



# Passionate innovator set to inspire others

By **PETER BRADY**

**T**HE passion for her job is evident in any conversation with Woodside Cheese Wrights' Kris Lloyd.

She is, by her own admission, parochial, proactive, aspirational, innovative.

And as one of five Australian finalists in the global 2012 Veuve Clicquot Business Woman Award, she wants more South Australian women in agribusiness to have the same ambition.

"My job is not exactly glamorous – hair net, whites, gum boots," Kris said.

"It looks like (and is) a bit of hard work.

"But I'm very passionate about what I do. I guess the message for other women is they are their own limit – look what can happen just making cheese!"

If she wins against four other Australians, Kris will join 15 other finalists from around the world at Reim, in France, home of great Champagne houses.

Regarded as the Oscar for female entrepreneurs and business leaders, the award is in its 40th year.

Held in 16 countries, it was the

first international award specifically created to recognise the contribution women make to business.

In addition to the financial returns and commercial success of nominees, judges take into account important factors such as commitment to community, employees and environment.

The winner's prize includes a return business class flight to France, a Champagne vine christened in their name, a silver replica of Veuve Clicquot and a bottle of Le Grande Dame Champagne every year for the rest of the finalist's life on the birthday of the late Madame Clicquot.

Kris took over Woodside Cheese

Wright's in 1999, having never made cheese.

"It was a steep learning curve, and I had a passion for business," she said.

"After I started, I was hooked and found that I had the ability to be creative.

"I had a good team around me, and my style is mentor-driven – I want people to have a go."

Between 2002 and 2004, Kris grew the business five-fold, and in the last half of 2011, it increased 35 per cent.

Kris won the national Telstra Business Woman of the Year category for innovation in 2002.

"I believe it's a testament to my business philosophy," she said.

"One of things we aspire to is quality, and these accolades are a bit of an affirmation about aspiration.

"It's like when I wanted to put flowers on cheese and everyone said 'Kris, you can't do that' – so I did it and produced Monet, which is named after his garden and incorporates edible organic flowers.

"You have to be tenacious and persistent if you want to be an innovator, so when you believe in it, stick to it."

Kris says she is thrilled to be SA's only representative in the Australian section of the awards, which will be announced on March 8 – International Women's Day.

"More than just being selected, I think it's great for small business and wonderful for the cheese industry," she said.

Woodside Cheese Wrights has a cellar door, open between 10am and 4pm every day and sells, soft, semi-hard and hard cheese, and a range of other products.

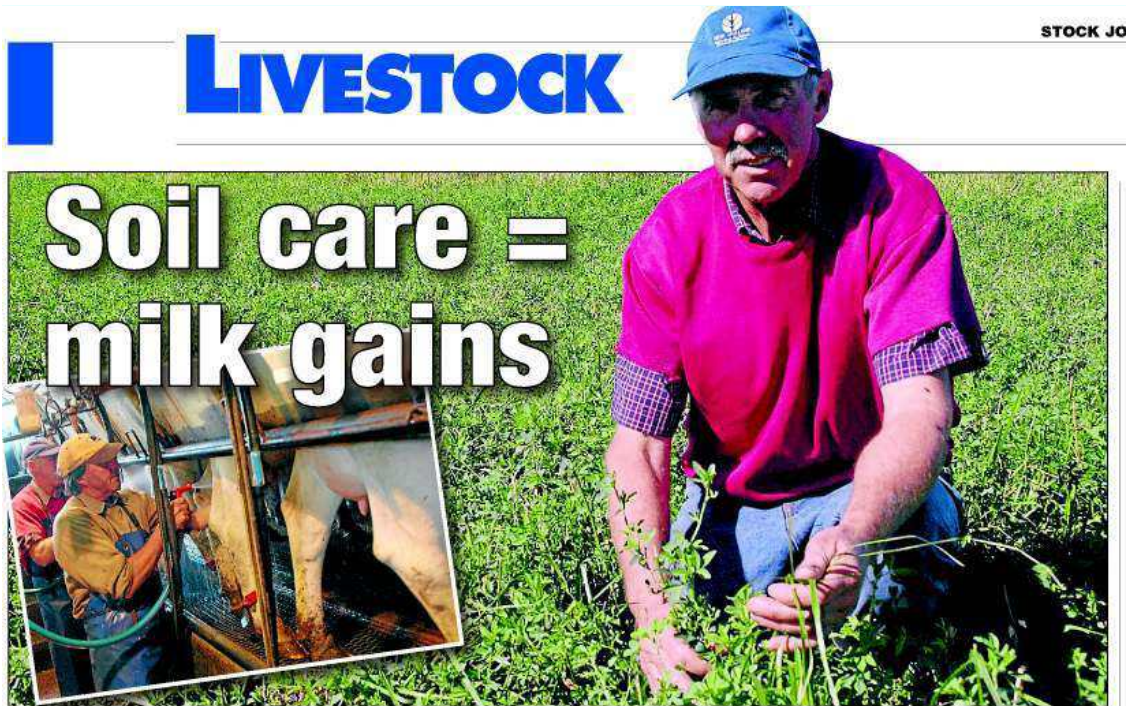
• **Need to know more?**  
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**Kris Lloyd**

**You have to be tenacious and persistent if you want to be an innovator, so when you believe in it, stick to it.**



*Cheesemaker Kris Lloyd has been selected as one of five Australian finalists for an international award*



**PROMISING RESULTS:** Lucerne and fescue trials on John and Graham Mieglich's farm between Charleston and Springhead have produced good results, with production up 200 litres after the milking herd grazed the lucerne. Inset: Milk from the Mieglich farm averages about 4.7 per cent butterfat and 3.3pc protein. The high components have stimulated demand from boutique dairy manufacturers, such as Tweedvale Milk at Lobethal and Woodside Cheese Wrights.

By **ALISTAIR LAWSON**

**F**OR Adelaide Hills farmer John Mieglich, a background in growing potatoes spurred a strong interest in soil management and pasture improvement.

"We used to milk 70 cows and grow potatoes," John said.

"I learnt a lot about soil nutrition through growing potatoes, especially when we were leasing land because we had to know what was in the soil and how to look after that."

John farms with his brother Graham between Charleston and Springhead, in the Adelaide Hills, milking 150 Holsteins across 100 hectares. The Mieglichs phased-out of potato growing five years ago.

While Graham predominantly concentrates on herd manage-

ment, John busies himself with finding innovative ways to improve the pastures at Paringaview Park.

One of the key elements to this has been soil testing and liming.

"Before we do the liming we do a full soil test to know what's in the soil, especially with calcium and magnesium, because if we put too much on we are going to run into problems with the cows," John said.

"It is critical to maintain magnesium levels in the soil and if you don't know what your magnesium levels are, you can run into problems, such as milk fever with the cows.

"We produce more than 1.2 million litres of milk a year, which means a lot of calcium is going off



the farm, so we have to keep the calcium levels up in the soils.”

John uses a range of materials to spread on the farm, depending on soil nutrient requirements.

If magnesium levels are acceptable, Nutrilime – a by-product from the cement industry – is used because it contains no magnesium but if magnesium levels are low, then dolomite becomes a part of the plan. Gypsum is used to build soil calcium level.

Last year, John spread 30 tonnes of lime and 30t of gypsum and this year plans to spread 30t of gypsum and 30t of dolomite to help sustain the four paddocks lacking magnesium.

The Mieglichs run irrigated perennial ryegrass pastures with some prairie grass thrown into the mixture across most of the property.

It is these pasture management and supplementary herd feeding techniques that give the Mieglichs’ milk a special touch.

“At the moment, the cows are fed a 9-kilogram ration of barley, triticale, mineral pellets and some mollasses while they are being milked, after which they head out to a feed pad for their fill of meadow hay for about half an hour before heading out to pasture,” John said.

“When we move into autumn, the hay will be substituted for silage rolls and in winter, it will be

oaten hay.”

Milk from the farm consistently achieves about 4.7 per cent butterfat and 3.3pc protein, lending it the quality needed for good cheesemaking and the constitution for top-notch cappuccinos.

This is the reason why John and Graham supply most of their milk to boutique dairy manufacturers in the Adelaide Hills, including Woodside Cheese Wrights and Tweedvale Milk at Lobethal.

John said about two-thirds of the milk goes to Tweedvale, WCW pick up milk when they need it, and the rest makes it way to Lion.

“The high butterfat ratio means it is a good, frothy milk,” John said.

The Mieglichs’ milk is achieving excellent quality and gaining a good reputation as a result of the pasture system but John is always looking for ways to improve on it

And he may have found one.

About three years ago, John decided to plant a lucerne and fescue mixture in a trial plot at the back of the property that would not just be useful in warmer summer months but also a base to examine more water-efficient plants.

This plot has since expanded to six bays of the lucerne and fescue mixture spanning 2ha.

“The ryegrass doesn’t like high temperatures, which is why we are trying out the new lucerne and

fescue varieties on offer,” John said.

The lucerne varieties being used are L56 and SARDI 5 while the fescue is made up of the winter-active variety Origin and the summer-active Advance.

John is pleased with the results from his alternative pasture system.

“We grazed it off in winter when it was predominantly fescue and again in summer when it was mainly lucerne,” he said.

“The cows love it and they milk better on it too.

“When the cows grazed the lucerne, production was up about 200L, and the components were up slightly too, with protein up by one point.”

John said that one of the benefits of lucerne and fescue has been reduced fertiliser inputs.

“We are putting out 70kg/ha of urea every three weeks on the irrigated ryegrass pasture but putting potash on the lucerne only twice a year at 100kg/ha,” he said.

“In the long term, I think the lucerne and fescue would probably be the way to go if we have hotter summers because the ryegrass doesn’t have the same production when it is hot.

“The lucerne and fescue can withstand the heat and being deep-rooted, are more efficient with water.”

## 5CriticalFactors

Soil lessons from growing potatoes

Liming keeps soil nutrients up

Milk output at 1.2 million litres a year

High component levels in milk

Lucerne, fescue trials deliver results



## What the experts recommend: vine dining

### Ten Minutes by Tractor

1333 Mornington Flinders Road, Main Ridge, Vic (03) 5989 6080  
 Mornington Peninsula “has the greatest concentration of winery restaurants in Australia”, says John Lethlean in *The Weekend Australian Magazine*. This one has serious aspirations. Chef Stuart Bell’s food is “fancy but not ostentatious”. Celery panna cotta with vegetables, quinoa, beetroot jelly and walnut vinaigrette has “great textures”. Spinach and local goat’s cheese, with beetroot pasta sheets and fresh peas, is finished with a “stunning” sweetcorn soup. Seared SA tuna slices are paired with WA crab in tarragon mayo, avocado, grape pieces and citrus cream – it’s a “sophisticated dish”. The “inevitable winery duck” is served as well-rendered breast slices, yet “cooked a little too far in the bag before hitting the pan”. Desserts “up the ante”: orange and rosemary panna cotta with honey cake, honey ice cream, compressed pear and dehydrated pear wafer is all soft textures and restrained sugar. This restaurant offers “attention to detail” in a lovely location.  
*Two courses: \$68; three courses: \$88; six-course tasting menu: \$120 (without wine).*

### Bridgewater Mill

Petaluma Cellar Door, Mt Barker Road, Bridgewater, SA (08) 8339 9200  
 This iconic Adelaide Hills eatery was in the “national spotlight” for many years,



*Ten Minutes by Tractor: food with a view*

says Tony Love in *The Advertiser*. New chef Zac Ronayne’s menu is “an exuberant mix of multicultural influences” with nods to Asia, France, the Middle East and the Mediterranean. His poached chicken with scampi, a laksa-like sauce and grapefruit pieces is “Malaysia alfresco – excellent”. A dish of “stunningly creamed” Woodside goat’s curd is teamed with various takes on beetroot, from syrup to dice and more. There’s a “salty power” to the barramundi with cauliflower purée and a white anchovy, asparagus and quinoa salad, and the same applies to a gamy duck, daikon and dashi broth. But desserts “seem almost like they are here under sufferance”: a chocolate fondant is well crafted but old-

fashioned. The new chef “has begun to stamp his own style” on this winery icon.  
*Entrées: \$25-\$27; mains: \$35-\$40; desserts: \$18-\$20.*

### Restaurant Sanctuary

Peppers Guest House, Ekerts Road, Pokolbin, NSW (02) 4993 8999  
 It may seem an elegant, special-occasion diner, but “this is the Hunter Valley, where the overall ambience is laid-back”, says Liz Love in *Weekender*. There’s a “professional informality” to the service, yet chef Michael Bolam’s food is “skillfully prepared”. His entrée of Mandagery Creek venison carpaccio is scattered with shaved foie gras, radish, enoki mushrooms, petals and marsala caviar. Labna-filled zucchini flowers, coated in “cobweb-fine” tempura batter, are set on a bed of pumpkin seeds, parmesan “soil”, dried barberries and sweetcorn succotash. Soft-shell crab has a slightly oilier batter, but the green mango salad with “hot/sweet/salty/sour nahm jim dressing brings relief”. Boned, roasted quail – “its succulent flesh protected by crackling skin” – comes with spinach, micro herbs, apple slices, walnut crumbs and vanilla emulsion. The house-made ice creams have flavour, texture and appeal. Sanctuary is “one more reason to make that promised trip to the Hunter Valley”.  
*Entrées: \$19-\$23; mains: \$29-\$35; desserts: \$18-\$20; degustation: \$95.*