Wine not? Advertising Feature

A splendour too good not to be shared

What started as happenstance turned into a vision for a winery that captured the grandeur of its surroundings.

When Karin Adcock stumbled upon a neglected Hunter Valley winery in need of some serious TLC, establishing a chardonnay lover's paradise was the furthest thing from her mind.

Initially conceived as a weekend get-away for friends and family, it wasn't long before the founder of Pandora Australia knew that the destination's potential was something that had to be developed and shared among a wider audience.

"It was a bit of a chance encounter, really," Adcock recalls of the discovery. "In May, 2016, we learned that the former Pooles Rock property was available and thought, 'Let's have a look'.

"We completely fell in love with it. When we saw what the property had to offer, I had a strong feeling that there was so much potential that had to be developed and matured."

Renaming the property Winmark Wines, the first order of business centred on rehabilitation. With the existing vines having fallen into neglect, a team of experts (including 2017 Viticulturist of the Year Liz Riley and vineyard manager Dave Grosser) was assembled to carefully nurture 11 hectares of vines back to full health.

"We realised the vineyard had a history of making very good wine, particularly chardonnay, so we decided very early on to focus on that and to be known for that, rather than trying to be everything to everyone," says Adcock.

"Our first vintage was produced in January 2019 with Rusty's Run and the Single Vineyard Reserve Chardonnay under winemaker and international consultant John Belsham."

With the development of the winery into a tourism destination being a key priority, Winmark opened its cellar door to the public in June 2020. Housed in the former Pooles Rock wine storage sheds, the space connects the working vineyard with a beautifully designed place that's perfect for enjoying and showcasing the winery's chardonnays.

"Winmark is located in a stunning part of the Hunter Valley that is to some degree still undiscovered, so it was very important that we had a place where people could come and try our chardonnay," explains Adcock.

"We were also conscious that because we only have one offering, Winmark needed to become not just a wine destination but also a place people could come to enjoy the beauty of our environment."

Offering far more than a top-shelf wine tasting experience, Winmark incorporates an art gallery and a sculpture park featuring the monumental work '*Biosis*' by renowned sculptor David Ball. A stunning perennial rose garden by leading landscape designer Paul Bangay, a sandstone fire pit, tennis courts and pools also ensure there's plenty to enjoy. The legendary 'Pooles Rock' (named after former convict and local Richard Poole, who slept in the rock's hollow) is also a must-see.

"Our guests can also enjoy some very unique winery accommodation, with four different houses on-site that can cater for a total of 34 guests," says Adcock.

"We have worked hard to be 100 per cent COVID compliant and it's wonderful to see people coming to truly enjoy Winmark, whether that be for family getaways, groups of friends, retreats or conferences."

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