



## THE HISTORY OF HUON

- Huon Aquaculture (Huon) was founded in 1986 in Southern Tasmania by a local Huon Valley farming family, the Benders. The Benders started Huon as a diversification from the family farming business. At this point the business consisted of one pen of fish and one lone employee feeding fish by hand.
- In 1994, Peter and Frances Bender purchased Huon from the family group and became contract growers, selling their fish to other companies. In 2002, they began marketing their salmon under the 'Huon Salmon' brand. At the same time, they invested in new harvesting capabilities and infrastructure. In this year Huon also began harvesting and selling Huon Salmon Caviar.
- In 2005, they stepped out from behind the contract grower model and the Huon Aquaculture brand was established. 2006 was the year Huon developed a recirculation hatchery at Lonnvale, which supplied 40 per cent of annual smolt requirements.
- 2006 marked the purchase of the Springs Smoked Seafoods factory in Adelaide's Mount Barker, enabling Huon to offer a complete range of products from whole fresh fish to smoked salmon.
- Huon started farming Ocean Trout in 2008 (in Macquarie Harbour), at which time they also acquired the Trumpeter Bay offshore lease in Storm Bay.
- In 2009, Huon purchased the Parramatta Creek land with the intention of creating a processing facility that would see the business control 100 per cent of its production line in one location, from fresh whole fish to finished packaged product.
- Huon launched *Reserve Selection* in 2010, and in doing so, took an innovative step into online retail. In the same year, the business also acquired 100% ownership of the Springfield hatchery and achieved British Retail Consortium Accreditation (A Rating) at Parramatta Creek.
- 2012 saw Huon invest in remotely operated net cleaners and install underwater cameras in pens to monitor fish behaviour. This was also the year the business won Tasmanian Exporter of the Year.
- In 2013, Peter and Frances Bender were named Biosecurity Farmers of the Year. In this year Huon also achieved Global G.A.P accreditation.
- 2014 was a year of innovation for Huon, with the launch of its controlled growth strategy. This move saw the business become a publicly listed company on the ASX, introduce state-of-the-art feed barges, larger, seal-proof fortress pens, as well as Huon's first well-boat, the *Ronja Huon*. 2014 was also the year Huon started offshore farming in higher energy sites such as Storm Bay and construction for the \$35 million Forest Home hatchery began.
- In 2015, Parramatta Creek officially opened for production. This was also the year Forest Home began egg incubation. In 2016, Huon entered a partnership with the Government of New South Wales to research the viability and best technology and methods of farming Yellowtail Kingfish in Providence Bay. June 2016 saw the first sea transfers take place from Forest Home.
- Parramatta Creek achieved BRC AA rating and continues to hold this standard.



- 2018 was the year Huon was named Australia's first RSPCA-approved salmon producer. This was also the year Huon secured an aquaculture farming licence to farm Yellowtail Kingfish off the Houtman Abrolhos Islands in Western Australia.
- In early 2019, Huon opened their Ingleburn (Sydney) processing facility. Also in 2019, after one year of product development, Huon launched the Huon Ocean Trout Caviar range and the Forest Home hatchery farmland was certified as organic by NASAA.
- Early 2020 saw the much-anticipated arrival of the world's largest wellboat, the *Ronja Storm*.

## A CLOSER LOOK – THE EARLY YEARS

For Peter and Frances Bender, farming, whether it is on land or sea, has always been about family, community, passion and of course, quality produce that is second-to-none. As local Tasmanians, they met by chance on the Ida Bay Railway, and just two years later they were married and managing the family cattle and sheep farming property in the Huon Valley.

While farming was their passion, they also branched into other business ventures, including a butcher's shop, Tasmania's first trellised apricot orchard, as well as a small-scale excavating business to help on the cattle farm.

In 1986, the Bender family began farming fish. Eight years later, Peter and Frances made the decision to put all their energy into fish farming and bought the fish farm outright from the rest of the family. During this time, Peter and France were contract growers, which meant they sold their fish to other companies.

In 2005, they stepped out from behind the contract grower model and the Huon Aquaculture brand was established. As the business grew it soon became apparent that there was a need to control the process from egg to plate, to do so, Huon needed to become vertically integrated and have control over their own breeding stock and smolt.

Accordingly, in 2006, Huon purchased the Lonnvale hatchery on the Russell River in the Huon River catchment. One year later, the business built their first RAS facility (Recirculation Aquaculture System) to complement the existing flow-through system on the site. Lonnvale's RAS facility representing a shift from traditional flow-through style hatcheries. The environmentally friendly RAS system was designed for low water usage, with an extensive filtration system that removes nutrients from the water, before circulating back through the fish and eventually to waste.

Huon began farming Ocean Trout in Macquarie Harbour in 2008. In this year the business also launched retail products into the market under the Huon brand. 2008 also saw Huon secured the Trumpeter Bay lease, signifying a shift to higher energy offshore salmon farming.

In 2009, Huon purchased land at Parramatta Creek, near Devonport, with the intention of creating a smokehouse and product innovation centre. This facility would become unique by global standards as it's one of the few commercial facilities that has a whole fresh fish coming in one end and a smoked packaged product coming out the other.

## THE LAST DECADE

In 2010, Huon launched its signature *Reserve Selection* range, and in doing so, took an innovative step into online retail.

In the same year, Huon acquired 100 per cent ownership of the Springfield hatchery, located 20 minutes outside of Scottsdale in the north of the state. Unlike other flow-through facilities, Springfield had the benefit of having two water supplies. The first was a spring-fed supply from the Myrtle Grove Creek and the other irrigation flow from the Headquarters Road dam on its way to the Forrester River.

Technology at Huon took a leap in 2012 with the introduction of remotely operated net cleaners and underwater cameras in the pens. The introduction of the cameras allowed for the real-time monitoring of fish



behaviours and feeding habits. 2012 also saw Huon become the first salmon producer in Australia to achieve the internationally recognised Global G.A.P. accreditation.

In 2013, Peter and Frances Bender were named Australian Biosecurity Farmers of the Year at a national awards ceremony. Huon were proudly the first aquaculture company to receive this prestigious award.

In 2014, driven by Peter Bender, Huon launched its controlled growth strategy, marking a pivotal turning point for the business. This saw Huon evolve every aspect of their farming practices, including moving further offshore into rough waters. This move was made possible through developing, in house, world leading patented fortress pen systems, designing and constructing robust highly technical feed barges, designing and implementing Huon's first well-boat, the *Ronja Huon*, and developing a remote feeding system utilising AI technology. These significant developments coincided with Huon becoming a publicly listed company on the ASX.

2014 was also the year construction for the \$35 million Forest Home hatchery, located at Judbury (situated on the Huon River), began. At the time of building, Forest Home represented the second generation of Huon's recirculation hatcheries (Lonnavele was the first RAS facility).

In 2015, Parramatta Creek officially opened for production. The Parramatta Creek Smokehouse and Product Innovation Centre meant that every single fish grown by Huon could be processed in-house. Huon's harvest plan and state-of-the-art equipment housed inside Parramatta Creek allowed Huon products to reach the Australian market up-to 24 hours earlier and fresher than any other salmon. 2015 also saw Forest Home began egg incubation.

In June 2016, Forest Home's first fish were transferred to sea, and the site was officially opened by Premier Will Hodgman MP in November 2016. In this year, Huon also entered a partnership with the Government of New South Wales to research the viability and best technology and methods of farming Yellowtail Kingfish in Providence Bay. The project ended in early 2019.

2018 was the year Huon was proudly named Australia's first RSPCA-approved salmon farm. The decision was made by the RSPCA after a two-year assessment of Huon's sites and procedures against the RSPCA Approved Farming Scheme – Farmed Atlantic Salmon. This was also the year Huon secured an aquaculture farming license to farm Yellowtail Kingfish off the Houtman Abrolhos Islands in Western Australia.

In 2019, after one year of product development Huon launched the Huon Ocean Trout Caviar range. This was also the year Forest Home farmland was certified as organic by NASAA. This certification also benefited Bruny Island Cheese, who lease the grazing land for silage and hay, as well as grazing calves and dry cows.

Early 2020 saw the much-anticipated arrival of the world's largest wellboat, the *Ronja Storm* into Huon's fleet. Measuring at 118 metres in length, she has a total water storage volume of over 13,000 cubic metres and holds 800 tonnes of fish at a time (equivalent to an entire 240 metre Fortress Pen).

