



Woman in Organic of the Year | Melissa Brown Gemtree Wines, McLaren Flat, South Australia



Determination and passion to improve farming practices and land stewardship has seen Gemtree Wines' Melissa Brown crowned the inaugural Woman in Organic of the Year at the Australian Organic Industry Awards.

Starting work in the family's McLaren Vale vineyard in 1994, Melissa became a qualified viticulturist before trialling organic methods on select blocks of Tempranillo grapes in 2005. By 2007, the whole vineyard had been converted from conventional farming to organic, with Gemtree Wines achieving organic certification in 2011.

Always seeking opportunities to improve sustainability, Melissa said the certified organic vineyard was also an energy neutral operation, with customer education playing a significant role in their offering.

"We recycle everything we can from every aspect of the business, even our wine labels are made from sugar cane waste," Ms Brown said.

"We build sustainably, use solar and rainwater, and recycle and treat by-products from our operations for use in the vineyard.

"Driving unique and authentic tourism experiences is important to me, and we now offer several educational programs including an Indigenous Cultural Tour.

"Guests can enjoy our 10-hectare Gemtree Eco Trail, which was previously degraded and barren land that has been restored by planting 50,000 native trees and shrubs."

As a woman determined to lead change, Melissa said it was a great honour to win the brand new Woman in Organic of the Year Award among a group of high calibre businesses and like-minded females.

"I am really proud to be part of the organic industry, and humbled to win this Award, however I am only one person in an incredibly talented and passionate team," she said.

Learn more about Gemtree Wines [here](#).