

the bullionaire

BULLION 15B

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Thinking outside the square . . .



Adrian Filuta of Bistro Felix in Sydney has joined our stable of Sommeliers. He is one of the more awarded Sommeliers in Australia, with an incredible palate and knowledge of wine. This is his first selection and it is a beauty. His theme is thinking outside the square with some wines and varietals you may not have tried before, but as always these are from the region's top producers and excellent examples of their style. These wines will be perfect for the colder months and some great evenings in front of the fire or around the dinner table.

Vermentino is one of the new white varieties from Italy making an impression on Australia. As

our wine market continues to develop and our interest in wines other than Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon grows, it is only natural that both our winemakers and consumers want to try something different. So expect to see a lot more wines on the shelves with names like Vermentino, Arenis, Savagnin and Sagrantino, as our local winemakers experiment with these grapes and importers continue to bring in the originals.

Adrian has chosen a Vermentino for his first white wine, which is an aromatic grape variety whose native habitat is the Mediterranean islands of Sardinia and Corsica. It suits a warmer climate where it retains its freshness and acidity. This explains why a lot of Australian winemakers have planted the variety in our warmer regions.

In Sardinia the wine has its own DOCG classification (**Vermentino di Gallura DOCG**) the highest classification on the Italian premium wine pyramid.

The Vermentino di Gallura achieved its own DOCG because the wines have a dramatic intensity when grown in the Northern most tip of Sardinia. The conditions are much cooler and windier than the rest of the island, and the soils are quite dry. The result is a wine with intense aromas and flavours; slightly nutty, citrusy, with a dry finish, but quite a full bodied style of wine.

2013 Vigne Surrau "Branu" Vermentino di Gallura is from a pretty special winery. They have spent a fortune on the estate and it shows in the quality of the wines. Their ultra modern winery with all its gleaming glass and steel is quite a contrast to the dry and rocky landscape. They produce an aromatically intense and vibrant Vermentino, with plenty of mineral freshness and

stone fruit characters. It is a wine with complexity and a palate weight that demands your attention.

Durif is one of the lesser known grape varieties even to our sommeliers.

In Australia it is mainly associated with warmer climate, robust reds from the Riverina and Rutherglen. But in the hands of this quality producer in Central Victoria, we have a sensational wine for the colder winter months.

Durif is a cross between Shiraz and the almost unknown Peloursin variety. It was developed in the 1860s by the French botanist François Durif (such modesty those French scientists to name a wine after yourself.) It is also known as Petite Sirah in the USA and it makes a very robust full bodied wine. The berries are very small, hence the Petite name, and the reason for such big wines. (A very high skin to juice ratio resulting in plenty of colour, tannins and flavour).

This variety was introduced into Australia in 1908, but was largely swamped and ignored as Australian winemakers and consumers moved to Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot etc. But the variety is making a comeback as people are looking for something a little different or "alternative".

Beechworth is in the North Eastern part of Victoria. The climate is quite cool, especially in the vineyards higher up the slopes. (They are planted at altitudes between 300 – 700 m). Modern Viticulture began in the late 1970's with one winery waving the flag for the region with Chardonnay and Pinot – Giaconda. Brown Brothers have extensive vineyards nearby, but Beechworth is all about small, high quality vineyards.

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bullion CELLARS
SOMMELIER SELECTED AND DELIVERED

THE WINES *Selected by Adrian Filuta*

2011 BATTELY DURIF *Beechworth, Victoria*

There is a very innovative spirit amongst the growers and winemakers in the Beechworth region, with a high proportion of bio dynamic principles and a lot of alternative grape varieties used. This Durif is a classic example.

Russell Bourne joins the long list of Doctors who have jumped on the wine bandwagon. He has taken it a little more seriously than others going to the effort of actually making the wine, not only in Australia but also doing vintages in the USA. In fact it was in the USA making wine for the Perrin Family of Chateau Beaucastel that he discovered the wonders of Petite Sirah / Durif and arranged to have cuttings from these vineyards brought back to Beechworth. The process took nearly 5 years due to the strict quarantine procedures, but it was worth the effort.

It is easy to fall in love with the idea of new and funky styles of wines. Who doesn't want to try something new, but in most cases they are disappointments. This Durif is something a little special.

Totally opaque, black in colour. The nose displays cherry and liquorice aromas, followed by some vanillin cedar, dark chocolate and spice. Big, rich and full bodied, it has an amazing concentration with dense tannins that coats your palate and is just crying out for a rich casserole. Despite all this, it has an elegance and sophistication which is pleasantly surprising.

Sadly this is the last vintage of this wine, so enjoy!

FOOD MATCHINGS

Easy – Casseroles and any slow cooked meats. Think rich dishes and stews, Osso Bucco, roast meats with plenty of gravy and roasted vegetables. If you have every wanted to try some “game” recipes (Rabbit etc, then this is the wine for it).

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Decant this wine for 30 minutes before serving, you can safely cellar for another 6-8 years.



2013 VIGNE SURRAU “BRANU” VERMENTINO DI GALLURA *Sardinia, Italy*

Vermentino di Gallura DOCG is Sardinia's only DOCG appellation, and covers white Vermentino-based wines from the Northern end of the island. DOCG is Italy's highest quality ranking and Sardinia is a large island off the West coast of Italy, above Sicily and below Corsica. Now that the Geography lesson is over we can talk about the wine. Vermentino is the wine that has put Sardinia on the world stage.

Vigne Surrau is very committed to the region and to Vermentino. It is the show piece of the region, with all the architectural designed steel, glass and concrete you would expect.

It makes a bit of sense as this part of Sardinia is on the destination list for the International Jet Set type. For most of the year, you will see enormous yachts parked alongside trendy hotels every day of the week. But this means nothing if the wines are not any good, and this “Branu” is a standout.

Vigne Surrau's vineyards are in the centre of region and vines are planted in soil that can only be described as crushed granite. Strong winds blow in this area of the country and it makes for a very difficult place to grow grapes. The wine is fermented entirely in stainless steel to preserve the youthful zest and mineral notes of the wine. A big intense wine, with nuances of grape and exotic fruits and a hint of green pepper. What is really surprising and delightful is the weight and complexity of the wine. It is long and persistent, yet still elegant and fresh.

FOOD MATCHINGS

Ideal as an aperitif wine, it's also well matched with fish starters and seafood of all kinds. The ultimate wine for fish entrees, shellfish and crustaceans. Light first courses, seafood risotto, grilled or stewed fish.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Designed for early drinking, however can be cellared for the next 1-3 years with ease.





2012 GÉRARD BERTRAND “TERROIR” MINERVOIS, SYRAH *Carignan, France - EUROPEAN WINERY OF THE YEAR - WINE ENTHUSIAST 2011*

Gerard Bertrand is one of the largest wineries in the South of France and many consider him to be the best. He is certainly the poster child for the area and a tireless promoter for his wines and region. He is both loved and loathed in the area, typical for large wine ventures. The South of France is considered the engine room of the French Wine Industry, with pockets of brilliance and Minervois is one of these. Gerard purchased this estate in 1997, a few years after the appellation gained official recognition. This allows the region to place the name of the region on the wine label. A huge bonus if you want to differentiate your wine from the other cheaper wines in the surrounding areas.

Minervois is a region that produces rich savoury reds, with a very dry and warm climate in one of the most picturesque places of the world. (Hilly, rugged landscapes covered in vines minutes away from the Mediterranean.) Sounds like heaven to me. No great surprise they have been making wine in this region since the Roman times.

It is blend of Syrah and the grape variety Carignan. This is a variety we are seeing a lot at Bullion Cellars. It is used in the final blend in a lot of wines from Southern France and Northern Spain. I am beginning to think it is the Carignan that makes these wines so appealing and delicious. The grapes were all handpicked, fermented and matured separately for around 8 months before final blending and bottling.

This wine is a dark, medium bodied and full of complex aromas like cherries and liquorice. It is a wine full of juicy blackcurrant fruit and a velvety smoky palate, full of ripe fruit and sweet oak characteristics. It also has this incredible peppery richness to the mouth feel that makes you want to pour the second glass.

FOOD MATCHINGS

A very versatile wine, this can be matched with most red meats, (lamb stews, casseroles and grilled meats) but also with chicken and even some anti pasto plates and some cheeses (Brie) Plus perfect for watching the rugby.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Decant for 20 minutes before serving, this wine could be safely cellared for another 3-5 years.



2007 FINCA NUEVA RESERVA, TEMPRANILLO *Rioja, Spain*

Miguel De Gregorio comes from a family steeped in grape growing and winemaking. He was responsible for one of Rioja's first 'modern' wines, Loriñón, at Bodegas Bretón. Here he discovered the grapes and vines of the village of Briones in Rioja Alta and when he decided to start his own winery he chose Briones as his home base.

The jewel in the Finca Nueva crown, the Reserva is produced entirely from Tempranillo fruit, with the wine matured for 24 months in French barriques, bottled unfiltered and bottle aged prior to release. It is an approachable, easy-drinking red, fruity in nature and dominated by soft cherry and plum characters touched with vanilla and liquorice nuances. It signs off with a lingering, velvet-lined finish.

It is hard to believe this wine is 8 years old. The colour is so bright and youthful. I can see why the winemaker views this wine as his plaything. It is engaging, approachable and shows what a great winemaker can do with a great vineyard. The humming bird printed on their labels signifies freedom, a vision that surrounds this winemaker as he strives to make wines from different vineyards and terroirs in Rioja and the freedom from the constraints of Rioja law makers

This wine shows me why Spain is my favourite country right now. The wines are so good, so approachable and so unique. This wine could only be Tempranillo and only Rioja — Cherries, tobacco, elegance over raw power with a great energy and lingering sweetness.

FOOD MATCHINGS

The obvious food pairing with Tempranillo wine is to go with Spanish style dishes, tapas and Chorizo anyone. It would also be sensational with jamon or dry cured ham. My favourite though is grilled or roast lamb.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

At 8 years of age, this wine is ready to go right now. Decant for 10 minutes, just to freshen the wine. You could safely cellar for another 2-3 years, but why — Drink these wines over the next 3 months .





ABOUT THE SOMMELIER

Adrian Filuta of Bistro Felix in Sydney

Since moving to Australia, about 5 years ago, Adrian Filuta has been a sommelier on the Sydney wine scene in “hatted” restaurants such as Quay and Est. From 2012 he has been head sommelier at Felix Bar and Bistro, managing an extensive wine program with a great focus on Burgundy and Bordeaux.

Adrian has recently won the 2015 Sommeliers’ Ruinart Challenge and has been a finalist in the 2014 Best Sommelier of Australia competition.

He is an Advanced Sommelier certified by The Court of Master Sommeliers and at the moment Adrian is preparing for the final examination with the hopes of achieving the Master Sommelier Title.

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A prime example of this is Battely, a small vineyard planted in 1998 to Shiraz, Durif and a little Marsanne and Viogner. The owner and winemaker Russell Bourne had a real affinity with the Rhone Valley. (On a side note, this is the last of the Battely wines, as the family has sold the vineyard to another winemaker – a great shame but at least this quality vineyard will be maintained).

The Battely vineyard is a little lower than Giaconda and as a result the site is a little warmer and has slightly richer wines.

The 2011 Battely Durif is a wine that demands attention. Big, full bodied, juicy, fleshy, but still retaining the elegance and sophistication that makes you want to drink the rest of the bottle. This wine is all about cold nights, so get out your casserole dishes and slow cookers, as you will want some rich dishes to match this big, burly wine.

I continue to be amazed by the wines of Spain. The quality and value are just sensational. Adrian continues this trend with a great wine from Rioja in Northern Spain. Rioja is the grand daddy of the Spanish Wine industry, but over the past 10 years or so it has been overlooked, as the cool, groovy kids on the Spanish scene are generating all the buzz- think Ribera Del Duero, Priorat and Monstant. In the past Rioja was associated with a lot of dull, commercial red wine with coconut and vanilla notes, as a result of spending far too long in oak. The winemakers tended to get a bit lazy, focusing too much attention on the “Brand” of their estates and forgot about the vineyards and the wine quality.

Thankfully a number of quality minded producers are thinking more in terms of single vineyards and

terror and a “less is more” when it comes to oak. They are connecting with their vineyards and losing the focus on the “brand of their estates”.

One such winemaker is Miguel Angel de Gregorio of Allende, regarded as one of the top winemakers in Spain. Miguel takes a very much terroir-driven approach, which is almost Burgundian in focus. Allende has 56 hectares of vines, split among 92 different plots, covering 14 different terroirs. They only produce 25,000 cases so there is a lot of blending and looking at the individual parcels to bring all these “terroirs” together.

Finca Nueva is Miguel Angel’s latest project, where he can let his creativity roam free and produce wines closer to his heart. This new estate was established in 2004 as a device to shrug aside the constraints of Riojan rules and tradition. The Wines are sourced from a 20 hectare vineyard in the village of Briones, that produces a fruity, more accessible style of wine.

Adrian has chosen the **2007 Finca Nueva Reserva**. It is the jewel in the Finca Nueva crown, produced entirely from Tempranillo fruit, with the wine matured for 24 months in French barriques, bottled unfiltered and bottle aged prior to release. With 8 years under its belt this wine is in its prime right now, but still with years left. This wine is just so enjoyable now I challenge you to keep your hands off the three bottles we have sent you.

The last wine Adrian has chosen brings together two of my favourite interests - Rugby and Wine, with the Estates of Gérard Bertrand.

Gérard Bertrand was a professional Rugby player in France back in the early 1990’s. He is

from the South of France, where rugby is almost as popular as wine and he made it to the fringe of International Rugby for France. His family owned a smallish estate, but when his father tragically died he was forced to take over the estate at the ripe old age of 22. For a number of years he shared the two roles of professional athlete and winemaker, but it is a good thing Rugby is a winter sport, for I am not sure he would have managed a vintage if he was also playing rugby at the same time.

He eventually retired from rugby in 1998 and to say he has taken his wine business to another level is an understatement.

He now owns 7 Estates in Southern France totalling some 1100 acres and he has been named European Winery of the Year by the US magazine Wine Enthusiast. His wines range from the quaffable to the sublime, typical of large wineries, but it is his passion for his region and wines that really appealed to me. That and his love of Rugby.

The wine Adrian has chosen comes from the region of Minervois, in the deep South of France, right next to the Mediterranean. The **2012 Gérard Bertrand Minervois** is a blend of Syrah and Carignan and is a full bodied wine full of juicy blackcurrant fruit and a peppery richness. The Minervois is one of the most renowned and beautiful of Appellations in the South of France, characterized by hilly landscapes, small towns, lovely vineyards and plenty of rugby pitches.

Enjoy these 4 wines over the coming cooler months. I know I will!

Matt, the Bullionaire