

Jane Ferrari

Winemaker / Communications

Jane Ferrari is not simply a Yalumba employee, she's a company crusader. Born in Adelaide, brought up in Alice Springs and an inveterate traveller, she's been around enough to know that the blend of elements that makes up Yalumba and the Barossa is rare indeed, and worth taking the time and trouble to explain to people, whether industry insiders or consumers.

Her official job title – Winemaker, Communications – scarcely gives an indication of the scope of her role, still less of her expansive personality. Put simply, her work encompasses public relations and wine education, yet Ferrari is no PR fluff, no charcoal-suited jargon-spinner turned out from a corporate mould. She's jeans, boots and a laid back straight talker, with a taste for Barossa Shiraz and an open soul. There's no fake or frippery with Ferrari – when she preaches the Yalumba gospel, you realise that she's doing it because she's passionate about the place; she leaves the distinct impression that she wouldn't waste her breath on anything she didn't wholly believe in herself.



Her passion is as infectious as it is heartfelt. Spend an hour or so with Jane – in a London boardroom, at a New York tasting, at the Angaston winery, it doesn't matter where – and you'll find out more about the heritage and culture of Yalumba and the wider Barossa than most locals learn in a lifetime. Much more than just a winemaker, she's a born story-teller, a canny judge of character (whether people or horses), and has a knack of sizing people up and knowing how to put them at ease – though no one's immune from the occasional wry observation, courtesy of Ferrari's down to earth brand of wit and humour.

To say her life has been colourful would be something of an understatement. The daughter of an Italian migrant surveyor, she grew up on Aboriginal missions and in Alice Springs as her father worked on the construction of schools, silos and airport runways. A lifelong passion for horses and racing nearly saw her become a vet; but, somehow, somewhere along the line, vineyards and winemaking took over. A degree at South Australia's renowned Roseworthy campus and vintages with Wolf Blass Wines' legendary red maker, John Glaetzer, were followed by a spell in the Sydney spirit trade with United Distillers, where research and development on emerging premixed spirit drinks vied for attention with the many attractions of the nearby Randwick racecourse.

By the end of the 1980s, Jane was back in the Barossa, working first at Yalumba, then Rockford, before coming back to Yalumba full time. She's had spells all round the place, from winery to front of house to event management and entertaining – private tastings for dignitaries, full scale banquets for 300, two-day Harvest Markets, staff Christmas parties, you name it – always working hard, playing hard and first with a canny idea. In the meantime, she's taught herself how to make olive oil (building up a successful brand in the process), bought a treasured gum-studded block of Barossa land and built her own house.

Jane's current role was made for her – it's the sanctified version of what she's been doing for years – with the only real difference being that she now spends much of her time on the road, talking, tasting and explaining the Yalumba difference in her inimitable style to distributors, retailers and consumers across the globe. As she says herself, in a world that is becoming more and more reliant on technology, it's important to take things back to a more personal level, so that anyone who has any interest in Yalumba understands what goes on there, what makes it tick and can feel a part of it. To do that, the company could not have chosen a better ambassador.

Snapshot paragraph:

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