

# Destination boutique chocolate shop ready for next chapter

Iconic Chocolate Shop, Robyn Rowe cottage and 9.6 hectare property to be auctioned.

It's almost like a script from a bestseller – the iconic chocolate shop that has attracted some of Australia's most revered dignitaries is on the market, ready for its next chapter.

The sale of Robyn Rowe Chocolates is a complete package, including the iconic Murrumbateman business, the separate four-bedroom cottage and 9.6 hectares (96,000m<sup>2</sup>) of easy-care quality pastures for grazing, hills with woodland bush, permanent creek and spring-fed dam.

Located 30 minutes from Canberra in the heart of the cool climate wine district, the business has built its reputation on producing high quality, handcrafted chocolates made with the finest Belgian chocolate.

This hasn't gone unnoticed, with some of the country's most famous faces, an Olympic gold medalist and Prime Minister, indulging their sweet tooth at the business.

While these identities have lifted the profile of the business, founder Robyn Rowe's passion and skill for making chocolate has also caught the attention of media outlets such as the ABC, Qantas Magazine, being named in the Australian Traveller's Top 100 ways to holiday here this year while also being acknowledged with a swag of medals at the Sydney Royal Cheese and Dairy Show across many years.

It was a country upbringing at Cowra that led Robyn and her husband Denis to Murrumbateman in 1996 after spending 15 years in Sydney. Being just 30 minutes from Canberra drew the family to Murrumbateman where they eventually bought the block they named "Boolarong" which means 'place of plenty.'

After putting the home on the property and planting more than 400 trees, Robyn discovered an addictive passion for chocolate.

"I started making chocolate at home after reading an article about the Margaret River Chocolate Company and once I did my first course I was hooked and needed to learn more."

Taking the hobby to the next level from home to markets across New South Wales, the shop was built and opened in January 2012.

"I find chocolate as much a wonderful art form as it is a science," Robyn said, describing how she was able to pursue her creativity through chocolate.

At the ripe age of 79, Robyn acknowledges the time has come to allow someone else to take the property and make it theirs.

Reflecting on her highlights, they include her daughter Lucy's wedding held on-site just before the shop opened and the shop going from three days trading to five – and she says it could be open seven if her energy allowed. Robyn is exceptionally proud to have employed 31 locals in the almost 10 years the shop has operated.

Reflecting on her cosy cottage, she said: "It's been a lovely home for us, with five children and now grandchildren."

As for the business, Robyn says "it really could be taken to the next stage, automated or different flavours created".

"The bones are there, the hard work has been done and everyone knows where it is."

Agent George Southwell adds: "Robyn Rowe Chocolates is already a destination in its own right, but its reputation and proximity to Canberra and Yass puts it high on the itinerary for people exploring the region and it has an integral place in a variety of tour programs and events.

"Various road upgrades such as duplicating the Barton Highway means the future's looking bright in Murrumbateman, but not only is this property appealing in a business sense, it is also a wonderful place to live with a new primary school being built and central to the growing boutique wine region."

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