

Jeff Keith and **Sharon Kirkland** have an interesting story. The business name is **Fire Island Coffee LLC** but their farm name is **Messahana Farms**, and in there is a funny little tale about how the farm got its name.

When their children were small they built a sailing ship, complete with gauges and sails, from an old refrigerator box. When asked where they were sailing to, they replied "TO MESSAHANA!" It seems that Messahana was a magical land with 100 rainbows, 100 clouds, 100 waterfalls and flowers everywhere. The moment Jeff and Sharon stepped on the farm they realized that the mythical place existed right there, even though the land had been neglected for years.



Jeff Keith and Sharon Kirkland of Fire Island Coffee.

Messahana Farms is located at 1500 foot elevation in the Honaunau Valley with a view from Kealakekua to Ho'okena Beach. The farm is not certified organic but they do follow organic practices. No chemicals herbicides, insecticides or fertilizers are used. Pulling vines manually, weed-whacking, applying Grow Green organic foliage spray, using diatomaceous earth, B. T. and Mycotrol O (*Beauveria bassiana* fungus) for the Coffee Borer Beetle is the way they have chosen to farm.

Jeff and Sharon do all of the farm work except the coffee berry picking. They weed, fertilize, prune, pulp, sun dry, roast, package, design, and print their labels and work two farmers markets a week.

They sell their roasted coffee and serve it at the market in the Kyoto cold brew method, which they make on site. This method makes the already smooth Kona coffee even smoother, and according to Jeff, contains 60% less acidity. Fire Island's best seller is their Black and Tan Coffee which is a 50-50 combination of Vienna Roast (medium) and Full City Roast (dark) beans. It is the perfect combination for the cold brew system.

They also serve their own organic lavender lemonade made with culinary French lavender and ginger. Soon they will be offering lavender extract for baking.

Other products they sell are a delightfully smoky and very hot Caribbean Red Pepper Sauce (made from pepper plants from the Caribbean where Sharon spent many years sailing), as well as produce: bok choy, Swiss chard, kale, beets, green beans, tomatoes, avocados, and papayas, plus oranges and tangelos when in season.

The farm offers tours where visitors can sample coffee, sit on the lanai, talk story and enjoy the view. During harvest guests are invited to strap on a bucket, grab a hook and gloves and try their hand at picking.

Jeff Keith and Sharon Kirkland, **Fire Island Coffee LLC – Messahana Farms**
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