



Luke Clayton Associate Winemaker

Though he grew up just 40 minutes from some of Australia's most famous and revered wine regions, Luke Clayton had no intention of going into winemaking.

But after attending a "career day" that focused on the wine industry his final year of high school, his mind was made up. In 2000, he enrolled at The University of Adelaide in South Australia, and four years later he graduated with a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Science with a focus on Oenology.

After college, Luke embarked on a series of cellar and harvest positions in South Australia, gaining more experience in wineries and vineyards. In 2005, he was chosen to participate in an agricultural exchange program and came to work at Rombauer Vineyards as a harvest intern. What was supposed to be a several-month harvest stint turned into an 18-month work experience. "I met someone," says Luke, "so I stayed."

When his work visa ran out, Luke traveled for several months in Europe, then returned to South Australia and took a position as harvest assistant enologist at Hardy's Tintara in McLaren Vale. In August 2008, Luke was able to return to Rombauer as cellar hand and laboratory assistant, where he worked in all aspects of winemaking, including laboratory analysis, bottling and — fittingly — managing harvest interns. He quickly worked his way up to the Assistant Winemaker position in 2009, and in 2013, he was named Rombauer's Associate Winemaker.

At Rombauer, Luke's winemaking philosophy is straightforward: "Wine comes from fruit so it should taste like fruit." An avid taster and collector of wines, Luke is keen to keep evolving professionally. "I always want to improve; otherwise you just fall behind."

Luke is now married to Kristin — the "someone" he met when he did his first internship at Rombauer. Though he loves team sports and follows cricket and Australian rules football closely, he doesn't get to participate as much as he used to. He and Kristin are the busy parents of twin girls.

