

## GROWTH CURVE FOR 'BLACK SHEEP' WINERY



EXPANSION: Winery chief Mary Hamilton wants to create a more engaging experience for visitors.

Picture: KELLY BARNES

### VALERINA CHANGARATHIL

SIXTH generation-owned Hugh Hamilton Wines will expand its famous rotunda-style cellar door in a bid to create a new tourism experience for the region and build its own brand.

Chief executive Mary Hamilton told *The Advertiser* she was working on the blueprint for the expansion at McLaren Vale, which would “bring to life” the story of Hugh Hamilton Wines – one of the oldest surviving wine families in Aus-

tralia and the first producer of wine in SA.

The new development will take about two years to complete and will celebrate the group’s 180-year history, including new “tactile” experiences for visitors.

“The rotunda is a fabulous spot and has been doing really well since 2001. We have been innovating the experience with new cellar door experiences,” Ms Hamilton said.

“But this is about making it more of an engaging, drawn-

out experience for wine lovers and visitors.

“It’s early days yet but I want to create this time travel/historical journey through six generations of an industry, its start and development.

“I want to package this all up in an incredibly tactile experience.”

The expansion will enable more people to become comfortable with wine tasting as well as enabling a sense of pride about the state, she said.

“I just think wine is fascinat-

ing and enjoyable if people get a few clues on getting more out of it,” Ms Hamilton said.

The winery prides itself on the “black sheep” moniker – selling its wines almost exclusively to consumers directly, through its Black Sheep Club.

It is also one of only a few that produce and sell wine from the Saperavi grape, an ancient variety from overseas.

Hugh Hamilton Wines hasn’t missed a vintage in 180 years and continues to grow its brand through the club.