



 Gina Rinehart with her dad, the late Lang Hancock in Western Australia in early 1980s. Picture: Supplied by Hancock Prospecting

Gina Rinehart: ‘I was brought up as the son dad never had’

SAMANTHA TOWNSEND, Regional reporter, The Sunday Telegraph
July 9, 2016

SHE may have been the boss’s daughter but Gina Rinehart didn’t get any special treatment.

Like all country kids she had to work. That meant she was sent out to bring in the horses, muster in the heat and in snake-filled paddocks.

And if she got it wrong she’d have to start again, even if that meant scaling back down the windmill to get the right tool.

Throughout her childhood she was by the side of her father Lang Hancock, learning not only to work the land but his impressive business skills that would eventually make her Australia’s richest woman.



📷 Gina Rinehart when she was 12 years old.



 Gina Rinehart on her family property when she was 12 years old.

Mrs Rinehart fondly recalls her childhood travelling along the bush roads with her - father at the age of four without airconditioning.

“My father did not have a son,” Mrs Rinehart said.

“People who knew dad used to say at times I was brought up as the son dad never had.

“From four years old I would travel the bush roads with my dad and climb up windmills to bring him tools he needed while fixing windmills on the windmill runs, without a helmet or any other safety equipment.

“If I brought the wrong tool, I would need to go back down again and bring up the right one.”

Mrs Rinehart experienced first-hand what it was like to live on stations in the Pilbara, an ancient landscape of unforgiving terrain.



📷 The late Lang Hancock. Picture: Supplied by SBS

Having lived in the outback in her earlier years, Mrs Rinehart said she appreciated the difficulties of remoteness, lack of amenities and extreme heat for months on end.

There was also dust, drought and flooding rain, along with fires, mosquitoes and flies in great abundance.

But in contrast to that, she recalls the “beautiful landscape” that has been forever etched in her heart.

“I spent much of my childhood on stations up north, loving that life and with many, many special memories, and so the country holds a very real place in my heart,” Mrs Rinehart said.

“The fresh air and open space, the beautiful landscape, seeing the colours change on the mountains as evening approaches, the stars at night — so much more beautiful than can be seen from cities, is truly wonderful, and to have enjoyed all that, my family and I are blessed.

“This has embedded in me respect and life-long regard for people in the country and the outback.”



 Rinehart when she was 12 years old.

Now, Mrs Rinehart hopes her legacy for the next generation — her daughters and granddaughters — to understand the land she has grown to love.

“To be able to take the next generation, my daughters and my granddaughters to better understand and respect the people in the outback, and experience the wonders of our country would definitely be one of my favourite duties,” she said.

Mrs Rinehart may be known for her iron ore but in a rare interview it is clear she holds our sunburnt land and those who toil it in the highest regard.

It’s this passion that saw Mrs Rinehart turn her sights to invest in agriculture.

Since paying back the banks for the first three major mines and investing in Roy Hill, she said they now had the opportunity to invest further in other primary industries.

“We have chosen to invest in Australia in stations and farms instead of sending such investment monies offshore,” Mrs Rinehart said.

“It is a natural fit for us to invest in agriculture and in Australia’s north, indeed in other rural areas of Australia, should such opportunities arise.”



📷 Gina Rinehart.



📷 A young Gina Rinehart.

Mrs Rinehart has a growing list of agricultural operations in her agricultural division of Hancock Prospecting having bought a number of properties in Western Australia, NSW and Queensland, including legendary Kimberley station Fossil Downs, a 400,000ha property near Fitzroy Crossing in Western Australia.

She has expanded her Wagyu beef portfolio, which could see her become one of the nation’s significant wagyu producers behind Australian Agricultural Company.

“Our wagyu expansion is one of our continuing investments into agriculture in rural Australia, and as part of this, we are also growing crops to feed our cattle,” she said.

“We want to build our reputation in prime quality beef, so wagyu is an essential part of this program.”



📷 Hope and Gina Rinehart at Hamersely Canyon.

As a woman of the land and of mining, she says being a woman had made her resilient.

“From a young age I have been working in an industry which is commonly held as a male-dominated industry, and so investing in agriculture is not a barrier for me,” she said.

“As times change, it is becoming more acceptable for women to be employed in business and positions which may have previously been regarded as male domains.

“For example, our Roy Hill project has the highest female participation rate in industry.”

Mrs Rinehart says agriculture was vital for human survival and that Australia had a huge opportunity within the agriculture industry, both domestically and internationally.

Back on the station, Mrs Rinehart in her bright red Akubra is at ease touring her properties in northern Queensland.



📷 Gina Rinehart was brought up to work hard.



📷 A property in northern Queensland.

When asked if she could do any job on the farm what would it be, Mrs Rinehart mentioned that although she does not have the physical strength to undertake all farm tasks, it's vital for her to keep in touch with the managers who run her properties.

“I enjoy the job I already do, talking with our managers to get their ideas on how we can improve the cattle and the properties, then seeing this set in action,” Mrs Rinehart said.

“Given my outback background, I truly enjoy visiting the stations and farms and seeing country people, and find very interesting the opportunities to invest in to improve the farms and stations, and make our beef some of Australia's best.

“The land and agricultural industry is the backbone of Australia, and we need to foster the industry that provides our country with so much.”