



## *Taste Inspired by Passion*

Geoff + Barb Brown

### **Barb & Geoff Brown** **Owners Ascella Pure Wines**

It may be very different from the routine of working within a University faculty and a world away from the harsh conditions of the Arctic, but Barbara (Barb) and Geoff Brown are loving their life running their successful organic vineyard in Milbrodale known as **Ascella Pure Wines**.

A Canadian national by birth, Barb grew up in Vancouver, Canada while Geoff grew up in Wagga in NSW, before graduating from Sydney University in Engineering followed by a Doctorate of Engineering at the University of British Columbia. Geoff then worked in manufacturing, and went on to do consulting work for the military and large corporations building large scale mobile power generation systems.

Barb has had an equally interesting career working at the University of British Columbia, before heading off to Canada's far Arctic North where she worked with indigenous communities – assisting them to build sustainable communities, improve their health and education and take better advantage of employment and business opportunities in the oil and gas and mining development in the region.

Barb and Geoff met in 1968 at the University of British Columbia and they were married in 1972. They have one son 'Doug' who is following in his parents footsteps and currently completing his Doctorate of Chemistry in Calgary, Canada.

In 2005, the adventurous couple decided on a complete lifestyle change and made the move to Australia where they planned to explore organic farming.

Being passionate advocates of sustainable principles and pure wine, they purchased a certified organic vineyard in Milbrodale just 10 minutes from Broke and immediately set about turning the estate into a sustainable organic farm and producing high quality, award-winning wines.

Today, with 32 hectares under vine, Ascella Pure Wines may well be the country's largest family-run organic vineyard – producing wines made from organically grown grapes and without any added sulphites.

Not a bad achievement for a couple who learned the ins and outs of viticulture mostly on the job.

"We decided on the Hunter Valley and the Broke – Fordwich region because it is the oldest and most historic wine region in Australia and produces world class, award winning wines. It is also conveniently located to the largest market, and has good access for the regular trips to Canada and elsewhere," said Barb.



Taste chemical free wine at Ascella

Barb and Geoff are committed to the regions tourism and in making the world a better and safer place to live – free from the hazards of chemicals. Apart from the challenges involved in running a large organic vineyard the couple is also active in the Bulga-Milbrodale community's fight against the expansion of open cut coal mining and in trying to protect the Hunter from Coal Seam Gas. Barb is the Vice President of the Broke Fordwich Wine Tourism Association (BFWTA) and the chairperson of the Little Bit of Italy committee – a popular wine and food event held each year in Broke.

Geoff, who is responsible for all things organic in the vineyard, said that there was strong growth in the organic sector with the demand for organic wine increasing both locally and overseas and that further growth was expected in the coming years.

"A growing numbers of wine lovers are seeking out organically-certified options. Organic wine is viewed as a quality product and is fast becoming an essential choice at some of the better restaurants and retailers," said Geoff.

Ascella has a full range of award winning white and red wines. These include Chardonnay, Verdelho, Semillon, Shiraz, Merlot and Chambourcin as well as a Rose and sparkling Pure Vescence. Their wines are made by leading Hunter Valley winemaker Liz Jackson (Silkman) and are distributed throughout Australia, and exported to the UK, continental Europe, China and Canada.

You can enjoy their great tasting award-winning wines at their cellar door on Thompsons Rd in Milbrodale seven days a week between 10am and 5pm. Vineyard tours can also be arranged. Also be sure to check out their Jack in the Vine Stalk BBQ in the Orchard – great wine and food every weekend! They also have a grapevine giveaway for children 6 to 12 years of age.

Experience the tranquil Thompsons valley, with a panoramic view down the valley. Have lunch under the Marquees among the fruit trees or bring a blanket and picnic on the grass. Accommodation is available any time of the year at Ascella Vineyard Stay or Riverpines Cottage.