



And the winner is...

KIMBERLEY ACCOMMODATION

Started by a bloke who came to the region as a teenage jackaroo, they now manage hotels, bars, a brewery and restaurants in one of Australia's most isolated and picturesque areas.

Garry Herbert, Chief Financial Officer for the Kimberley Accommodation Group, is over the moon. It was he who put together their presentation for GAME ON, telling the sad story of a man without a life, working horrendous hours to keep the books straight and produce the reports.

The Kimberley region of Western Australia is a scenic wonderland of immense historic and ecological value. Kimberley Accommodation helps ensure that the thousands of tourists who flock there from May till August are bedded down, fed and watered. However, managing a business whose facilities are separated by hundreds of kilometres, is owned by a complex structure of family trusts, and which has significant downtime during the wet season, is no picnic – especially with antiquated accounting systems.

“I was told we’d won GAME ON as I was heading into a board meeting to present our quarterly financial results,” Garry says. “That report took me over 40 man-hours to produce. With Greentree I’ll be able to run that consolidated report straight from the system at the push of a button – that’s a week a month given back to me, straight away.”

The Kimberley region is on the verge of an industrial boom, with major gas and mining projects in the offing, and a huge irrigation land expansion underway as well. But its history is bound to the cattle trade, and that’s where Kimberley Accommodation’s founder, Martin Pierson-Jones, got his start. He left his home state of Victoria at age 19 and worked as a stockman in the Kimberley before turning his hand to managing pubs. These were knock-down, drag-out places filled nightly with hard drinkers, and with cages around the bar to protect the staff. But from those beginnings, Martin built a multi-million dollar business which is now looking to expand. Kimberley Accommodation is currently building a resort near the Berkeley River, and has plans for another



major development in Broome and a residential complex at Wyndham. However, to ensure financial support for their plans, they need to demonstrate that their monetary systems are sound.

“We’re really excited about Greentree,” says COO Dannielle Hart. “I’m well aware of the limitations of our accounting system. We don’t have that ability to analyse the business as we should, and we struggle to get the information that the bank wants in a timely fashion. It’s just super-exciting that we won’t have those sorts of problems going forward, and we’ll be able to know exactly where we’re at and plan for the future.”

The story told (and hilariously illustrated) by Garry Herbert really impressed GAME ON’s judges. “I fell in love with Kimberley’s story because it showed a pioneering spirit and a challenge to make the most out of a fairly difficult set of circumstances,” says Chris Alp. “That’s a very Australian attitude.”

“They proved to me that they could actually use the software, and understood what it could do for them,” says Mark Nilsen. “I thought that if they won, they’d get the most out of it, but also their presentation was clearly able to capture the imagination of the voting public. So they appealed to the technical people like me, and to the non-technical people who were looking for something visual with a bit of humour.”

“Running GAME ON has been a joy because it gave us the opportunity to connect with real Aussie businesses that are inspiring in what they’re trying to achieve,” says Greentree’s CEO, Peter Dickinson. “Kimberley Accommodation is a fantastic example of the mid-sized companies that are the heart of Australian business.”

Kimberley Accommodation is a family business in the truest sense. Dannielle is Martin’s stepdaughter and is also a director, along with her husband and stepbrother, as well as Martin and his wife, Kim. “As a family I guess we have some pretty interesting dinner table discussions,” Dannielle laughs. “We were all jumping up and down when we got the news. It was really lucky that we were actually all together because our business is so spread out, and so it was great that we were all together to celebrate it.”

Dannielle says the \$250K software prize will give Kimberley Accommodation peace of mind, and confidence in its growth and development. But perhaps the best moment was seeing what the news had done for the hard-worked Garry Herbert.

“You couldn’t wipe the grin off Garry’s face,” she says. “Someone said it was the first smile they’d seen from Garry in a very long time.”