

Jan takes cue from family of world-beaters

JAN Lindrum's 20-year quest to commemorate the Lindrum family history by creating a new wine brand is proof that she inherited some useful qualities from her famous forebears.

She nominates her strongest attributes in business as her "incredible focus and determination" – evidently enduring family traits judging by its record of producing five world-champion billiard players in four generations.

But, when it comes to actual business acumen, she candidly admits there were few lessons to be learnt from the male members of the family who did little to promote themselves or make much capital out of their unparalleled sporting achievements.

Anything she learnt in that field, she suggests, was much more likely to have come from the females of the family, including her grandmother Clara who, apart from setting up Australia's first dixieland jazz band in Paddington in 1922, also very astutely ran Lindrum's billiard hall in Pitt St for more than 20 years.

Then there was her mother, Joy, now living at Collaroy Plateau, who toured the world with her husband Horace (Clara's son) acting as official

A new wine brand reflects the Lindrum family's history, but it's the women who appear to have passed on their business acumen. **SUE HOBAN** reports.

manager and promoter for most of the 33 years that he dominated the world in both billiards and snooker.

Jan Lindrum says when she decided to do something to honour her family and re-establish its name in the public consciousness, a wine label soon emerged as the obvious way to do it.

Her great, great grandfather, Friedrich, had set up his own winery in Norwood, South Australia, soon after arriving from Prussia in 1849. He went on to win the first gold medal for Australian wine in any international arena at a London exhibition before his billiard-playing prowess saw him become Australia's first professional billiards champion.

"I decided wine was a way to take the family back to its roots and be able to tell the whole story over the five or six generations and, since it is also one of Australia's greatest products, I felt



Jan Lindrum, whose company is making a range of wines to commemorate her family's achievements

it was appropriate to tell this great story through wine," she says.

But it was to take two decades and plenty of setbacks before that dream became a reality. At the launch two weeks ago Lindrum unveiled the first of three planned Lindrum Estate wine ranges – the moderately priced "drinking" range of four wines, each named after a family member. This is to be followed by a reserve range which will be produced in conjunction with a major insurance company client and the pinnacle of the brand, the smaller Friedrich collection in honour of the family's original wine producer and gold-medal winner.

She says the company plans to produce about 8200 cases in the first year increasing to 34,000 cases in year three. Already 2000 cases have been sold since the launch and exports could account for another 2000, with China likely to be the source of the first overseas customers and the UK and US markets also being targeted.

One of the first US citizens to taste

the new wines was former president Bill Clinton after Lindrum scored an early coup by negotiating to have her wines served at the charity dinner he attended in Sydney last week along with several hundred corporate high-fliers.

Jan Lindrum spent much of the six years she devoted to setting up her company looking for the right winemakers before settling on Michael Potts of Langhorne Creek and the Hunter Valley's Rhys Eather. "I had quite a wish list but essentially I was looking for people who made good wine, who grew good grapes and had history in this country," she says. "They also had to be flexible in their thinking and prepared to experiment with blends in order in the future to give Australia something different under our label and something hopefully that will win other gold medals."

Jan Lindrum is not sure how much of an advantage a label bearing the Lindrum name will be in a crowded

wine market with a customer base which may be largely unaware of it. But she says the exercise is all about correcting that ignorance to ensure the name lives on.

"If I had been able to do this just before my father died or just after his death I probably would be cashing in on my family name but that was 25 years ago and now I have to put in the hard work to remind people about it or to tell those who don't know that it exists," she says.

"This is the only family in the world to have produced five world-class champions in the same sporting discipline in only four generations," she said. "Friedrich was Australian professional billiards champion for 27 years, his brother Walter's highest break of 4137 under the old rules of billiards will never be broken and my father Horace was professional billiard champion and snooker champion for 33 years. For a period of 105 years this family totally dominated cue sports in Australia and internationally, so it's a history worth celebrating."