

MARCH 25 2020 - 4:00PM

Kangaroo Island Spirits moves to sanitiser manufacture to meet Island needs in face of coronavirus COVID-19



Stan Gorton

Coronavirus
Comments



Jon and Sarah Lark in the Kangaroo Island Spirits distillery. File photo

Kangaroo Island Spirits has joined other distilleries around Australia in switching to produce sanitiser products to help fight coronavirus.

The award-winning distillery will make available its waste ethanol for prioritised needs on Kangaroo Island such as the hospital.

It had already made sanitiser to the Kangaroo Island Community Education schools.

Owner Jon Lark said he and the KIS staff were keen to meet that need for the local community, even though he had also received calls from authorities from around the nation asking for product.

Mr Lark explained that his distillery received highly-refined ethanol from the Tarac distillery in the Barossa Valley, for whom they were the oldest customer being Australia's original gin distillery.

Mr Lark said he was following various protocols in terms of labelling and bottling, but more sanitiser product should soon be available for those most in need.



Sonny Johnstone at Kangaroo Island Spirits that is offering take-away bottles of gin and mixers, as well as coffees.

Kangaroo Island Spirits meanwhile is offering take-away bottles of gin and mixers, as well as coffees, at its Cygnet River cellar door, just outside of Kingscote.

It is also working on "care packages" of a gin, a mixer and herbs or dried fruit garnishes that could be delivered across the Island.

Online sales have also greatly increased.



Kangaroo Island Spirits meanwhile is open for business.

In other news, KIS has been sold to Melbourne-based company Founders First, but for now there should be no changes at the KI cellar door.

Jon and Sarah Lark began their Kangaroo Island adventure in 2002 and their distillery at Cygnet River has been a beacon for gin lovers for more than a dozen years, producing many award-winning blends and culminating in their Best Contemporary Gin award at the International Wine and Spirits Competition last year for their O Gin.

Mr Lark said the new business move was "the perfect solution" for KI Spirits. "It's a new opportunity for us to get on with what we do best - creating premium products to meet growing demand".

The Melbourne-based Founders First listed on the Australian Securities Exchange in December last year and has six breweries and three distilleries in its portfolio.



Mark Haysman and Stuart Morton of Founders First, with Jon Lark, centre. Photo Shauna Black, KI Business and Brand Alliance

Managing director Mark Haysman said his aim was to increase KIS' ability to produce and take the brand to the world. "We invest alongside the founders. Jon and Sarah are amazing makers and they can stay on for as long as they want. We want to enable them, not operate the business."

Jon - who with Sarah was one of the Kangaroo Island Brand's first ambassadors - said the new ownership was a win-win. "The only changes will be good things. We can build on the great brand we have and take our products to the world."

The Islander: <https://www.theislanderonline.com.au/story/6696920/kangaroo-island-spirits-moves-to-sanitiser-manufacture-to-meet-island-needs/>