

## KATE HARDING

Kate Harding, Sales and Marketing Manager for the Val Harding Collection, has more than just a professional interest in her job. For years she watched her mother, Val Harding, establish and grow the company, never thinking that someday she would play an integral role in its success and current international expansion. Kate's life experience and family background propelled her in a direction that, once unimaginable, now seems organic and as natural as the wonderful, botanical products she helps to create and market.

As a girl growing up in England, Kate had a lovely early childhood, riding horses and enjoying family life with her parents and younger sister, Sarah. She was exposed to other countries and cultures quite early, however, moving a few times as a result of her father's work as an executive with British Petroleum. Kate had early living experiences in Australia and Korea, among other places, before coming home to live outside of London for a time. As a teenager, however, her father's work carried her and her family off again, this time to Melbourne, Australia, the city which Kate loves and in which she lives and works to this day.

Studying business and marketing at RMIT University, Melbourne, Kate planned to work for a time after school to gain experience, but thought ultimately she'd attend France's famed Cordon Bleu cooking school in Paris. With a lifelong interest in food, wine and cooking, Kate was well-known among friends and family as a wonderful cook and hostess. After graduation from University, she accepted a position at a catering and event management company, where she worked for a few years organizing and running large scale events, including Australia's famed Melbourne Cup Spring Racing Carnival, the annual, Internationally acclaimed race meeting which attracts the country's top celebrities and corporate sponsors.

Putting in long hours and regularly working seven days a week, Kate was getting a great primer for the next step in her professional life, which she didn't imagine, even by that time. With Vals' business steadily growing, and Kate carefully considering her next career move, she thought she might use her skills and training to assist her inundated mother for a brief time. Kate helped out wherever needed, sometimes alternating between handling important sales calls and completing everyday tasks including actually sample boxes.

What she didn't fully anticipate was quite how much she'd love working so closely alongside her mother. Val recognized immediately how integral Kate could be to the success of the company. As the Val Harding Collection expanded and the demand for the product grew internationally, the need for Kate's formal training and experience was apparent. Signing on three years ago as official head of Sales and Marketing, Kate Harding is enjoying her role guiding the products' expansion in the international marketplace. Kate continues to love living in Melbourne, where she maintains an active social life, cooking and entertaining for friends as often as possible.

