



**As pioneers of the Mount Benson region, the Hooper family established Cape Jaffa Wines as the region's first winery in 1993.**

**History**

*Cape Jaffa Wines, the central navigation point of the Mount Benson region, was founded on a commitment to making distinct cool-climate wines that showcase the best of the region. The maritime compass logo represents how central our geographical position is to everything we do here, both at work and at play.*

In June 1993, Kym, together with his wife Sue and his sons Derek and Rob, moved to the area and purchased land with plans to diversify their interests to include winemaking. Once a livestock buyer, but always appreciative of great wine, Kym Hooper had noticed the red tinge in sheep's wool from the Mt Benson region apparent in the wool of sheep grazing in other successful wine growing regions blessed with the famous *terra rossa* soil. Both he and winemaker son Derek deemed the site climatically suited to viticulture with a good north-facing aspect and a desirable cool climate moderated by the Great Southern Ocean. The surf break a few kilometres down the road also fuelled Derek's enthusiasm for the region and the decision was made.

The Hooper family spent the next few years planting the 8.25 hectare Cape Jaffa vineyard, comprising four hectares of Chardonnay, two hectares each of Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz, and a quarter of a hectare of Merlot. They harvested their first crop in 1995. In 1997, the modern and innovative winery with a capacity of 1000 tonnes was constructed alongside a quaint and substantially rustic cellar door built out of paddock rock found on the site. The second vintage was processed at the new Cape Jaffa Winery. Over the past 10 years the vineyard has continued to expand and varieties now include Semillon, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Gris and Petit Verdot.

Now run by Kym, Derek and his wife Anna, Cape Jaffa Wines employs up to 15 staff members depending on the time of year. A family-focused company from the beginning, the whole family has played a role at various stages with Sue Hooper attending the cellar door, Rob Hooper working in the cellar and sister Danielle Hooper having a hand in some of the design work. Even Derek's children Daisy, Harry and Grace like to evaluate grape juice samples prior to alcoholic fermentation.

Now 15 years on, with 25 hectares under vine, Cape Jaffa has become the Limestone Coast's first fully certified biodynamic vineyard and has established the Mount Benson wine region as a premium wine producer. Having developed a reputation for producing some of the Limestone Coast's best and most savoury reds, Cape Jaffa continues to draw interest and accolades for its heavily maritime-influenced cool-climate wines.

**Left:** The cellar door

**Below:** Sue and Kym Hooper, with winemaker son and daughter-in-law Derek and Anna

