from Christchurch Tony was attracted to the Coast because of his South Island based fishing tour business. After selling his Just Rimu business he ended up with 100 tons of Cyprus pine and decided to build a house on the Coast.

After researching possible crops including blueberries and black currant and receiving advice from port research, the couple learned of the benefits of the newly available cranberry plant to New Zealand growers. Introduced to West Coast growers in recent years, the cranberry has proven to be perfectly suited to the climate and weather conditions of the area.

Tony says when they started obtaining plants was a problem however they had a stroke of luck and met people from Motueka in Horticulture research. They had a complete bed of cranberries and were in the process of throwing them out. Tony made a number of trips to Motueka and loaded his trailer with the cuttings which was to be the start of his own cranberry beds.

Today he is harvesting on a daily basis the start of his crop. They supply fresh cranberries to South Island supermarkets and can't keep up. He exports a pallet a year to Japan and his marketing continues but production of the cranberries is the herby.

The variety being harvested by Tony and Marj produce between 5000 and 7000 kg per ha per year and as the plants get older they produce more in there 80 years plus life span.

Tony inspects yesterday's harvest.



Particularly attractive to the Allans is the high yielding fruit requires little maintenance after the beds are established, and the life of the cranberry beds lasts many generations, providing maintained correctly. They hope to see the crop grow in popularity in Westland to become a staple crop, like the grapes of Blenheim.

A real bonus in planting cranberries is they require a low PH of 5.0/6.0 and love the pakahi land that covers many areas of the Coast.

Any fertiliser requirements are small and well below the WCRC limits in the 10 year plan.

There is no cash flow for the first 3 years and a cost of approx \$60,000 per HA to develop the beds. This includes land preparation and irrigation. In the States one staff member looks after 50 areas of cranberries.

Tony works closely with another small producer in Paroa and his web site www.Westlandcranberries.co.nz is very popular.

When he started he planned 5 experimental plots of approx. 180 square meters. These plants once grown were shifted into beds. Each year the clippings taken from the existing beds doubles the size of the plantings and Tony's next year could see his 1ha become 2 and expand exponentially from there.

Funding the planned growth has been a challenge with a difficult experience with Development West Coast just one hurdle.

Having completed over 100,000 miles sailing around the pacific running a yacht delivery business Tony has overcome a number of problems.

He's used to hurdles having sailed in 1972 in a single handed yacht race to Australia. The boat flipped in and he survived 3 weeks in a life raft and is said to be the longest known survivor in the Tasman and he will release his book on the subject within a few months

The Cranberry grader built in 1923 and still runs without a hitch.



Currently, Cranberries Westland has tested all four of the major varieties available in New Zealand in trial beds, and are currently trialling new varieties which will be available in due course to the local market. The first commercial beds are being established in part of the block, and the propagation operation is humming along to supply plants to both commercial growers and for local gardens. After building Cranberries Westland and going through the trial processes, the Allan's are happy to advise others interested in growing cranberries here on the West Coast. They are excited about the opportunity for the West Coast to grow cranberries.



Cranberries the Super fruit

Cranberries have been deemed one of the “super fruits” for their nutrient content and healing abilities. They are packed with antioxidants and Vitamin C. They are used to prevent urinary tract infections, and supply other nutrients of Vitamin A and B, calcium, phosphorus and iron.

The tart berries are used fresh, frozen, and dried forms. These versatile berries are popular used in juices, sauces, smoothies, relishes, restaurant use, dried in snack bars, salads, baked goods and breakfast cereals, and included in vitamin supplements. Their growing popularity in New Zealand adds to the potential already available in the export market.

Tony has worked to improve his knowledge of the industry and on one trip to the States visited a university in the Wisconsin about the size of Canterbury University which has Cranberries as its one subject. He met experts in every aspect of the industry and has an open invitation to attend any aspect of the university. There are research papers available on every aspect of growing and marketing cranberries you could think of.

West Coast’s Ideal Environment

Traditionally imported to New Zealand from North America, producing cranberries domestically provides a fresher crop and can provide an export market to North America during the colder “off season” in the northern hemisphere. The West Coast provides an ideal climate and weather for the commercial production of cranberries, and the fruit has the potential to become a major fruiting industry for the area.

In the USA there are cranberry varieties that produce up to 147,000 pounds of fruit per hectare.

At present with the 3 year old stock Tony is hitting 30,000 per HA.

Growing Requirements

Good access to clean fresh water

River Sand

Flat land

Ideal soil acidity of 4.5-5.5

Winter chill to set berries

Dry or Wet Harvest

Dry Harvest: uses a machine and hand scoop, not as water intensive; preferred method for fresh fruit

Wet Harvest: floods crop and dislodges berries with water turbulence, fruit collected as it floats atop the water; requires access to plenty of water and water storage; best for fruit used for juice and to process



Tony uses dry harvesting as the land required to wet harvest is 7 times as much as dry.

Vision for the future:

Tony has a firm vision for the future of Cranberry's on the Coast. It involves a marketing structure similar to the kiwifruit industry being supplied by individual growers.

He sees regional investment being a priority driven by demand and strong financial returns.

The growth in the industry will also be driven by the incredible health benefits of the cranberry products.

It's not the answer by itself for the Coast but it has the potential to grow in the same way the wine industry has improving export earnings for New Zealand. It's a product that can be frozen so delivery can be regulated.

Where else is there a product that needs the worst land you can find, where you must lower the PH and which produces the returns per hectare that Cranberry's does he asks.

What do these innovative Coasters make from the Cranberry crop?

Cranberry Relish



A mix of cranberry, maple and orange to give it a very unique flavour.

A real favourite with pork, chicken, venison, cheese boards, sandwiches, pate, pizza and more.

Cranberry Jelly



This is a pure cranberry jelly the perfect compliment with cheeses, pate, venison etc.

A real favourite with the men in the kitchen.

Smokey Cranberry Sauce / Marinade



The touch of smoke gives this sauce thoughts of ribs, pork belly or just used as a tangy sauce.

Dessert Sauce



Especially for the sweet tooth in the group, drizzle on pancakes or serve with ice-cream sprinkling with your favourite nuts.

Contact Marj and Tony Allan at Cranberries Westland Ltd for:

Plants

Growing commercial crops

Two year old plants available

Cuttings by order

Home garden plants also available

Berries

Fresh and frozen berries available

Home: 03-755-8032

Cell: 021-359-245

email: cranberries@kinect.co.nz

Address:

1190 Old Christchurch Road,

RD 2, Hokitika, Westland,

New Zealand.