



Red Hill water

rises to the top

| By Danielle Davey

CASUALLY MENTIONED IN THE REAL ESTATE LISTING OF A RED HILL PROPERTY IN 2012, THE TERM 'AQUIFER' MEANT LITTLE TO THE MALVERN COUPLE BUYING IT AS A HOLIDAY RESIDENCE AND INTENDING TO SETTLE THERE AFTER THEIR WORKING YEARS. NOW THE WORD HAS ASSUMED UNIMAGINABLE SIGNIFICANCE, STALLING THEIR PLANS FOR RETIREMENT AND CATAPULTING THEM INTO THE INTERNATIONAL SPOTLIGHT – WITH A GENEROUS NUDGE BY HOLLYWOOD STAR ZAC EFRON.

Like the popular TV sitcom family *The Beverly Hillbillies*, Three Bays owners Olaf Lyche and Dayle Purcell playfully recall the moment they learnt they'd struck 'liquid gold'. Rather than oil, their discovery came in the form of delicious natural spring water containing a diversity and quantity of minerals unlike any other mineral water in the world.

Two years after the pair bought the property, a friend described by Olaf as "a Swedish health nut" tore through a stubborn mass of blackberry bushes

to find the spring's source. Cupping the water in his hands, he noted its remarkable taste, urging Olaf and Dayle to get it tested.

First results seemed promising, but the couple were blown away by the final revelation of the water's profile. Extensive research determined the aquifer originates from a depth of 900m, rising from the 600-million-year-old palaeolithic basement formed long before dinosaurs roamed the Earth. The water is drawn from New Zealand, where rainfall seeps into the ground and trickles through tectonic plates to feed the aquifer, a journey that is estimated to take millions of years. Its return to the surface then takes at least 2000 years.

Every day, 22,000 litres spill forth from the ancient aquifer in a constant supply to meet the ever-increasing demand for Three Bays' award-winning mineral water, so named for the Western Port, Corio and Port Phillip bays located beneath its source.

Due to the rarity of its origin and properties, and the magnificence of its taste, the water has been dubbed a 'unicorn'. One of only a limited number of commercial artesian springs worldwide producing water fit for human consumption, it contains the highest mineral count of any commercial mineral water in the world, with 22 of the 24 minerals essential for human health. In the business of bottled mineral

water, a stamp of approval from The Fine Water Society is worth its weight in gold. Coincidentally, gold is the award Three Bays' still and sparkling waters have repeatedly attained since its entry into the global forum in 2018.

This would come as no surprise to viewers of the 2020 documentary series *Down to Earth*. Early in the first season, LA water sommelier Martin Riese presented host Zac and guest Anna Kendrick with mineral waters chosen for their high mineral content. Tasting the Three Bays offering made a significant impression on the stars; Anna said: "It annoys me that this is so good because I don't know how to describe it."

The morning after the episode aired in the US, Olaf and Dayle woke to find 800 orders in their inbox. The pair were stunned, given they had no idea it had even been filmed. As they scrambled to ship stock, it was just the beginning of Three Bays taking the world by storm.

Now it has become the unofficial water of the Philadelphia Phillies baseball team, with the Phillies' head dietitian arranging ongoing deliveries. Players like it so much they've begun placing their own orders for home use.

The University of Victoria has proved Olaf and Dayle's mineral water



Three Bays owners Olaf Lyche and Dayle Purcell

improves physical fitness, conducting a four-week control study in 2018 where half the subjects consumed Three Bays water while the other half drank tap water. The result? The difference between winning a race and finishing 30th. For athletes, the benefits are significant.

Regarded so highly overseas, it's surprising Three Bays hasn't received greater recognition on the Peninsula. For a region that values the dining experience, it's the perfect accompaniment to a meal. Rather than cleansing the palate – which essentially kills tastebuds – Three Bays enhances the palate, unlocking the flavours of food and wine.

Tasting Three Bays for the first time is an epiphany. You'll never be satisfied with tap or table water again. And to think it all began with a surprise discovery in Olaf and Dayle's backyard. To learn where Three Bays mineral water is available near you, visit www.threebays.com.au