



TOURISM

Introducing Greg Horner from Mt Bera Vineyards, Cellar Door and Vineyard Cottage BnB near Gumeracha
by Bill Nehmy

BN: Welcome Greg, please can have a snapshot of your early years, where you were born, went to school, your early plans and aspirations?

GH: I was born in Wonthaggi, Victoria, and attended the Wonthaggi Primary and High School.

I grew up on a dairy then beef farm, and despite loving childhood and where we grew up in the country on a farm – the pressure of being solely dependent on primary production and always struggling financially gave me the aspiration to never be involved in what my father described as a ‘mug’s game’.

I went to university to study aeronautical engineering, joined the navy, then left and fell into a job working in the UK doing what eventually resulted in me starting a computer aided engineering business in Sydney.

Katrina grew up in very similar circumstances in Ki Ki, SA, and followed similar pathways to uni in Adelaide but studied fine arts.

We met in Sydney, and with four young kids decided to spend a year near her parents in SA whilst renovating our house in Sydney.

Funny how things turn out – we fell in love with the Adelaide Hills and Mt Bera, and as with most of our lives the happenings were all unplanned.

BN: Please can you elaborate on your creative and diverse range of cool climate wines, restaurant and onsite cottage accommodation?

GH: Due to the topography of the land at Mt Bera we are in the fortunate position of having a multitude of microclimates within a small area.

The steepness and tortuously variable catchments provide diverse temperature profiles, and means we can grow a large range of grape varieties.

One of the first things we did when we purchased Mt Bera was switch to growing biologically, using organic and biodynamic methods.

We use healthy soils create healthy vines and produce much better flavours in the grapes.

Half of our wine production is under our Wild & Free range which is all naturally fermented.

The other half we use wine yeast for the ferments and find that everyone has different taste buds so we cater to a wide audience.

Our range includes Gruner Veltliner, Pinot Gris and Sauv Blanc for the whites. For reds, we have Pinot Noir, Tempranillo, Shiraz, Merlot, Cab Sauv and more recently Zweigelt and

Blaufrankisch, with some more varieties.

The creation from the ground up of our wines is really important to us – all estate grown single vineyard wines – with each of them expressing the best of that season instead of trying to create each vintage to be the same as the last one.

Similarly, our cellar door is an extension of our family – with all of our family working there plus a growing extended family.

All the food is freshly created from locally grown and produced quality ingredients.

We use what we can from our gardens as well as selecting organic, chemical-free produce wherever possible.

All our meals are cooked for you with love in our kitchen by Katrina and our children.

BN: If you have visiting friends or relatives and you want to give them a memorable Adelaide Hills day, what do you recommend?

GH: The Adelaide Hills are stunningly beautiful with such a range of attractions and producers of all types of products.

Of course, we love wine and food and so would fit in a great lunch in a beautiful environment, and if not staying with us, would recommend accommodation at one of many different types of historical but renovated buildings in our local area.

The Gorge Wildlife Park is so close and every time we go we are reminded how great it is. Right nearby is the Applewood Distillery too, rounding out the beverage offerings.

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

GH: Being so close to Adelaide it is extremely easy to make day trips and combine visits to the plethora of Cellar Doors that are now open in the Hills.

New activities are being offered all the time. I think the opportunities for expansion will continue to revolve around food, wine and other beverages combined with activities. Walks. Bike riding.



Family photo in the Cellar Door Garden

BN: Please share any other key interests/activities that might surprise us!

I fell in love with Nepal many years ago. The mountains were the first attraction and the immensity, but the people and their attitudes with warmth, happiness and humour will always be in my heart.

It was fantastic to find a whole group of Nepalese in the picking crews the past couple of days. Smiling and singing Nepali folk songs climbing the Mt Bera Vineyards whilst picking.

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

GH: Be spontaneous. Follow what is right for you at the time. That might be a planned or unplanned course, but whichever way you choose make sure you enjoy what you are doing - and if you don't enjoy it make a change and try something else. The world is full of possibilities.

Thanks Greg for giving us the opportunity to get to know you and Mt Bera better. Your creativity and development of Mt Bera is an important part of the exciting cluster of tourism experiences that has emerged in and around Gumeracha in the Northern Adelaide Hills.