Flat-sharing in Germany “Down Under” style

14/04/2020 Factory driver Matt Campbell and Porsche Junior Jaxon Evans have set-up a special flat-sharing arrangement close to the Porsche headquarters in Stuttgart.

A traditional 1960s apartment building in the Stuttgart suburb of Uhlbach. The hedges in the front garden are meticulously trimmed, the door buzzers are clearly labelled, a classically Swabian weekly cleaning roster hangs in the entrance foyer. The view from the balconies over the countryside is idyllic. The vineyards on the nearby Württemberg hill are perfect for long strolls. A wonderful place for retirees? No way. This idyllic suburb, about 20 minutes by car from the city centre of Stuttgart, is home to two of the fastest young racers in the world. Factory driver Matt Campbell (Australia) and Porsche Junior Jaxon Evans (New Zealand) have set-up a special flat-sharing arrangement close to the Porsche headquarters.

“We found each other without really looking,” says 23-year-old Evans. “I moved into this three-bedroom apartment with kitchen, bathroom and laundry with Matt in February 2019. When you’re so far from home and you’re missing family, it’s great to have a brother in Germany.” The Porsche Junior feels at home with his colleague, friend and “brother” Matt Campbell. The Australian, who is only 17 months older than his flatmate, is certainly not the head of the household. The two young drivers are one unit, almost like fraternal twins. Both are around 1.8-metres tall, both have brown hair and brown eyes, both have the same wicked humour. “We’re always joking around and we hardly ever disagree,” says Evans about their lives in the 70-square-metre rental. Not even when it comes to divvying up domestic duties.

“I’m an orderly person, I always like things clean and tidy,” explains the New Zealander, who spent his youth in Australia. Evans stands in the modern, functionally-furnished living room, looks at the floor and adds with a wide grin: “I’m a virtuoso at vacuuming, Matt’s a hero at the stove.”

The pair has come up with some weekly rituals in the small, cosy kitchen. “Every Tuesday is Taco Tuesday at our place. We make tacos and other Mexican dishes. We’re always posting stuff on Instagram,” says Campbell. There is the familiar sight of a large glass of Nutella in the kitchen cupboard, next to it stands another glass with a yellow label and red lettering. It resembles a spice jar. “That’s vegemite, a kind of yeast extract that you spread thinly on your toast,” laughs the 2018 Le Mans class winner. This Australian delicacy tastes like a stock cube. Replacements of this and other goodies from Down Under – like chocolate-coated Tim Tam biscuits – are regularly sent from home.

“These care packages help alleviate homesickness a little,” says Evans. “We’re really like twins in this regard, as well. We both miss our families very much. We only get to see them once or at most twice a year.” Both drivers openly declare their close connections to family. Campbell’s helmet has a message of gratitude to his mum, his grandparents, his aunty. Evans’s is adorned with the national flags of New

Zealand, Samoa and Fiji – the countries where his closest relatives were born. “And there’s something else missing,” says Campbell with a laugh. “At home, the weather is better and you can go to the beach whenever you like. We only have a simulator and a Playstation here, and in summer we have the outdoor pools.” Things often heat up in the apartment when the two play on the consoles. No matter what the discipline, the most important thing is to win. “That’s just how we are,” laughs the Australian, who was promoted to works driver last winter. The Playstation proves more popular than learning German. That’s the motto even during the slower weeks of the coronavirus pandemic. “The language course is progressing slowly for me. That’s the downside of two guys from Australia living together,” Campbell openly admits. “I do know one word though,” jokes Evans. “Senf. I can’t remember what it means but I thought it was hilarious when they tried to teach me the word during dinner one evening.”

Sometimes the easy-going flatmates get special company in their Stuttgart apartment. “When our girlfriends come to visit life gets even funnier,” explains Evans, whose girlfriend also comes from Australia. Then, the powerful pair turns into an entertaining quartet. “The four of us get along brilliantly,” says Campbell. “Our partners know each other really well now. We enjoy going out and doing stuff together, and if we need a little space, everyone has their own room.”

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