



**I MADE IT, I LOVE IT ...**

**Sarah-Kate Dineen**  
Tempus Two Wines,  
Hunter Valley

*Tempus Two  
Pinot Gris 2003 (\$30)*

"We use the cooler-climate  
King Valley for the fruit and  
it shows the clean, pristine  
flavours that I like."

*Tempus Two Sangiovese  
2003 (\$30)*

"Our first sangiovese and  
I'm really happy with it. The  
fruit's from Beechworth."

**Dan Dineen**  
Tower Estate, Hunter Valley

*Tower Estate Hunter Valley  
Shiraz 2002 (\$35)*

"It was a really tough vintage  
and it came together on the  
blending bench. I enjoy it  
each time I see it, how it's  
changing and gaining its  
own identity."

# two's company

Creative tension between two winemakers is one thing. What happens when they live together as well? By Jeni Port

POP THE CORK ON a T'Gallant wine and there's a surprise in store. What ho! It's Shakespeare — a scene from *Romeo and Juliet* actually — in a lyrical, romantic pentameter winding around the cork: *Which to the high-top gallant of my joy! Must be my convoy in the secret night.* Ah, love among the vines.

A jewel like this reinforces every love-struck notion you ever had about vineyards and wine. Even more so when you discover that T'Gallant co-founder and winemaker Kevin McCarthy is responsible for it.

Shouldn't his partner in life and wine, Kathleen Quealy, be chuffed to be so publicly declared the object of his affection, the top gallant of his joy? He did do it for her, didn't he?

"Oh, of course not!" she laughs.

"To say it was specifically to do with Kathleen is not true," says her husband but, he adds passionately, "Kathleen is the inspiration behind T'Gallant, Kathleen is the inspiration behind pinot gris, she is the guiding light of T'Gallant, she is the true mother of T'Gallant ..."

A "total romantic", McCarthy says he loves the "creative tension" that comes from working with his winemaking wife.

Most couples in the wine industry usually find that their roles in the winery and vineyard conveniently dovetail, with the man controlling one part of the production process while the woman is responsible for another. One suspects that it's a deliberate arrangement conducive to domestic harmony as much as anything else.

But what happens when both partners are winemakers, the final creative arbiters of 'The Taste'?

Well, it certainly adds spice to wine and life.

Natasha Mooney was employed as a winemaker at Lindemans Karadoc

winery near Mildura when she met her husband-to-be, Stephen Dew. He was a cellar hand and early on in their relationship tensions were strained when a quantity of wine was lost during Dew's shift. Being his boss, it was Mooney's job to give him a verbal warning. "It was done one-on-one and that was fine," recalls Dew. "I certainly took it on board. I was already quite cross with myself, but once I got the warning it was like, 'Fine, thank you very much.'"

"We didn't really talk for the rest of the day 'til we got home."

Mooney went on to become senior winemaker at Barossa Valley Estate and today is in charge of Xanadu's winemaking operations in the Adelaide Hills. Dew is assistant winemaker at Kaesler in the Barossa Valley.

A "big picture" person, Mooney respects her husband's attention to detail. For his part, he says he is proud

of her high profile in the industry and achievements like winning the International Wine Challenge Red Wine of the Year when she was at Barossa Valley Estates.

And they don't mind a frank wine discussion, either.

"We argue like anything over wine and wine styles," she says. "We do a lot of blind tastings together and we're always arguing, but I think that's good for creativity in winemaking."

We both respect each other's opinions ... most of the time."

Watching that creative spark between partners somehow makes their coming together seem one of fate's master strokes.

Take Sarah-Kate and Dan Dineen, winemakers in the Hunter Valley. Sarah-Kate was a young New

**"We argue like anything over wine and wine styles. We do a lot of blind tastings together and we're always arguing, but I think that's good for creativity ..."**

Zealander looking for work in Australia when she first applied for a job at McWilliam's Hunter Valley. Dan, the McWilliam's winemaker, took one look at her resume and picture ("I got my best photo for my CV," she laughs) and wanted to hire her. It didn't happen, but in 1997 both found themselves working together at Brokenwood Wines. Love did the rest.

While Sarah-Kate and Dan have proven they can work together, they no longer do. She's stationed at



“... the idea was that she would lean on me for a couple of vintages until she was confident enough herself.”

Tempus Two and he's at Tower Estate, but it's not unusual for one to pop in on the other during blending trials, just to offer a second opinion. This vintage, Dan toyed with making a rosé. Who else should he turn to but his wife, who has a strong love for the style?

“This morning, because I've made a few rosés, he called me down to have a look at what he was doing,” she explains. “I just gave him my advice on what I do with rosé and had a look at his juice and said: ‘Oh, you've lost some of the aromatics out of your juice already by not sulphuring it.’ He said: ‘Right, that's enough information’ and showed me the door.”

Mention of rosé gives Dan Dineen an attack of guffaws. “That bloody rosé! Oh, the bane of my life. I'll never make it again. She can have it. I think it needs the feminine touch.”

Jeffrey Grosset, the riesling wunderkind of the Clare Valley, was on a promotional trip to Perth back in the early 1990s and kept hearing about a Perth retailer/wholesaler who was a great supporter of his wines. Her name was Stephanie Toole. They met, they fell in love, she moved to the Clare Valley in 1992 and within four months was the owner of her own vineyard, Mount Horrocks Wines.

Grosset, a trained winemaker, no longer sees the need to give advice to Toole, who has picked up everything she knows about growing and making wine by living it for the past 12 years.

“I think the idea was that she would lean on me for a couple of vintages until she was confident enough herself. Yeah, it was probably two (vintages),” he says.

He needn't have worried. Toole has proven to be a highly talented winemaker in her own right.

Both Grosset and Mount Horrocks rieslings are among the best in the country and while Jeffrey has moved into new winemaking territory with chardonnay and a cabernet sauvignon blend (Gaia), Stephanie has added semillon, shiraz and a fine dessert Cordon Cut riesling to her repertoire.

His wines are classically restrained and elegant. Hers show a feisty, daring edge: she fermented her semillon in French oak and chose French oak for her shiraz back when the prevailing winemaking mood was pro-American. She says her decision to make styles

#### I MADE IT, I LOVE IT ...

**Stephanie Toole**  
Mount Horrocks Wines,  
Clare Valley

*Mount Horrocks Cordon  
Cut Riesling 2003 (\$32)*  
“It's just unique.”

*Mount Horrocks Watervale  
Riesling 2003 (\$28)*  
“I love making riesling  
because it is just so  
demanding to get it  
right, to get that purity.”

**Jeffrey Grosset**  
Grosset Wines, Clare Valley  
*Grosset Polish Hill Riesling  
2003 (\$38)*

“There was a risk of the wine  
being less intense compared  
with the 2002, which had  
volumes of flavour. It was  
a challenge to get the same  
intensity and needed more  
expertise to get the best out  
of the vineyard.”

*Grosset Gaia Cabernet  
Sauvignon/Cabernet  
Franc/Merlot 2001 (\$58)*  
“It was a warm year but the  
wine accurately reflects the  
season, which I like to see.  
It shows typicity.”

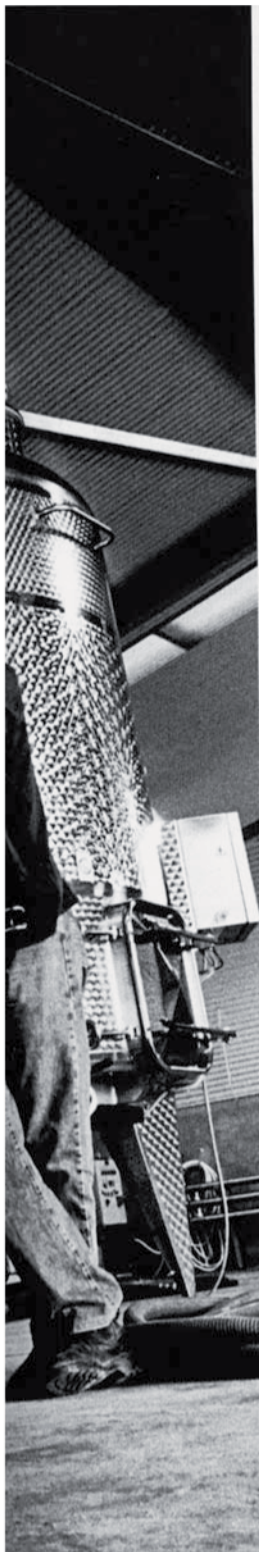
different from those of her partner was deliberate — there is less room for comparison that way.

Most relationships are tested at some time, but winemakers living and working together are put through a physical and emotional wringer every single year. It's called vintage. And it must be hard to support a loved one after a hard day when you've just had the same, God-awful 14 hours of hell?

“Well, it's actually a lot more stressful when your partner isn't in wine,” suggests Queensland winemaker Dylan Rhymer, of Ballandean Estates in the Granite Belt. “I've been in previous relationships where my partner hasn't been in the industry. It's been harder to accept when you've done 14-hour days, six, seven days a week and you come home and sit down in front of the TV and you don't want to talk.”

This vintage, Rhymer had the couch and television virtually to himself. His wife, Spanish-born and trained Paola Cabezas Rhymer, was putting in longer hours at Heritage Wines of Stanthorpe, partly because the winery was just up and running, and partly because of her pernicky habits. “She's a very good winemaker





**"He makes 300 boxes a year (of viognier). Who cares? We make 20,000 cases of pinot grigio and that's what I've got a thing for!"**

and an absolute perfectionist, which can be good and bad," he says. The stresses associated with one vintage a year are enough for most to handle, but two vintages? That's when your partner needs to be more than merely patient and understanding, because when one is away the extra work burden falls on the other. Dominic Morris, of Pondalowie Vineyards at Bridgewater on Loddon in Central Victoria, travels three times a year to his second wine home, Quinta do Crasto in Portugal — once for vintage and twice for blending exercises.

He was already working an annual vintage in Portugal in 1996 when he met his future wife, Krystina, at St Hallett in the Barossa Valley. He was a cellar hand and she was in the lab.

Travel has become an accepted part of their relationship. The couple did two vintages a year together between 1997 and 2000, and regularly drove from St Hallett to Pondalowie during that same time to establish their vineyard, each of the original four hectares of vines — shiraz, cabernet, merlot and a sprinkling of tempranillo and viognier — planted by hand.

Today, Krystina works three days a week in Bendigo at a portable wine-bottling operation and does most of the lab work at the winery, while Dominic is responsible for pruning and much of the heavy work.

"We are ridiculously full-on," she laughs. "I don't mind the flat-out work because everything you do is related to the business."

And personal time? "There is no specific time for ourselves," she says, adding that Dominic's tour of duty to Portugal each year, which sees him away for up to two months, actually allows her time to settle and re-focus.

Any awards that come the Morris' way for their Pondalowie wines are shared. The two agree that they enjoy a similar winemaking philosophy, which obviously helps on the domestic front.

In other households there's an air of friendly rivalry and sometimes downright competition. The scoreboard in the Rhymer household shows Paola ahead in trophies and gold medals for her red and white wines. Then there's her success in dessert styles. Her botrytis chardonnay won trophies at the Brisbane Wine Show in

2002 and 2003. Her husband regards the competitive nature of wine shows as bringing a bit of "fun" to their working relationship. Well, some of the time.

"There's always an element of friendly rivalry when she pips me for the dessert-style wine of the show, you know," he says, his voice firming as if it's coming from between clenched teeth. "She did just pip me in the show before last when I was runner-up. I had to cop a bit of stick for that."

On the Mornington Peninsula, Kathleen Quealy and Kevin McCarthy are focused on white winemaking but each harbours secret desires. Quealy has always been passionate about pinot grigio, McCarthy has long been a viognier fan.

"He makes 300 boxes a year (of viognier). Who cares?" she giggles. "We make 20,000 cases of pinot grigio and that's what I've got a thing for!"

Score one for Kathleen, although with five children to look after, her role has gradually moved from the winery and into the vineyard where the hours are more flexible. "There is no question about it," she says. "Kev used the fact that I had five children to keep me out of the winery."

This from a man who labels the T'Gallant moscato "lost is all the time not spent in love" ... It can't be true. ●

**I MADE IT, I LOVE IT ...**

**Kevin McCarthy**

T'Gallant, Mornington Peninsula

T'Gallant *lo Pinot Gris 2000* (\$30)

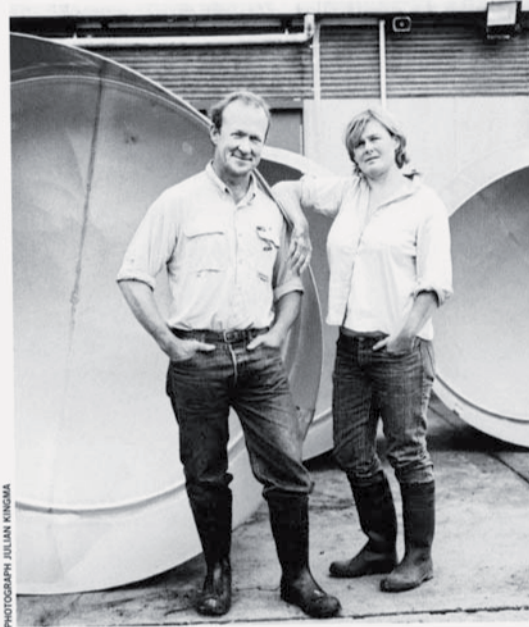
"It's outrageously over-the-top and expresses something extraordinary that pinot gris can do that we were amazed to see. It's extreme wine."

**Kathleen Quealy**

T'Gallant, Mornington Peninsula

T'Gallant *Pinot Grigio 2003* (\$25)

"It's our best wine. Pinot grigio is what I always wanted to do. It's a lovely, fine, racy wine."



PHOTOGRAPH JULIAN KINGMA