



# Wine runs in the blood for Tulloch manager

The hopes, dreams and influences of generations of wine-makers run through Christina Tulloch's veins.

At 31, the former Pokolbin girl, is general manager of the family company Tulloch Wines and with it comes the responsibility of upholding this winemaking family's 113-year history.

Christina was named last year's Hunter Valley Rising Star and Tulloch Wines was awarded cellar door of the year.

But this fourth generation Tulloch is under no illusion about the "big responsibility" that is now hers.

"There is something scary about that sort of responsibility but my devotion to the company comes from the biggest motivation of all - my name is on the product," Christina said.

It was by accident that Christina found her way into the family wine-making business in December 2003.

"I had been working and living in Sydney and at the time was writing fluff about fluff as a public relations manager for Murdoch Magazines.

"I wanted a change of direction because I knew there had to be more to life. I felt I was not contributing much to the world at that point."

At 26, Christina moved to China to live with her sister and after a couple of months came home to get her finances in order.

"The family mentioned to me that they were opening a new cellar door and my father Jay (the company's winemaker) wanted me to manage it and I have never left."

Christina was there when the \$4 million cellar door sales and function centre opened in the heart of Pokolbin.

She was later appointed opera-

tions manager and brand and marketing manager before taking on the general manager's role.

"I oversee everything within the company and I am never bored," she said.

"This company has a 113-year history and this is my opportunity to help carry that on and pass it on to the next generation of Tullochs.

"Nothing makes me more passionate than seeing the satisfaction and the pride my father has in his company.

"He took on the business when he was thinking about retiring but his response was to continue to make the same quality wines that Tulloch is known for."

Christina was born in Maitland and is one of four children. She is the youngest child by 10 minutes (she has a twin brother Jock) and was raised at Pokolbin. She attended Cessnock West Public School and then boarding school for her secondary education.

She now splits her time between Sydney and Pokolbin for her work with the family business.

The Tulloch tradition started in 1895 at Branxton where Christina's great grandfather, John Younie Tulloch, owned Branxton general store.

"He was owed money by a landholder who couldn't pay so he gave my great grandfather some property at Pokolbin which included shiraz vines on a neglected five acres.

"He decided to give it a go.

"His son Hector (one of nine children), my grandfather, was the oldest in the family and he took over as managing director and all the men in the family worked for the company.

"Hector died in 1965 when my father was 19 years old. The company was sold outside the family for the first time in 1969.

"The Tulloch family bought it

back in 2001. It was Hector who in the 1950s and 1960s made the Tulloch name famous for the Pokolbin dry red, Hunter River white and the private bin shiraz.

"The private bin shiraz was a very famous wine which was more expensive than Grange at the time."

Christina said it is an exciting time for Tulloch Wines which has relaunched its famous wines with the original style labels.

"I grew up in the wine industry and I have very fond memories of the close knit community at Pokolbin. It is a social industry to be involved with - the camaraderie and the pulling together to help one another.

"I have helped pick the vines and I rode on the harvestors. I have been involved at every level."

Christina has the company's future firmly set in her sights.

"From here Tulloch will build on its reputation as a traditional winemaker - an old Hunter Valley brand produced from the prime Hunter Valley grape growing area.

"I want to carry on the traditions of the Hunter and the fabulous old wines produced. This area is perfectly suited to those style of wines and I would love to see us return to the glory days of the 1950s and 1960s."

Christina said she has travelled to other wine making regions throughout the world, including California and Spain, and it is important that the Hunter Valley maintains its image as a wine lover's destination.

"The Hunter has to continue to build on its profile as a massive tourist destination and wine must remain a big part of that so we need to work very hard to preserve that recognition."



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**A FINE DROP:** Christina Tulloch returned to her roots to act as the general manager for the family business, Tulloch Wines