



# Life on a lifestyle block

Fancied getting out of town and onto a lifestyle block? Read *Moon Over Martinborough*, it might just help as well as being entertaining.

**Moon Over Martinborough**  
 By Jared Gulian, \$39.99  
 Publishers Random House  
 Reviewed by Jill Galloway

This is a well-written, engaging story of two American city boys who end up on a lifestyle block in Wairarapa. It is a heart-warming tale with many laughs and a few tears as Jared Gulian describes their new life in the country.

They were originally from Michigan, had lived in Chicago and Tokyo then Wellington, and were confirmed city dwellers, moving from apartment to apartment, always eating out – then it all changed.

They fell for an old house and overgrown olive grove near Martinborough.

From the city, they knew nothing about living in the country.

They learnt the usual lifestyle things, who to call when the pump doesn't go and there is no water, they learnt about pigs, hens, sheep and cattle, how to muster them and much more.

It was a steep learning curve, but with the help of neighbours

they got through it.

Gulian writes a blog, and it shows. He is an entertaining author.

His partner CJ fell in love with the property first.

“CJ, we know nothing about



olive trees', I explained. I spoke slowly and clearly as though I was talking to some sort of mental patient. 'We know nothing about agriculture at all. We've never had a garden before. We can barely even cook for ourselves. We've survived for years on takeaway meals and pre-packaged dinners.'

So Gulian was going to talk CJ out of wanting the property – that was before he too saw the lifestyle block on a sunny day, and it was love at first sight for him too.

Evil Cow, Old Lady Lucy (pig), Sweetie the lamb, Old Man Henry (decrepit rooster) Sunshine the tractor and the charming neighbours – all people rural New Zealand know and rely on. There was Aussie Bronwyn, Jim the Mad Welshman, Hamish and Kiwi Bronwyn – just a few names which crop up regularly and help the men get accustomed to country living.

CJ and Gulian had been on the lifestyle block for five years. The book is sprinkled with anecdotes and a few recipes.

They learnt to prune olive trees, mow grass and cook.

There's the joy of seeing their first olives pressed, and the report card that said 'Oil colour: Vibrant rich green. General comments: Clear oil – stunning'.

Five years on, they can't imagine life without hens, sheep, olive oil and hearty meals with neighbours in front of the woodburner. They found their paradise.

It is an interesting read, and fun – easygoing and written with wit and warmth. Anyone on a lifestyle block, as well as rural people, will enjoy it.

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