



Jen Pfeiffer

PICTURE: ROB LACEY

JEN PFEIFFER, PFEIFFER WINES, RUTHERGLEN.

If the ebullient Jen Pfeiffer can't get you excited about wine, well, I doubt if anyone can. Just spend a few moments with her and you'll be a convert to Rutherglen's astonishing fortifieds, if you're not already, and along the way, fall for gamay and quite possibly her riesling too.

"I do have an affinity with wine, which is not unusual considering I'd grown up in the industry," says Pfeiffer. "But I guess it was the realisation that I had a reasonable palate and I understood the chemistry behind winemaking. It all made a lot of sense and I really loved the combo of different jobs, the intellectual stimulation, the physical stimulation and the opportunity to do different things all the time. How appealing is that?"

Her father, Chris, started Pfeiffer wines in 1984, handing over the winemaker job to his daughter in 2003.

This smart and loquacious 26-year-old has come a long way in a short time. Yet she's not trying to revolutionise Pfeiffer, merely make an impression. With riesling, one of her favourite varieties, she's opting for a flinty, mineral, dry style with good fruit definition. "And that's a little bit different to where dad

started off. Now I'm constantly trying to perfect riesling."

However, it's no secret her first love is fortified wines. Considering the unique place Rutherglen's fortifieds have in Australia's wine heritage, they are nonetheless difficult to market, particularly to the younger generation. That isn't deterring Pfeiffer.

"I want to grow the fortified side of our business because I am just so crazy about them. Fortified wines are the pinnacle of winemaking. They can be the most complex wines that this country makes, and to be a part of the evolution of a wine, which might take 20 or 25 years, is the most fascinating process. In terms of the blending of these styles, there's not a harder job or a more creative one. It's just amazing.

"You can tell I'm definitely a Rutherglen girl," Pfeiffer says. "Don't you worry about that."