

The Power of One



Contributed by Russ Allison, CEO
Springvale Botanical Cemetery
Springvale Botanical Cemetery also manages St Kilda, Dandenong
and Melbourne cemeteries

One never ceases to be amazed by the clients we serve. Their needs and at times their preparedness to make significant outlays to satisfy them, serve time and time again to encourage us to offer a range of products to cater for a variety of tastes, incomes and preferences.

A clear example of this marketing philosophy is readily found in St Kilda Cemetery in Melbourne. Amongst the thirty-four graves released for sale at this closed cemetery, in October 2007, was one most unusual vault.

It was created under the floor, inside an old Heritage Victoria classified pavilion within the cemetery at the suggestion of John Hawker (a 'Friend of St Kilda' and a Heritage Victoria staff member).

Like those in the cathedrals of Europe, this vault has a ledger flush with the floor which forms part of the pavilion floor. The vault provides for two interments. Its gazetted price of approximately \$168,000 reflected the following:

- vault construction and pavilion restoration costs;
- special nature and positioning within a closed cemetery;
- the fact that St Kilda had been cross subsidised by Springvale Botanical Cemetery since 1968;
- need to build St Kilda's future preservation fund.

Its sale in February to a family who became aware of its existence and selected it after reading the cemetery brochure truly reflected the power of one:

- unusual but good idea;
- creative implementation;
- quality brochure;
- team of proactive staff;
- family who wanted something special;
- trust and management team that is prepared to do something different.

One thing you can be sure of is that if you do what you have always done, you will do what you always do.

Below: photos of the unusual vault at St Kilda Cemetery

