

# OLIVER'S AND PRESS TEAM UP TO PURCHASE WINERY

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Family-owned wine producers Oliver's Taranga Vineyards and Mike Press Wines have teamed up to acquire Gemtree Wines' winery in McLaren Vale.

A new contract wine processing business, known as Oliver & Press Winemakers, has been established to operate the facility, where Gemtree previously offered contract winemaking services for a number of customers including the two new owners.

The acquisition does not include the Gemtree brand, stock or cellar door.

Oliver's Taranga winemaker Corrina Wright said the Oliver and Press families had extensive vineyard holdings in McLaren Vale and the Adelaide Hills, and they would now own the facility where their wines were produced.

She said the new contract winemaking business would look to grow the existing customer base of the facility.

"We are thrilled to join forces with Mike Press Wines in this exciting endeavour," she said.

"We look forward to the future and the endless possibilities that this collaboration brings."

The 3000-tonne winery currently provides 1000 tonnes of contract winemaking.

All 10 staff at the winery will be kept on by the new owners, led by general manager and winemaker Josh Waechter.

Gemtree, founded by the Buttery family in 1998, is now owned by Mike and Melissa Brown (the daughter of Paul Buttery, who founded the business with wife Jill) and Chinese iron ore and property investor Yuangang Song through his company Sacredtree International, which owns a slight majority.

They put the entire business up for sale late last year.

Langley & Co director Stephen Strachan, who is managing the sale, said a potential buyer was currently in due diligence to acquire the remaining

unsold assets including the Gemtree brand and cellar door in McLaren Vale.

“The sale of the brand is well advanced – we’re in an exclusive arrangement with a party and expect to complete the transaction in the near future,” he said.

Mr Brown, Gemtree’s managing director and chief winemaker, said the sale of the contract processing operation after 10 years in Gemtree hands would enable the Browns to focus on the brand’s “sustainable wine and tourism experiences”.

He said the husband-wife duo were hoping to stay on with the business if and when a sale of the brand, cellar door and Gemtree’s other assets is finalised.

“We’re hoping that someone new can come in to purchase the brand, stock, Eco Trail and the tasting room, and can take the business forward,” he said.

“Melissa and I want to continue our 25 years of hard yakka in the business. For me the most important thing is to retain the quality and integrity of the wine while also making sure cost reduction.”

Gemtree, which implements biodynamic practices, currently sells about 40,000 cases per year.