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GWYNETH OLSEN

Gwyneth Olsen, was born and spent her first five years in Cairns, Queensland before the family moved to a remote part of Indonesia (Tembagapura, West Papua) where she lived for many years before returning to Brisbane to complete her high school studies.

Gwyn's interest in travel saw her complete a Bachelor of Science in Biochemistry from the University of Otago, and it wasn't until her final year whilst working with fermentation kinetics, that she realised she was never going to make a decent biochemist and thought winemaking sounded like much more fun!

This saw Gwyn study Oenology at Roseworthy University in Adelaide, graduating in 2005. Since this time Gwyn has worked three vintages in France - Languedoc, St Emillion and Burgundy, held an Assistant Winemaking role at Villa Maria in New Zealand, for two years before being promoted to Operations Winemaker which she held for a further two years. Gwyn was then offered a position at McWilliams Wines with the pivotal role of building the production across both New Zealand and the Hunter Valley. Gwyn's passion and enthusiasm for wine saw her quickly appointed to a senior winemaking role. In 2013 she accepted the position of Chief Winemaker at Briar Ridge.

Gwyn's achievements so early in her career are impressive. In 2015, Gwyn was awarded the **Rising Star of the Year** award at the Hunter Valley Legends Awards, in recognition of her contribution to the Hunter Valley wine tourism industry over the past 12 months and later that year became a '**Len Evans Tutorial**' Scholar. This followed on from a very successful 2014, when Gwyn was awarded the prestigious **Gourmet Traveller WINE, Young Winemaker Medal**, an award that 'left me completely speechless', says Gwyn. "With so many young winemakers doing interesting things and making their mark on the industry, I felt very humbled and privileged to accept this award".

Additionally in 2012 Gwyn was awarded the title of '**Dux**' at the **Australian Wine Research Institute**, Advanced Wine Assessment Course. Gwyn was described as an 'individual with exceptional judging skill and deserves the opportunity to be fast tracked into the national wine show system' says Con Simos, Coordinator of the AWAC. As a result Gwyn now judges at six wine shows throughout Australia, including three National Wine Shows - Adelaide, Melbourne and Brisbane.

Gwyn's enthusiasm and dedication to the Hunter Valley wine industry, passion for creating wines with a strong sense of place, representative of the Briar Ridge Mount View vineyards and the confidence to push boundaries in winemaking is evident in the success she has had both personally and for the Briar Ridge brand; with four trophies already gracing the shelves.

She continues to enjoy the challenges and opportunities to craft diverse, high quality wines for the iconic Briar Ridge brand.

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