



## Supporting Sunshine Coast Tourism

# It's little touches that make the difference

If you want to run a good business that is in touch with your customers, get out from behind the counter and experience it from their point of view.

Do it regularly.

It's Business Ownership 101.

And it's a very easy principle to abide by when you are Mark and Joanne Skinner and you run rainforest B&B The Narrows Escape at Montville.

They stay in their own cottages, and others all over the world, all the time.

All in the name of research, of course.

The duo, who have managed the six-cottage, seven-acre property for four years, recently won a Sunshine Coast Excellence in Business Award, were finalists in the Queensland Tourism Awards and won the Hotel Motel & Accommodation Association national award for best hosted accommodation.

So, what's their secret?

"Consistency of delivery of a high quality service and our ethos of generosity," Mr Skinner said.

"All of our guests are absolutely delighted at the experience. It's the little



**NICE WORK:** Mark and Joanne Skinner often spend a night at their rainforest retreat.

extras that are there all the time...the chocolate, port, slippers, bathrobes, the fires already set.

"The little service touch that goes above and beyond. We understand that we are an emotional destination experience.

"Our location also helps, customers are immersed in rainforest and touched by nature when they get here, but also close enough to the village that if they want a pizza, they can get it five

minutes away."

Mr Skinner said business had certainly declined this year, but that was no excuse to skimp on customer service.

"There is a more selective market out there and the competition is certainly greater in terms of overseas destinations," he said.

"But even if times are tight we will go that extra mile for a guest and that is rewarded by word of mouth referrals and Trip

Advisor ratings, where we are currently ranked number three in Queensland.

"The strongest advertising is word of mouth referrals, friends and repeat customers. You have to maintain your existing customers, treat them as you would family and friends and they'll keep coming back.

"It's also important to treat customers equally, no matter how much they are paying."