



Where it all began

The History of Morning Star Estate

Morning Star Estate is a rural property on the Eastern Shore of Port Philip Bay, between Mornington and Mt Eliza. The main house on the property was originally named 'Sunnyside' and was built in 1867 by Francis Gillett.

Fifteen years after the first land sales of 1845, the stretch of coast between Frankston and Mornington became an enclave for Melbourne gentlemen to set up their summer residences. Built on large land blocks and commanding sweeping views of the Bay, these properties set precedence for coastal residences of the era.

Immediately to the north, Richard Grice built 'Manyung' (now Norman Lodge) in 1863 to a design reputedly by Francis Gillett. This Gothic Revival mansion shares many similarities with the original 'Sunnyside' and is one of the few early seaside homes to remain intact through the subdivisions of the 1920s.

By the late 1880s, the Gillett family had developed a carriage driveway, extensive gardens and an orchard into a showpiece of the Mornington Peninsula. Each year the Gillett family would join the annual hunt next door at 'Manyung' and occasionally play golf, tennis, croquet and polo at the adjoining 'Moondah', built by Richard Grice's son James. Estates including, 'Moondah', 'Nyora' (now Ranelagh Estate), 'Earimil' and 'Ramsdale' (to the east) have been broken into smaller lots over the decades, although many of the original buildings still stand today.

Francis Gillett died in 1888 and was survived by his wife and family, who remained on the property till her death in 1909. For twelve years, the property was administered by the Trustees / Executors Agency, till purchased in 1921 by the Syme family.

Ten years later a bequest, by Elizabeth Hannon and Patrick Lawler provided the basis for establishing a country-training centre at 'Sunnyside' for delinquent boys which aimed to expose them to rural life.

'Morning Star Boys Training Farm' was run by the Franciscan Fathers as a rehabilitation centre for young male offenders. It remained under Catholic Church ownership for 45 years. During that time, a dormitory wing was built (1936), followed by a summer school (1944 - 1946). The Chapel was enlarged, a gymnasium and Priest's quarters were added, followed by the construction of 'Greyfriars' Student House in 1949.

After being used as a retreat by the Catholic Church, the property reverted to private hands in 1976. During the early 1980s, it operated as a horse stud, but fell into disrepair over the five years before the present owner, Judy Barrett, purchased it in 1992.

Judy and her family have spent the last fifteen years restoring the property to its original splendour. More than one hundred truckloads of rubbish had to be removed before the chapel, theatre and gymnasium (currently the Ballroom) could be restored. The original vineyard, one of the first on the Mornington Peninsula, had sadly been neglected, as had the extensive gardens.



With dedicated and consistent work, Morning Star Estate has once again been transformed into a showpiece of the Mornington Peninsula. With acres of sweeping lawns, 300 varieties of roses, and approximately 30 acres of vineyards (currently producing our Morning Star Estate and Sunnyside labels), the Estate is a delightful and unique venue for a variety of Functions, Conferences & Accommodation.

The ex dormitory wing (circ. 1936) has been transformed to provide for a unique boutique Hotel facility, which opened in January 2002, with a 4 Star rating.

Located adjacent to the Estate Restaurant, the Cellar Door houses an extensive range of Morning Star Estate wines as well as Mornington Peninsula Produce. Wine is served by the glass and outdoor seating with the best view on the Peninsula, are just some of the many reasons to visit Cellar Door. Open Thursday – Sunday (inclusive) 10am to 4pm. Group tastings by appointment

In October 2002, Morning Star Estate licensed the hospitality operations (including food, beverage and Hotel & Conference facilities) to Table Matters, a reputable and well-established catering company managed and directed by Craig Regan and Peter Green. Table Matters have grasped Morning Star Estate's growing operations with finesse and have raised the bar of excellence in food and beverage services.

Richard Linton Maritime Art Gallery joined the Estate in January 2005, relocating his business from Frankston CBD to Morning Star Estate's Old Dairy. Richard and his family have successfully integrated his business on the Estate with a suburb refurbishment of the Old Dairy. The Gallery is open 6 days a week (closed Tuesday's) from 11am – 4pm. Telephone: 9775 3747

Future Developments

Morning Star Estate has the opportunity to further develop the operations with the addition of a further 52 hotel rooms, Restaurant within the main residence building, and a purpose built winery/cellar door. It is Judy Barrett's clear objective to further develop Morning Star Estate into a state significant tourism destination on the Mornington Peninsula.



**Morning Star Estate
WINNER
International Great Wine Capitals Award 2005
*Views, Parks & Landscape***

"A must see when visiting the Mornington Peninsula"

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