

the bullionaire

BULLION 14D

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A Selection from France, Argentina, Austria & New Zealand

Dan Sharp of Six Penny is the Sommelier on deck this quarter. Six Penny is one of the new kids on the block in the Sydney restaurant scene, getting some serious reviews and accolades. They have just been awarded their Second Hat, so I would think about making a reservation soon, before they get their third, for when that happens you will never get a table.

Dan has chosen an amazing selection of wines, with a definite "freshness" to them all, perfect for the warmer months.

The first wine is from the Languedoc Roussillon region, the engine room of France and responsible for the majority of their every day drinking wine. A lot of this is cheap and cheerful, but over the past 10-20 years quality minded producers have moved in taking over older, higher altitude vineyards. Clos des Fées is one of these new producers.

Hervé Bizeul, the owner and winemaker, is a former sommelier, restaurateur and wine critic, who left the boulevards of Paris for the wild tracts of Roussillon in 1998. Sixteen years on, his winery is the talk of the region and the Restaurants of Paris.

He started off buying old and often abandoned vineyards, from the higher slopes of the Vingrau

in the Northern Roussillon, a spectacular landscape of steep-sided, stony hills, dotted with bush-trained vines. They have gradually amassed dozens of tiny plots, of which many are magnificent, mature vineyards spread throughout these cooler slopes on limestone based soils.

The wine Dan has chosen is the **2011 Clos des Fées Les Sorcières** and the freshness and polish Hervé Bizeul achieves in this wine is testament, not only to his wine-making skills but also his knowledge of the great wines of the world. It is a blend of Syrah and old-vine Grenache and Carignan.

Most people I talk to love Malbec and when you think of Malbec, you think of Argentina and Mendoza. But when the experts think about Mendoza, they think about Catena.

Catena is the most famous wine name in Argentina and their family seems to be littered with over achievers. Nicolas Catena the third generation was the person who transformed the business, from local producer into International superstar. He started this in 1982, when as a visiting Professor of Economics at the University of California; he became entranced by the wines of the Napa. Upon his return to Argentina he introduced his family winery to modern winemaking and viticultural techniques and

the rest, as they say is history. To put it into perspective, Catena is the Penfold's of Argentina, with prices and reputations to match.

Ernesto Catena is the eldest son of Nicolas and is considered by many the "bohemian" of the Catena family. He is a painter, art collector, horseman, polo player and archer. Along the way he has earned a Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science and Economics, a Master's in Design from Milan and a Degree in History at London. Oh, did I tell you his sister, the General Manager of Catena, is also a Harvard and Stanford educated Physician. This is before you even get to the wine qualifications they have. Wow – Quite a family and quite a wine chosen by Dan, which is the **2011 Ernesto Catena Siesta Malbec**. This is a side project for Ernesto, as he tries to break away from the family – a little.

It is quite a bottle as well. South Americans love big bottles and it looks and feels bloody fantastic. However you cannot shake the feeling that this has cost a lot of money to get to Australia. It reminded me that a lot of wine journalists will not review wines in bottles like this!

Grü – Vee. This is what the hipsters call this sensational white wine from Austria. For the "beardless" of us out there, **Grüner Veltliner**

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SOMMELIER SELECTED AND DELIVERED



THE WINES



2011 ERNESTO CATENA "SIESTA" *Malbec - Mendoza, Argentina*

Ernesto started his own business in 2002, but I am not sure how hard he is trying to escape the Catena name. He has access to the best vineyards and resources in Argentina and his wines are still being made at the main Catena winery. After drinking this wine though, it is not hard to see why they are so sought after in the top restaurants of Buenos Aires. He sources most of his fruit for the Siesta range, from a high altitude, bio dynamic vineyard, located in the heart of Vista Flores (in the Uco Valley in Mendoza). This vineyard is planted at 1,100 metres above sea level to Malbec, Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah and Cabernet Franc.

It makes sense to offer a Malbec, as Argentina is all about Malbec and Mendoza in particular. This region accounts for nearly two thirds of their total production. Vista Flores is a sub region of the Uco Valley in Mendoza, where the hot days and cool nights allow the fruit to achieve full ripeness, whilst maintaining a solid acid core. It has a dry arid climate, but with an endless supply of clean water from the nearby Andes (From the snow melt after winter). Perfect wine growing conditions!

The Siesta Malbec is a big wine in a big bottle, but by no way, is it over the top.

It has a ripe, showy bouquet of dark cherries and mulberry with just a touch of a savoury liquorice type character. The palate is medium-bodied, with high quality oak in total balance with the fruit and tannins. It is aged for 14 months mostly in French oak. This is an elegant wine, more than a blockbuster, but it is juicy, fleshy and just a joy to drink

FOOD MATCHINGS

Everyone associates Malbec with steak and that's a great pairing but here are few other suggestions: Spaghetti Bolognese, medium hot lamb curries like Rogan josh, roast beef or venison, barbecued lamb, beef or pork - it particularly suits smokey, chilli-based rubs.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

3-5 years in the cellar will do wonders. Decant for 25 minutes before drinking and you will not be disappointed.



2013 SCHLOSS GOBELSBURG - LÖSSTERRASSEN, GRÜNER VELTLINER *Kamptal, Austria*

Schloss Gobelsburg is the oldest winery in the Kamptal region of Austria, with a documented viticultural history dating back to the 12th Century (In 1171, Cistercian monks from Burgundy received a small plot of land, which marked the beginning of a long tradition of wine production). In 1725 an impressive castle was built, forming the base for this winery that today has 39 hectares of vines (75% white)

The grapes are planted on loess terraces (the wine's German name Lössterrassen actually translates to loess terraces). Loess terraces can be seen pretty much everywhere in the region. Loess is a soil structure, which was built up in the last hundred thousand years. (Sahara winds brought the tiny particles from the alpine). "Loess" is a very compact sub-soil with high water storage capacity, ideal for the Grüner Veltliner and is one of the reasons for the wine's famous white peppery note. The vineyards are planted on the steep hill sides overlooking the Danube.

This wine is deliciously fresh, clean and mineral. Aromas of citrus fruit are prominent, with hints of white pepper, whilst in the mouth the fruit flavours are delicate, and the acidity crisp and refreshing.

FOOD MATCHINGS

Grüner Veltliner's bright acidity and appealing spicy quality pair very well with a wide range of foods. First and most obvious is Asian food—anything from Vietnamese to Thai to spicy Chinese flavours. Next, try it with seafood and finally, enjoy how that acidity can cut through salt and fat of a smoked ham on Xmas morning.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

This wine can be cellared for the next 2-3 years; however this wine is in the zone right now. Perfect for the warmer climate over the next 3-6 months.

Season's Greetings



Season's Greetings



2011 CLOS DES FEES - LES SORCIERES *Cotes du Roussillon, France*

Beginning in 1998, Clos Des Fees settled in Vingrau, on the high cool slopes of the northern edge of Roussillon. They recognised the quality potential of the cooler, higher sites of these magnificent limestone based vineyards, sitting well above the valley floors, where most producers work in easier and more fertile soils.

The wine is a blend of Syrah 50 %, Grenache 30 % and Carignan 20 %. The Grenache and Carignan are selected from old vines, between 40 and 80 years old, with the Shiraz coming from younger vines. These vineyards are mainly on limestone-clay soils. The grapes were picked by hand, with fermentation taking place in small stainless steel tanks. What is amazing about this wine is that it does not see any oak, and only minimal quantities of sulphur dioxide added during ageing and bottling. Amazing, because oak is considered a prerequisite for quality red wine. But when you have vineyards at 80 years of age, and skilled winemaking, I guess not.

This is a really thought provoking wine. It is all about minerality and freshness.

It has a laser like precision that opens into a fleshy, silky wine that is opulent and engaging. Aromas of black cherries and liquorice are intertwined with earthy qualities and some meatiness and spice. The palate is full bodied with finely structured tannins, explosive fruit flavours and a silky texture. I guess you have realised I really like this wine.

FOOD MATCHINGS

This elegant silky wine is perfect for long slow cooked roasts of pork or lamb that may even be a little bit fatty (shoulder of lamb and lamb shanks, for example). It suits stews with dark, winey sauces too. It will also make a great match for the Christmas turkey, if accompanied by caramelised roast root vegetables like carrots, beets and parsnips.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

This wine needs to be decanted for 20 minutes before drinking, and will improve in the cellar over the next 4-6 years.



2012 SINEANN "PISA TERRACE" PINOT NOIR

Central Otago, New Zealand

This very international wine is our local Australasian selection.

Owned by a winemaker called Peter Runback; who owns a winery in Oregon (USA), focusing on Pinot Noir; who also travels to NZ each year to make a Sauvignon Blanc (Marlborough) and this Pinot Noir. He sources the fruit from a vineyard also owned by expat Americans. Come to think about this is about as imported as they get, whilst still coming from across the "ditch"

The Pisa Terrace vineyard is located in the sub region of Central Otago called Cromwell. It is a small 17 acre vineyard planted in 2002, organically farmed and planted to a cross section of different clones of Pinot Noir. This is a pretty common practice, allowing the winemakers some diversity and choices on the blending table.

Only 200 cases of this wine were produced and mainly sold in the USA, with a little bit coming over to Australia, of which we have taken the lion's share.

The first thing you notice is the dark colour (Well for a Pinot anyway) and the incredible perfumed nose of dark fruits and floral characters, with this incredible combination of complex spices. The full bodied palate is layered and balanced, complemented by fine silky tannins encasing concentrated fruit characters (red and dark cherries); all hallmark traits of classic Central Otago Pinot Noir. This is a real crowd pleasing wine and incredibly versatile with food.

FOOD MATCHINGS

The most perfect match will be duck and mushroom based dishes (risottos etc) Also try dishes such as crispy duck pancakes, grilled quail, pork, seared salmon and tuna. Barbecue meats can also be matched with ease.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Will keep for the next 3-5 years, however drinking in the zone right now, with lots of primary fruit and complexity already evident. No need to decant.





ABOUT THE SOMMELIER

Dan Sharp

Dan Sharp is the head sommelier at Sixpenny in Stanmore, one of Sydney's leading restaurants and recently awarded their second hat. He is in charge of an impressive wine list focusing on Australia and France.

Prior to working at Sixpenny, he was the Head Sommelier at EST., as well as working a vintage at Pegasus Bay winery in NZ, to get his hands dirty so to speak. He also worked at one of NZ's leading restaurants, Logan Brown in Wellington.

Dan continues to travel the world honing his craft and if not in Sixpenny, can be found in a winery or vineyard somewhere in the world.

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is Austria's own white variety and rightly regarded as the centre piece of their wine industry. Dan has chosen the **2013 Schloss Gobelsburg - Lössterrassen - Grüner Veltliner**. Long name, long history, great wine! You can understand why the hipsters gave the variety a cooler, hip name.

Grü – Vee may seem like a new wine, but it has been around for a while. It has recently grown in popularity as people look for the "new black" and with its food friendliness, versatility and in many cases a capacity to gain complexity with age, Grü Vee is here to stay. Plus you cannot underestimate the cool name. You can act very hipster by ordering a Grü Vee, or very knowledgeable with the correct pronunciation. (GROO-ner VELT-leaner)

Grüner has a variety of expressions. Cropped at high yields it can make a pleasant but light quaffing white, but if growers take a little more care it is capable of making complex, full flavoured, spicy whites often with a distinctive citrus and white pepper edge to them. This is just such a wine, sourced from the Kamptal, which is Austria's largest wine region.

Other countries are trialling with Grüner but to mixed results and the jury is still out. One very good example from Australia is Lark Hill in Canberra, who were one of the first to plant this variety here and an old favourite of Bullion Cellars.

The last red is a Pinot Noir from Central Otago in New Zealand. This region has gained some serious fame over the past 10 years and is included in any conversation when the top Pinot



Noirs of the world are discussed, along with Burgundy and Oregon. They produce a very full bodied style of Pinot Noir, whilst still maintaining the floral elegance of the style. It is sometimes referred to as Pinot Noir on steroids, so for those few people out there who do not like Pinot Noir, this wine will change your mind.

Central Otago is in the deep South of the South Island of New Zealand. The landscape is very barren and rocky and similar to the landscape you see in the great Spaghetti Westerns of the 60's and 70's. As it turns out, these were shot in and around Andalucia in South Eastern Spain, who also make some great wine. On a bit of a tangent, I was very disappointed when I visited the Central Otago a number of years ago and Clint Eastwood did not ride over the crest of a hill to the music of Ennio Morricone. (But that is another story!)

Central Otago is the world's most southern wine producing region, but with some pretty important natural advantages. It sits in a valley of some 300 metres above sea level, surrounded by some very high mountain ranges (up to 3,700 metres) The summers are hot and dry, and the winters cold and snowy.

It also has a very significant Diurnal Temperature variation (Difference between night and day temperatures) This is important as it allows the fruit to ripen, whilst retaining the necessary acid for quality wine. It combines the strengths of both warm and cold climates. Around the sub-region of Bannockburn, the diurnal temperature range usually sits between 10 and 15 degrees and can swing as high as 25 degrees in the weeks leading up to vintage.

Dan has chosen the **2012 Sineann Pisa Terrace Pinot Noir**. I have seen this wine offered for around \$60 a bottle so this is a great example of how our Sommeliers can find some great buys for our members.

So there you go 4 wines to brighten any dinner party or celebration and something to plan your Xmas meals around.

SEASON'S GREETINGS!

Matt, The Bullionaire



Stu Freeman and Matt Eagan

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