

SE News
HD **Legacy just what the doctor ordered**
BY Cameron England THE ADVERTISER
WC 1,674 words
PD 3 December 2014
SN Leader Messenger
SC LEAMES
ED Leader
PG 16
LA English
CY © 2014 News Limited. All rights reserved
LP

AS far as **wine** regions go, Tea Tree Gully doesn't naturally spring to mind when you think of fine South Australian reds.

But unlikely as it seems these days — with the area wrapped to the foothills in a swathe of suburbia — Angove Family Winemakers grew some of the best grapes in the state there back before the march of progress swallowed up the **company's** land. In fact some of the parcels grown in the area were incorporated into some of the earliest vintages of Penfolds Grange Hermitage.

TD

Those familiar with the north-eastern suburbs will remember how, not so long ago, the white tower of the Angove's winery and distillery on North East Rd signalled the impending transition from the plains to the Adelaide Hills.

The heritage-listed tower still stands, but the vineyards which surrounded it were wiped out effectively by the stroke of a pen in 1974, when the State Government rezoned the area from agricultural to residential and compulsorily acquired the vineyards which three generations of the Angove family had worked to develop.

Current family patriarch John Angove said the decision was "devastating" for his father Tom.

But it is the mark of a family **business**, currently under the stewardship of its fifth generation that it can adapt, stay relevant and survive the vicissitudes of government policy, fickle consumer taste and simply the challenge of being a **business** and part of a family.

Angove Family Winemakers is possibly better known to many South Australians simply as Angove's — the name was changed in 2007 — and is known for its wines, for the famous St Agnes Brandy and for Stones Green Ginger **Wine**, which it brews under licence from Stone's of London.

The Angove story starts in Tea Tree Gully in 1886, when Cornish-born Dr William Thomas Angove and his family settled there and soon established a small vineyard.

As seems to be a common theme for South Australia's historic beverage makers, Dr Angove first produced his product as a tonic for his patients. By 1892 he had 10 acres in production, and planted another 20 acres the following year with varieties such as cabernet and malbec.

In 1904-05 Dr Angove established his own winery, where he crushed his own grapes, plus those from his good friend and neighbour Henry Hall's Warboys Vineyard — named after a small village in the east of England.

The earliest records of Angove's wines are of the 1895 riesling and white madeira, and Dr Angove entered his wines for judging at the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society Show the following year, where they won a highly commended citation.

In 1897 the first **wine** was released under the St Agnes label — the 1897 St Agnes Claret — and a iconic South Australian **brand** was born.

The Tea Tree Gully distillery was established in 1908 and the **company** expanded rapidly, leasing vineyards, including some owned by St Peter's College.

Angove & Sons were also the first **company** to establish a winery and distillery on the River Murray in SA, doing so at Renmark — still the headquarters of the **company** — in 1910.

Among the milestones for Angove were the release of St Agnes Brandy in 1934 and the establishment of export arm Dominion Wines in 1929.

"In 1956-1957 (Angove) was the third largest **wine** shipper from Australia and in 1957-58 ranked second to the Emu **Wine Company**," the **company**'s history, A Journey in **Wine**, says.

The **company** bought 809 hectares of land near Renmark in 1962 — its first substantial landholding in the region.

The **company** still has substantial landholdings and its main winery and distillery in the Riverland, and an old painting of the original Brightlands cellars at Tea Tree Gully watches over the boardroom where John, daughter Victoria, 37, and son Richard, 35, now make the decisions with the help of fellow **board** members. John was working in the **business** by the time the South Australian land Commission compulsorily acquired the Angove vineyards on Tolley Rd and at Modbury.

His father Tom told one of his staff at the time, "we're finished down here". John said there was never any "recognised pressure" from his father to be part of the **business**.

"The **company**'s come through a very fine line of succession with only one member in all four generations up to me actually taking on the running of the **company**," he said.

"I really didn't have any great feel for it." Mr Angove studied science at university but also thought he "might as well find out what the family **business** is all about before I say, 'I'm not interested'". He also studied **business**, which he enjoyed a lot, but it was a trip to Europe with his father to meet some of the overseas customers which tipped the scales. Mr Angove stayed in Europe for another 18 months, working in the Australian **Wine** Centre in London for quite a while, before coming back to join the **business** full time in 1972, and taking over as managing director in 1983 — a role he still holds.

While the **business** had always been run by a male, family lore has it that John's elder daughter Victoria told his father that she would be running the **business** once she grew up.

"As it's evolved both Victoria and Richard are very happily committed to the **business**," John says.

"But we both got here in very different ways," Victoria adds. "I was very obsessed with it from an early age, once mum and dad banned me from politics, but Richard got here in a very different way." "I wanted to be a snow-ski instructor but soon found out that wasn't very sustainable," Richard says. "I was lucky enough to work vintage in the winery and got a taste for winemaking. Then went back to university and did postgraduate winemaking." Continued Page 18 TEA TREE GULLY Generations add changes From Page 17 Richard then worked vintages in the Hunter Valley, Tasmania, and all around the world, including Napa Valley.

He came back to Angove's when his sister Victoria went on maternity leave in 2009. Richard now runs the McLaren Vale operation of the **business** and is involved with winemaking and marketing. Victoria has an eye for **business** and is involved in sales, marketing and finance.

A third sibling, Sophie, has steered away from the **wine business**, thinking that two in the **company** is plenty, and works in diet research and is currently undertaking a PhD.

Angove Family Winemakers has changed a lot since it last processed fruit at its Tea Tree Gully Winery.

The old favourites such as St Agnes Brandy are still going strong, but the **company** now has a new cellar door in McLaren Vale on a vineyard it bought in 2008 and named after Henry Hall's Warboys vineyard in Tea Tree Gully.

The **company** has added a premium range to its product offering, led by the Flagship Medhyk Shiraz from McLaren Vale. In a nod to the **company**'s roots, Medhyk is Cornish for "doctor".

The **company** also has a micro-winery at its Renmark site where it can produce small batches of high-quality product, some of which are only **sold** at the cellar door.

The family, in its current setting, appears to have a complementary set of skills.

Victoria says she “really enjoy(s) **business**” and “adores **wine**”, but is not interested in being hands-on with the winemaking.

“Behind us we have an amazing team of hardworking, dedicated and committed people who actually make it all happen.” She started originally in sales at Angove then followed up with a job at the International **Wine** and Spirit Challenge in London, before coming back to Angove and focusing on sales and marketing and export market development.

She has been responsible for broadening the **company**’s export markets into areas such as **China** and southeast Asia.

Richard has degrees in management as well as winemaking, and works across winemaking, but now predominantly sales and marketing, and has judged in **wine** shows such as the Adelaide and Victorian **wine** shows.

“To come into the other side of the **business**, to sales and marketing and how you get your product into the market is really interesting,” he says.

Richard came back at just the right time, as Victoria went out on maternity leave and the **company** started to plan and then build its new cellar door, which opened At McLaren Vale in 2011.

“We’ve been quite amazed and delighted at how well we’ve been received down here, there’s a lovely sense of community,” Victoria says.

“Every generation brings change and renewal to a **business**,” Victoria says. “What we were 50 years ago is so different to what we are today. Richard adds that even in the past five years, with the **company** launching its premium ranges and new varietals to round out its commercial offerings, there has been substantial change. The siblings clearly get along well, although Richard jokes that they did a conflict management course to help them work together.

John, who was awarded a Member of the Order of Australia in 2011 for his services to the **wine** industry, the arts and his charity work, remains managing director, dividing his time between Renmark and McLaren Vale – where access to his three grandchildren, is also a fringe benefit.

The family seems fairly confident there will be some involvement from family from the sixth generation – the Angove website says Victoria and Richard are “actively involved in the **business** and are working to ensure that it is in pristine condition for the sixth generation”.

Victoria says her young daughter Emily is already showing a keen interest. And when they are away for travel, Victoria says it is comforting for the children to know that while they’re working, they’re also being kept company by “Uncle Richie” or “Papa John”.

IN i426 : Wine | i41 : Food/Beverages/Tobacco | ialco : Alcoholic Beverages/Drinks | ibevrge : Beverages/Drinks | icnp : Consumer Goods

RE austr : Australia | adelai : Adelaide | saustr : South Australia | victor : Victoria (Australia) | apacz : Asia Pacific | ausnz : Australia/Oceania

PUB News Ltd.

AN Document LEAMES0020141202eac30000t