

# Brewing up a storm in Myponga

*If you visit the brewery on a warm day you're likely to find three Samoyeds lying around in the sun ...*

Story by **Heather Millar**. Photography by **Grant Beed**.



In November last year, just a few months after Kate Henning and Simon Dunstone were married, they bought the Myponga Brewery, and the Smiling Samoyed Brewery was conceived.

It was after Kate Henning bought partner Simon Dunstone a Coopers beer brewing kit for Christmas several years ago that a shared passion for brewing began.

'It fairly quickly spiralled out of control', laughs Kate. 'We ended up with a whole room in our house dedicated to brewing!'

'We made some pretty terrible beer with that kit,' agrees Simon. 'But we quickly got the bug, and worked out how we could improve the beer we were making. Before long, we had a full all-grain brewery and four beer taps at home!'

'Our poker nights were pretty popular – people loved coming round and tasting the beer. And then they started asking if we'd ever thought about making it professionally.

We were looking at what we might do to start our own business ... we're both passionate about beer, so it just made sense to try and do it.'

Last year Kate's parents bought the Myponga Market, and initially the couple planned to use one of the rooms at the market for a weekend production brewery.

Kate's parents had signed the purchase agreement for the market a week before the couple got married. They went to Europe on honeymoon for three months where they visited forty-two breweries and sampled many more beers. When they got back, the Myponga brewery, right behind the market, came up for sale. >



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'We thought, why not? We can sell our beer to customers at our own bar, tell them about it, show them where it's brewed ... it's a much better business model. So we worked out our finances, and bought the business at the end of November last year,' says Simon.

The couple sold their house up north and moved to Myponga. Simon gave up his job as a software engineer, and started getting the brewery set up for production. Kate has continued her work as a lawyer in the city for the time being.

The couple had their first run at the end of July, with their new 1000L all-grain brew-house up and running with a new range of hand-made craft beers produced on site.

Both Simon and Kate are studying for a Graduate Certificate of Brewing through Ballarat University, learning all about the science behind brewing.

'As a professional brewer you need to know what's going on behind the scenes and be able to control every aspect of the process. And there's also the safety and legal aspects. There's a lot to learn going from home brewer to professional brewer', he laughs.

While the new brewery was being set up, they were open three days a week selling craft beers. They now have over 50 varieties in bottles, and six on tap as well as two ciders. 'It's all small-batch beers by small independent breweries,' says Simon. 'It's given us a chance to see what people like – also what works and what doesn't.'

The couple have added to the food offered at the brewery as well. There's the Brewery Platter, which is a plate of local and SA produce, such as Alexandrina cheese and Willunga almonds; and they have just put in a wood-fired pizza oven.

Their logo is a cute, smiling Samoyed, which of course begs the question ... where did that unusual name come from?

'We have three Samoyeds,' says Simon. There's brother and sister Cooper and Mia, and now Poppet, a rescue dog we recently added to the family.

The first brew is named after the dogs: a pale ale called 12 Paws. 'If you visit the brewery on a sunny day you're likely to find the dogs lying around in the sun, welcoming visitors,' says Simon.

The brewery is open during the week, when visitors can come and watch the brewing through a big glass viewing window they have installed. 'If our sign's out the front – you know we'll be brewing', says Simon.

Through the viewing window is the brewing shed itself – once upon a time the Myponga Hardware store.

The previous owner of the brewery was Troy DeYoung, of DeYoung's Salvage in Seafood, so the place is full of interesting collectible and recycled items. 'He did a great job of doing the place up, putting in the bar and beer garden, decorating it and putting in all the trinkets and things,' says Simon.

Kate and Simon have added their bottle collection to the eclectic interior of the brewery: a wall of craft beer bottles from around the world. 'We've been collecting them for years; it was becoming a bit of a mess at home', says Simon.

It's almost as though the couple knew years ago that one day there would be a wall full of cabinets in a brewery just waiting to be filled with their collection! 