

# Nazaaray Estate

The year was perhaps 1994 or 1995. My wife and I had bought Nazaaray in 1991 and were running a small cattle herd with the help of a more knowledgeable and cattle savvy Australian neighbour. With both of us coming from an agricultural background in India, my wife Nirmal and I wanted to plant a crop. But we could not decide what. For two years we investigated, researched and analysed. Our conversations were somewhat along these lines.



**Nirmal:** Let us grow pomegranates. They grow in the Kasauli hills where I went to school.

**Me:** We have no know-how about Pomegranates around here in Oz. And no market.

**Nirmal:** Hmm. How about Boer goats? Australia is exporting goats to Middle East.

**Me:** Goats are escape artists? Cost of fencing will be big. Who will look after them when we are at work? No. Besides we want to grow crops.

**Nirmal:** Hmmm. Olives! Let us look into olives.

**Me:** Ok. Good idea. Let us do investigate. But why not grapes? And make wine?

**Nirmal:** No. Vines are too much work. Besides, you know nothing about it. Except drinking the stuff.

So, we checked out olives. All about their planting, oil production, care, irrigation, economics, markets etc, etc. However, one vital ingredient was missing. Passion. Nirmal, wise lady that she was, understood and relented. Okay, she said, try out a small patch of grape vines and we will see. Confident, like all good wives, she put up a small notice on the first vine past, for all to see, that still stands today. It said simply: "Param's Folly".



The year was now 1996. I planted less than an acre of different varieties as a trial. Organic was the goal. With help and advice from anyone and everyone who claimed to know about vines, I launched myself into the project armed with some theoretical knowledge and supported by like-minded friends (the Ansons) who were about to jump into the same churning sea of wine whose romance had swallowed many others before us.



The above is a brief summary of my start with wine-making in Australia. Having first tasted wine on board the Thai flight that brought my wife, my 2 year old son and I to Australia, all I knew about wine could have been written on the back of a postage stamp. However, with Nirmal's support and with the help of friends I managed to go through the first few vintages while paddling hard to learn about the history, the science and technology behind modern wine making.

Now, almost 25 commercial vintages later, it is satisfying to look back at some of those wines that are still kept in my wine cellar. I have increased the planting of Chardonnay since I first started as I believe that our site, perhaps, suits that variety best of all.

Today, (October 2024) we run a small cellar door serving a selected range of Indian food dishes to accompany the wines made on site with grapes that are grown on site with the sole exception of Shiraz. Our cellar door is open on weekends only from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm where people can come and taste and buy our current vintages of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay Pinot Gris Rose, Sauvignon Blanc and Shiraz.

