



TESTIMONIAL



lake george 173 THE VINEYARDS
Bill Karelas | SOLD \$ UNDISCLOSED

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My old man is my hero. As far back as I can recall I vividly see him racing feverishly to complete tasks and make stuff happen. I guess a lot of my entrepreneurial spirit comes from being exposed to his incessant work ethic and, what I remember as a child, somewhat limitless skills at his disposal.

As a family, my father always ensured we had a passion for working the land and nurturing nature. His purchase of Lake George Winery from its founder Dr Edgar Riek in 1998 would become the perfect playground for him to mature his talents and for us to bond as a family. With no background in winemaking the family set out to learn the craft and care for the vines on the most historic vineyards nestled on the foothills of Canberra.

In 2008 my father also acquired Madew Wines, located on our northern boundary of our property. The purchase brightened the outlook for this unique stretch of vineyards, and between ourselves and the nearby Lerida Estate, we toiled the land and produced some of the state's most sort after wines.

Each year that passed we familiarised ourselves with the artistry of winemaking and my father taught himself to prune the vines, protect the grapes and harvest to optimise flavours. I would spend my time bush bashing the hundreds of acres and quickly found my spot, nestled quietly at the top of the estate. I often considered myself alone on that spot, miles away from anything sophisticated and content that my stake in the world was mine and mine only. From that vantage point I would ponder the grapes, reflect on the sunsets and curse the cattle as they blackened my horizon.



I remember the day in 2017 when dad told me that it was time to sell Lake George Winery. So many thoughts raced through my mind and yet I was unable to produce anything worth saying. I knew there was little I could do to influence his decision.

In my family I'd become somewhat of a go to when it came to logistics, processes and execution. While my dad had made the decision to sell the winery, it would be my decision as to how we went about it and what course the transaction would take.



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Given that I spent most my time in Sydney, running multiple businesses, while keeping the infrastructure of Lake George Winery afloat, I began the hunt for an Agency to engage on the sale. I was acutely aware of the transactional value of the business, but more importantly I wanted a company that could represent the true value of the business to prospective buyers. I quickly learnt that local rural property sales representatives were somewhat confined with their thinking, and lacked the high definition marketing tools I was looking for.

Etch Real Estate had been on my radar for quite some time. Hugo and Luljeta frequent my supermarket often and I'd struck several conversations with them since their inception into the real estate industry. It always astonished me that they were a husband and wife team that had built a significant business in the computer industry, working with Microsoft and Google, and were now achieving great results in the real estate sector. They struck me



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as hardworking, honest and reliable. More importantly I felt they knew how to elevate a property, and from what I'd seen of their portfolio, they had the ability to showcase each and every strength of a listing to its nth degree.

From the outset they pushed me out of my comfort zone and yet I knew I was in good hands. They stripped, styled and captured every element of the winery with jaw dropping beauty. My old man gave a silent seal of approval, and with that Etch set off to work.

From flying-in Singaporese buyers and seeing them to the vineyard via escort, to day-long viewings which would take in the sunsets from the top of the estate, Etch understood the power of emotion and played to each and every strength. Negotiations with each and every buyer required varying degrees of business acumen. Given multinationals, locals and boutique oenophiles had each showed interest, it became evident that we had selected Etch correctly. As a husband and wife negotiating team they made the lightweight buyers feel comfortable with presenting offers, and with their professional background Etch locked down corporate dollars.

This wasn't a typical sale. The final negotiations were to include an estate which plays host to hundred-year-old vines, a cellar of irreplaceable bottled wines, a restaurant and a home. With the guidance of Etch Real Estate we settled on a local boutique winemaker name Anthony McDougall. In May 2018 the McDougalls, who operated the Summerhill Road label out of Bywong for six years, exchanged contracts on our 113-hectare property on the shores of Lake George and became the latest custodians of our once family estate.



Our family firmly believes that if it weren't for the tenacity, diligence and execution of Etch and their staff, this exceptional result would not have been achieved. Having surpassed the most recent nearby vineyard sale by 40% and halved the time on market, Etch showed that their ability to deliver on every promise was to be uncontested moving forward. I can strongly recommend their services if achieving an outstanding result is paramount.

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