

Nazaaray Estate

AT FLINDERS

Mornington Peninsula Victoria, Australia

Turning wine into water to save the Royal Bengal Tiger



Indian-born Mornington Peninsula winemaker's
cellar door donates
Solar water pumps to save Indian Tigers

www.nazaaray.com.au

Nazaaray Estate: a little bit of India amid very fine wine on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula

Paramdeep Ghumman is definitely not your typical Australian winemaker. For starters, he hails from Punjab in India - a region not associated with fine wine. Until age thirty he had never even tasted wine. On his first flight emigrating from Calcutta to Melbourne he had a glass of French Champagne. His interest was immediately piqued, but at that stage he never dreamt that one day his own wines would be served at some of Australia's best restaurant tables.



Nazaaray Estate Winery is Mornington Peninsula's southernmost vineyard, set on 50 acres with sweeping views. The long ripening of grapes on the Peninsula produces exceptional, high quality fruit. Here, grapes are handpicked and wine is made in small batches. Param has a passion to create the best and he expresses it in the fine drop he crafts. Lately, his passion has extended to supporting a cause close to his heart in India - The Tiger Water Life Project....

The Tiger Water Life Project. Introducing Bangles

Poaching, hunting, deforestation and climate change are threatening many wildlife species with extinction, so when Mornington Peninsula winemaker Paramdeep learnt of the plight of a tiny tiger cub in India, he knew he had to act.



Royal Bengal Tiger numbers have fallen from more than 100,000 in 1900 to just 2570 today. This magnificent beast may entirely vanish from Earth by 2040. Paramdeep sees tigers as "one of the last noble species dying because of environmental degradation and man's apathy in this Anthropocene age".

Jim Corbett's books on Indian wildlife in general and tigers in particular, have held a deep fascination for Paramdeep since childhood. But it was an email sent in 2017 by Pawan, a school mate from 50+ years ago that was the trigger to start the conversation that led to the initiation of the Tiger Water Life (TWL) project.



Paramdeep's friend, Pawan Jaidka, a retired US Government officer turned wildlife photographer, had come across a tigress with three cubs on one of his photographic expeditions. One cub, whom he had named Bangles for the distinctive stripes around her forelegs, was the runt of the litter. Often left behind by her mother and siblings, meowing like a frightened little domestic cat, she was frail and undernourished with a paper-thin belly. Pawan despaired of Bangles' chances of survival.



Facing death from starvation

One hot afternoon the abandoned Bangles slept alone beside a shady water hole, while Pawan watched her. A monkey came to drink. Pawan prayed for Bangles to open her eyes and catch the monkey. Food meant existence and survival. It was now or never, as she was facing certain death from starvation. With tears in his eyes Pawan watched as, in a lightning flash, Bangles made her first kill at the extremely young age of five months. He was assured that his adopted cub would now survive in the wild.



Pawan has continued to follow Bangles, who is still alive today, and developed a bond which sometimes saw Bangles make a successful hunt and bring her kill close enough for eye-to-eye contact with Pawan. There were no signs of aggression for long durations while she fed, which Pawan describes as “mesmerising”.

Solar pumps deliver life-saving water to tigers

Over the twenty years that Pawan has followed tigers, he has seen wildlife dying beside dried-up water holes. Summer temperatures soar well over fifty degrees Celsius in Central India. Pawan was desperate to help.

Pawan realised that subterranean water was available in critical tiger habitation areas, so the old school friends decided to install bores and solar pumps that would bring water to the surface. There it would cascade into man-made, saucer-shaped water holes for wildlife to drink and bathe. After several long telephone discussions the TWL project, finally became a reality when Pawan commissioned the first solar pump and the water of life began to flow on the 3rd of March 2019. The moment was celebrated by Pawan, who volunteered to be the first to test and drink the fresh cold water.

Nazaaray Estate Winery has committed to donating all tasting fees from their cellar door to the project. The pumps cost between \$3000 & \$7,000 each, depending on the depth needed to reach water. Nazaaray hopes to fund two to three pumps each year.

A single vineyard 2016 Bangles Pinot Noir will be released in November 2019, with \$2 from every bottle contributed to the Tiger Water Life project. A 2018 Pinot Noir will also be branded ‘Bangles’, again with a portion of the sale proceeds for the TWL project.



In the first six months of 2019 TWL has commissioned five pumps – funded by Nazaaray, other Australian donors and local donors in India. “After the installation of five pumps by TWL the Indian Forest Service was convinced of the benefits to tigers and other wildlife.

“The Indian Forest Service has been supportive and funded a further fifty three pumps. The target for Vidarbha, in Central India, was 280 pumps in December 2018. Twenty percent of the target has been achieved in six months. Perhaps an annual target of twenty to eighty privately funded pumps is achievable.” One hundred per cent of funds donated to the TWL project go towards labour,

materials and equipment. The small group of three voluntarily funds the administration, travel & accommodation costs.

Overflow water benefits tribal village people

There's a saying that one good turn begets another – and another good turn has emerged from the Tiger Water Life project.

Deforestation in Central India is a major issue, with inadequate attempts being made to reforest the dry tropical forest areas that have been stripped of vegetation, thus losing shade, topsoil, under storey plants and wildlife habitat. Indigenous villagers, the Adivasi people, are forced to forage further and further for firewood, sometimes losing their lives to tigers when they venture into the tiger reserves.

As Pawan photographed tigers near the solar pumps in the buffer zone, he noticed that overflow water from the man-made ponds ran off down the nearest slopes. TWL is now planning to regenerate “sacred groves” of select native trees and under storey in water run-off areas. The reforestation will provide fruit and other plant materials for the Adivasi villages.

TWL's longer term goals include methane gas harvesting from domestic cows and buffaloes for cooking. This will dispense with the need for firewood collection. Last but not least TWL is working towards funding the education of all children in the village of Topi Tola. However, the solar water pumps remain the first priority for TWL. They want to see the Royal Bengal Tiger not only survive, but “thrive and roar louder than ever before”, Paramdeep says.

We want to inspire individuals and organisations to ‘adopt’ a forest compartment to install, solar pumps in that zone and thus help save one of the most majestic and awe-inspiring creatures on Earth.”

Australians can donate by visiting the Nazaaray Estate cellar door, by placing an order for the Bangles 2016 Pinot Noir, or contacting Paramdeep Ghumman direct if they wish to adopt a forest compartment.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Paramdeep Ghumman
Nazaaray Estate, 266 Meakins Rd,
Flinders, Victoria

E: nazaaray@gmail.com
T: +61 407391991
W: www.nazaaray.com.au

Opening Hours

11am – 4pm, Saturdays and Sundays
Most Victorian public holidays and long WE.
Light lunch generally every Saturday and Sunday.
Also open by appointment especially Mondays.

