

CELLARdoor

K1 BY GEOFF HARDY



Rarely publicised, the mention of K1 is like a secret handshake, provoking reverence or curiosity, depending on the degree of familiarity. If you're one of those in the curious group, just get in the car

and check it out for yourself – I guarantee you will become one of the enlightened.

K1 is quietly hidden away in the hills near Kuitpo Forest at the southernmost tip of the Adelaide Hills Wine Region – closer to Willunga than Lenswood.

K1 owner Geoff Hardy (pictured with daughter Bec), a viticulturalist, self-confessed lawnmower mechanic and fifth generation descendent of South Australian wine pioneer Thomas Hardy, spent several years searching for a vineyard site to grow premium fruit. In 1986 he eventually settled on an old dairying property on the southwest escarpment of the Mount Lofty Ranges. In other words, somewhere off the road near Kuitpo Forest and up a dirt track heading back towards Willunga. The sign's always out, so you won't miss the turn off.

Yes, his uncle is Sir James Hardy and his mother is environmentalist Barbara Hardy, but family heritage aside, Geoff Hardy is a

man who has got his hands dirty and earned his stripes. He has received accolades for his joint effort with Ian Leask in bringing to life part of the old Ryecroft vineyards at McLaren Vale to create the award-winning Pertaringa winery. He's also made a valuable contribution to the state's vineyard resources through his many projects studying clonal variations of premium wine grape varieties. He even quarried the stone and laid each one himself when building the entrance gates to the K1 vineyard and cellar door.

Turning into the driveway is like entering another world. You leave scrubby hinterland for a superbly manicured vineyard property. A pristine driveway lined with 42 advanced London Plane Trees steeply descends to a peaceful lakeside cellar door reminiscent of a Japanese pagoda. There are even Rainbow Trout as big as giant Koi Carp in the lake.

The 30-hectare vineyard at K1 sits like a silk embroidered shawl above the cellar door. At 300 to 350 metres above sea level, the climate and ancient soils make this the ideal vineyard for cool climate wines.

"We have 23 varietals planted here," says Geoff. "Mainly Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, Shiraz and Merlot, but we have also planted more

unusual varieties such as Arneis, Grüner Veltliner, Gewürtztraminer, Tempranillo and Tannat. We're particularly proud of the Arneis; it's going to be a winner."

As expected, all the family is involved at K1. Geoff's eldest daughter Bec is in charge of sales and marketing. She also conducts tastings and hands out the bread so you can feed the fish from the balcony as you relax and enjoy wines by the glass along with a regional cheese platter. Geoff's wife Fiona coordinates weddings and corporate events (it is a perfect venue).

There are plans for a more comprehensive food offering in the near future. Sign up to the mailing list to receive updates on this, the Tractor Shed wine sales (where you can pick up bargain cleanskins, bin ends and export wines), the annual Continuous Picnic (a day of food, wine and music held in conjunction with neighbouring Kuitpo wineries Magpie Springs and Lazy Ballerina) and, perhaps, the exclusive 'Henley on Hardy Rowing Regatta'.

K1 by Geoff Hardy
Open Friday to Sunday and
public holidays, 11am-5pm
Tynan Road, Kuitpo
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www.k1.com.au