

Coup d'etat (6 April 2008)

Richard Clune

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LISA McCune talks to Richard Clune about her role in the new series of Sea Patrol.

"That's what happens when you forget your lines," quips Lisa McCune, in reference to the distant gun fire that breaks the silence of a southern Queensland rainforest.

It's a sharp aside and one she clearly finds amusing, flashing a smile that is both familiar and mischievousness. The punctuating sound again claps through the canopy, informing a scene involving McCune's Sea Patrol co-stars Jeremy Lindsay Taylor and Saskia Burmeister.

Sat under a tree, McCune admits to being in a reflective mood with only a weeks filming left on the program's second season.

Despite Sea Patrol's successful debut (it averaged 1.5 million national weekly viewers, making it Australia's second most watched drama of 2007 behind City Homicide) McCune says she is happier with the second outing, the full moniker of which reads Sea Patrol II – The Coup.

"I have enjoyed this series more, I've certainly connected with it more than the Bright Island storyline," McCune says candidly.

Last week's debut showed off the new HMAS Hammersley – as well as the vessel's new crew, namely Kirsty Lee Allen.

It also alerted audiences to the program's edgier approach. An explosive launch that again drew strong ratings, McCune says the increased action is balanced by a heightened exploration of the boat's relationships.

"I believe people will enjoy seeing the human relationships more. You can have as many explosions as you want but if you don't care about who's being shot or who's going into the dangerous scenarios then you don't care about the show – that's what's different about the series."

For McCune's Lieutenant Kate "XO" McGregor, such "human elements" translate to love.

"I think she (Kate) was such a hard nut last series, it's nice to see her softer side. We know she can run a ship, so it's nice to see her fall in love and have these dilemmas... She has feelings for the captain (Ian Stenlake's Lieutenant Commander Mike Flynn) and then Ditch Davey's SAS character, or 'Jungle Jim' as we call him around here."

While content about the increased romantic component, McCune says the opportunity for action the series afforded her was part of its initial appeal.

"I wanted to do it even before Sea Patrol came along... I was actually looking around for something action based.

"But yeah I love the physicality of the role. There's not a lot of roles that women get to do that are so physical. They don't come along very often so you relish the chance to explore that. I doubt I'll do another series that's as physical as this."

By contrast Lindsay Taylor says he deserves a break from the physicality of his role as Buffer.

Battered and bruised from the numerous stunts the chiselled actor was required to perform this season, Lindsay Taylor says he's looking forward to a short holiday at the conclusion of filming.

"It's dangerous out there," Lindsay Taylor says over lunch. "I've collected a few

injuries… I’ve just had these huge fight scenes and I don’t know how many boardings I had to do. I’ve had a ball but can do with a rest.”

At 35, Sea Patrol has proven a strong vehicle for Lindsay Taylor to re-establish himself on the small screen.

Perhaps still best remembered as heartbreak High’s Kurt Peterson, the watery drama proves his first full series in 8 years.

Although he’s quick to point out the “lean years” were through choice.

“You always have those periods as an actor. I don’t mind them to be honest, could have been working more but I didn’t want to do just anything.

“When I was living in Melbourne I was driving a truck and laying irrigation…. Out of that I got ten really close mates. I’ll do anything to pay the rent, but I don’t **** around with my career, I’d rather clean toilets than do something that’s a pile of shit.

“I’d rather a bio at the end of my career that’s short as long as I’m proud of every job that’s on it.”

SEA PATROL II: THE COUP, MONDAY, 8.30PM, NINE/WIN