

## WINE COUNTRY STRONG

THIRD-GENERATION GROWER DAVID HOSKINS IS KEEPING HIS GRANDPARENTS' LOVE OF THE LAND ALIVE IN ORANGE, NSW.

WORDS HANNA MARTON PHOTOGRAPHY MONIQUE LOVICK



Flourishing white grapes on the vine at Brangayne. **FACING PAGE** David inspects the freshly picked fruit as his teenage son, Will, drives the tractor.



IN 1932, NEWLYWED WINSOME HOSKINS named the apple orchard she'd just bought with her husband, Edgar, after a character in Wagner's opera *Tristan and Isolde*. She dubbed it Brangayne, after Isolde's handmaiden Brangäne, who prepares a love potion for the titular characters. But Winsome couldn't have known that almost a century later, after the apples were slowly replaced with grapes, a different kind of potion would be serendipitously magicked up on the same rolling hills: wine.

"Why she chose this secondary character name for the property is a bit of a mystery to us," says Winsome's grandson, David Hoskins, who runs Brangayne of Orange wines, about nine kilometres from Orange in New South Wales. "I'm told my grandmother was a very unusual sort of person." And creative, given she designed a new house on the property in 1960, in which David grew up. That home is still inhabited by David's mother, Pamela, today. Winsome was a green thumb to boot. "My grandmother's

garden is a legacy," the 55-year-old reveals. "She planted rhododendrons, which are big now. Every spring, we open the garden to the public in the last week of October."

David lives on a nearby property, Ynys Witrin, with wife Joanna, children William (Will), 15, and Charlotte, 13, and loyal labrador, Faith. Along with Brangayne, the two plots house roughly 25 hectares of grapes and produce chardonnay, sauvignon blanc, pinot noir, pinot meunier, riesling, pinot grigio, cabernet sauvignon, shiraz and merlot. At 100 metres lower in elevation, Ynys Witrin was hand-picked by David's father, Donal (Don) Hoskins, for producing reds such as cabernet, shiraz and merlot, which require slightly warmer conditions.

Don inherited the original orchard from his parents, Winsome and Edgar, and he continued growing fruit until the mid-'90s when he pivoted to wine grapes. "The orchard was getting old, and he was looking at replanting younger trees anyway," recalls David. >



CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT Siblings Will and Charlotte help out with the family business in their spare time; Will loves driving the picking trailer; a bottle of Brangayne Tristan; David samples Brangayne Rosé, made from shiraz grapes; the family's gorgeous labrador, Faith. **FACING PAGE** David and Will enjoy a stroll through the vines.



**PEOPLE ORANGE NSW**

Planted on rich volcanic soils, the vineyard at Brangayne has been producing premium cool-climate wines for 25 years.

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## PEOPLE ORANGE NSW

David, Charlotte, Will and Joanna love their life in picturesque Orange. **FACING PAGE** David pours a glass of Brangayne Pinot Grigio; delicious Brangayne Pinot Noir in the making.

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Don could also see that supermarkets were increasingly dominating the greengrocers, pushing prices down. “Plus, he’d been doing it for more than 30 years and wanted to try something new,” adds David. Don and Pamela embarked on a fact-finding mission to France, then planted the vineyard and partnered with winemaker Simon Gilbert to bring their vision to life. Simon and his own son Will continue to create Brangayne wines.

Despite an idyllic childhood spent among the orchards, David wasn’t necessarily destined for farm life. After attending boarding school, he studied economics at university and, while his parents were turning their hand to wine, he worked at an insurance company in Sydney. “I’d become a kind-of city boy,” he says, laughing.

David would return home on the weekends to help establish the vines, but a permanent move wasn’t on the cards until 2005. At this stage, Don was very unwell with Parkinson’s disease. “It was necessary for me to come home, otherwise we would’ve had to sell the business,” explains David. “But I had an underlying desire to come back to Orange at some stage because I’ve always loved it here.”

David’s then-girlfriend, Joanna, was keen to pull up stumps, having also grown up in rural parts of Far North Queensland. Within a year, they were married – at Brangayne – and Will and Charlotte arrived soon after. “We gave it a go and never went back,” says David.

Sadly, Don died in 2009. “He was only 71,” David says. “But I count myself lucky as I got to spend about three years with him here in Orange before he passed away, which was very precious.”

As the fourth generation to live on this paradisiacal patch of land, Will and Charlotte, who go to school in Orange, pitch in when they can. “They’re teenagers, so they’ll help out on the weekends or on holidays... if they get paid,” jokes David. “Will likes driving things, such as tractors and utes and forklifts. Charlotte’s more likely to get her hands dirty and she’s a good grape-picker. I think our kids enjoy being here, and they’re very lucky to grow up in a place like this.”

Brangayne of Orange has just released its first traditional method sparkling wine – a blend of chardonnay, pinot noir and pinot meunier. David admits it’s been a long time coming. On the label is a depiction of Isolde preparing to drink the love potion Brangayne has covertly prepared for her and Tristan. (A potion that looks suspiciously and aptly like wine.) We think Winsome would approve. *CG*  
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