

Son of the Coonawarra

James (Jim) Ian Brand

Winemaker

Born: September 8, 1952; Penola

Died: June 16, 2005; Penola

JIM Brand was very proud of the Coonawarra region and one of the greatest advocates for its wines. As chairman of the Coonawarra Vignerons Association for a number of years, he was a strong influence in its recognition as one of the nation's great wine regions.

As a third-generation Coonawarra winemaker, Mr Brand had a long family association with the premium wine-growing region. His parents, Eric and Nancy Brand, founded the Brands winery in 1965; his grandfather, Bill Redman, was a Coonawarra winemaker in the early 1900s; and his great-grandfather, William Wilson, helped John Riddoch to establish the Coonawarra Fruit Colony in 1890.

After he joined Brands in 1969 at the age of 17, he became actively involved in every aspect of the business, from planting vines to winemaking, production, bottling and marketing Brands' enviable range of wines.

Mr Brand studied a Bachelor of Applied Science (Oenology and Viticulture) from Charles Sturt University by correspondence – as well as courses in winery management, marketing, occupational health and safety and accounting.

When the McWilliam family bought the Brands winery in 1994, he was appointed manager of McWilliam's entire Coonawarra winemaking production. Always very humble about his craft and well respected



for his skills, he was responsible for overseeing the quality and style of all Brands red and white wines.

This comprises the limited-release Stentiford's Reserve Old Vines Shiraz, Patron's Reserve and Merlot; as well as a chardonnay, riesling, cabernet sauvignon, cabernet merlot and shiraz.

Son Sam said his father preferred a more elegant style of wine and that he was a big fan of the Brands Sparkling Cabernet Sauvignon. He also really enjoyed the wines

from the Brands original vineyard – Stentiford's Reserve Old Vines Shiraz, particularly those from the early 1980s.

"He was a wonderfully generous and humble man, who took great pride in everything he did," Sam said. "He was always very welcoming and loved to entertain; he was famous for his Sunday-night pizzas which he cooked himself. Everyone from Coonawarra was always very welcome in his house and still are."

He lived for his family and the wine business and even after McWilliam's bought it, he still gave 150 per cent: "He had an enormous passion for everything Coonawarra, the region, the wine and the people. He was so well liked and respected throughout the wine industry – and of everyone who knew him, no one had ever heard anyone say a bad word about him."

Mr Brand was a member of many leading wine industry associations during his long and distinguished career. He was also a member of the Australian Society of Viticulture and Oenology, Coonawarra's Vignerons Association, Coonawarra's Grapegrowers Association, the Limestone Coast Wine Industry Council and the Penola Beefsteak and Burgundy Club.

He was also a life member of the Coonawarra Community Club and a senior active member of Apex.

Mr Brand was heavily involved in cars, driving rally cars with his brother Bill from a very early age. He is survived by his wife, Jo, two adult sons, Sam and Tom, and faithful dog Isabella.

Nigel Austin