

Bob Lamborn Scholar for 2008



Fiona Sutherland is Napa Valley Wine Library's newest Lamborn Scholar and the new vineyard manager for E & J Gallo Winery's 450 acres in the Pope and Chiles Valleys, supervised by Mark Oberschulte. Although Fiona was born in Berkeley, she spent her high school years in Sydney, Australia. However, she returned to the States to attend San Jose State. She had planned to become an airline pilot or engineer, but her green thumb pulled her north to UC Davis and the study of viticulture. Fiona's first grape job was in research with the Sonoma Cutrer Winery. She then became an assistant viticulturalist for Sterling Vineyards. Wanting more hands-on experience, Fiona became a vineyard manager for Sterling in Potter Valley. She then spent a year in vineyard finance at Gallo (Fiona's always loved numbers) and then moved to Cotati to manage 400 acres of Gallo's vineyards. She came to Pope Valley last fall after five years in Cotati.

Fiona is based at Sun Lake Ranch, owned by Louis M. Martini Winery since the early 1980's, and part of Gallo's holdings since 2002. Half the property will be planted to Cabernet Sauvignon this year. Fiona says

Gallo is very big on sustainability—for each acre planted in vineyard, another is set aside for wildlife habitat. This “50/50 Plan” was first introduced by Julio Gallo in Sonoma County, and is now in place for all of Gallo's coastal California vineyards.

Fiona and her two Australian Shepherd side-kicks thoroughly enjoy living at Sun Lake Ranch and Fiona likes being back at work in Napa Valley. She is also looking forward to becoming better acquainted with the Wine Library.

Welcome, Fiona!