



## *Dimitris Koustoubardis* *If Johnnies Fruit Shop was art,* *it would be the Mona Lisa!*

Have you ever walked out of a shop with that warm and fuzzy feeling of being so well looked after? It is that special mix of politeness and sincerity in the customer service that wins you over and, over time, you return again and again...until this shop, and its owners, becomes part of your everyday life. In Mosman, Johnnies Fruit Shop, run by Dimitris and Stamatia Koustoubardis, is one of those special shops you have to experience! On July 4, 2017, Vasilis Vasilas interviewed Dimitris about one of Sydney's best kept secrets, Johnnies Fruit Shop. Vasilis was immediately taken aback by this unique experience, 'As soon as you walk into the shop, what amazes you is the way the shop is covered wall-to-wall of fruits and vegetables as if it is an art-form. I have not seen, for instance, the pineapples decoratively hanging off the walls in a fruit shop for many, many years...' What this shows is how much dedication and care the Koustoubardis family place in their shop.

What definitely grabs a customer's attention in Johnnies' Fruit Shop is Dimitris' enthusiastic and social character, 'Whether it is at Flemington Markets or in the local Mosman area, everyone loves Jimmy Mosman (how Dimitris is known). Everyone is addressed on a first-name basis and Dimitri knows all his customers' likes and tastes... And he conducts himself in such a wonderful way, no wonder the locals think he is so special...'

Johnnies Fruit Shop made the local newspaper, Mosman Daily, in 2015, when Dimitri and Stamatia shut the shop for the first time in 31 years, as their son, Dennis, and Eleni Zonaras, were getting married. Dimitris recounted a story of a teenager who came by the fruit shop, a few days after the wedding, and he gave Dimitris a bottle of scotch and it was a gift from the teenager's father who had read about the wedding and wanted to wish the Koustoubardis family all the very best.

One of the stories Dimitris recounted to Vasilis was when he invited all his customers to a special party to watch the opening ceremony of the Athens Olympics in 2004! That night, all roads led to Mosman, and specifically to Johnnies Fruit Shop, where the Koustoubardis family organised a large- screen audio-visual extravaganza, six-seven roast lambs from Corinthian Rotisserie, Marrickville, and plenty of ouzo for everyone. And a brilliant time was had by all!

No wonder Mosman loves the Koustoubardis' family!

