



TOURISM

by Bill Nehmy



Kifaru Gin - it is being sold to raise money to save the southern white rhino

BN: Welcome Kelly, please can we start with your early years, where you were born, went to school, your early plans and aspirations?

KK: Thank you for this opportunity Bill! I was raised the eldest of three girls driving tractors, picking Mallee stumps and herding sheep on a farm near Bowhill, just north of the quaint little town of Karoonda with the most resilient people.

I attended SA's first ever area school and was the only student in my Year 12 Geography class on field trips with my teacher – talk about 1 on 1 attention! I always had my sights set on the big smoke and was lucky to be accepted into the limited Advanced Diploma Tourism Course in the days when CEO Bill Spurr was known as Mr Tourism (before Keith Conlon!).

My first break was Tourism Manager at Monarto Zoo as its popularity was sky-rocketing. I continued with my dreams, only wavering slightly from tourism for flexible jobs in between having children. I am thrilled to realise my long-term goal of directing my own tourism business, at a time when people are looking to have meaningful experiences.

BN: Many people in the Adelaide Hills know you from a previous 'life'. Your ongoing advocacy is appreciated!

KK: Thank you Bill, that's easy! I'm

one of few who knows how tough, yet rewarding your job is. Having been in your shoes when the Adelaide Hills Tourism Marketing gig was with SA Tourism Commission (working with Mr Tourism!) producing visitor guides and running tourism awards. The people in the industry were so welcoming and willing to get on board with marketing initiatives.

The stunning properties, and autumn leaves were standouts for me as a country girl surrounded by Mallee trees. My husband Wayne proposed at the Scenic Hotel at Norton Summit (but accidentally had flowers delivered to Mt Lofty Summit!), and we married in St Michael's Lutheran Church in Hahndorf, so the Hills

have a special place in our hearts.

Although we live on the Murray River now, we're often found having brunch here, cruising the backroads on our Harley, or walking our favourite botanic garden in Mt Lofty.

BN: While Juggle House Experiences has suggested tour itineraries, if you have visiting friends or relatives and you want to give them a memorable Adelaide Hills day, what do you recommend?

KK: Yes, we have suggested tour itineraries, none more exciting than recently bringing 'Monarto Wild Gin' to life, with bookings rolling in immediately after launch. It's refreshing working with Ambleside Distillers and Monarto Zoo connecting with a conservation message.

The benchmark of accommodation standards is high, and our visiting friends and relatives often stay in the Adelaide Hills. Where else in Australia can you feel a world away from a capital city just 20 minutes up the road?! The wineries are outstanding and versatile.

An example is Hahndorf Hill Winery and I recommend their ChocoVino experience. I encourage people to speak with foodies, and buy produce from the roadside stalls.

The classics of Melba's Chocolates and National Motor Museum are favourites, and the history of The

Cedars blows me away. Lately I have been referring folks to the new Katze of Hahndorf for something different!

BN: What do you think is the most significant tourism opportunity waiting to be realised in the Adelaide Hills?

KK: The sleeping giant of Cleland Wildlife Park and the cable car connecting to Mt Lofty has been discussed for decades. It made me smile to see this advance to concept stage.

I truly believe this could be a game changer for the Adelaide Hills. I must say I was over the moon to see the Bald Hills Interchange on the Freeway come to fruition, as this was a big-ticket item raised by Mayor Ferguson for a long time.

BN: Please share any other key interests/activities that might surprise us. Being originally from Mannum myself, I know you have a strong interest in local government!

KK: I can actually juggle for real. After I left the Hills I worked for 'South Aussie with Cosi'. I served four years as an elected member on Mid Murray Council, with 2 years as Deputy Mayor. I didn't renominate at the last election, to concentrate on Juggle House Experiences and parenting.

I hope to return at another stage in life, because contributing to community is enriching. You may remember the media hype when our IVF children were born, reportedly from Australia's oldest 21-year-old frozen sperm after Wayne's cancer battle.

We are so lucky to have two happy and healthy daughters from medical science now 11 and 9 years.

BN: What advice would you give a young person in respect to finding the right career and to have an enriching life?

KK: Try as far as possible, without surrender, to be on good terms with all people. Roll up your sleeves and get stuck into the hard work because life doesn't come easy. Never let anyone stand in your way of your dreams. Life is short. Take the trip. Eat the cake.

Thanks Kelly for letting us get to know you better and gain a better understanding of your business. It is a small world, many years ago I played cricket with Kelly's husband Wayne. In the batting order Wayne was simply put in as 'Nugget'. I only found out his real name many years later!