

the bullionaire

BULLION 15D

www.bullioncellars.com.au

Unplugged and Raw

In this selection we have a German Riesling from a self proclaimed "Punk Rock winery". The owner calls it UNPLUGGED, because "in an age of technical reproduction and mass production the UNPLUGGED idea represents an appreciation of manual craftsmanship" I like the way this guy thinks. I also loved the MTV Unplugged Music series in the early 1990's: Kurt Cobain and Nirvana - awesome acoustic sessions.

To continue the music theme, there is a "Low Fi and analogue" look and feel to the wines in this pack. They are small winemakers struggling for their moment to shine on the world stage; making incredible wines of character and a sense of place, with very little intervention. Wines we love at Bullion Cellars!

So for our Christmas Pack I give you **"Unplugged and Raw" ...**

This selection has been chosen by Dan Sharp of Six Penny in Stanmore. Dan has a very thoughtful take on wine, which I really enjoy. If you have not been to Six Penny, do yourself a favour and make a booking. The Owner and Chef, James Parry spent some time at NORMA in Denmark, so if you missed out on the 10,000 places for NORMA's pop up Restaurant in Sydney next year, do the next best thing and go to Six Penny. (As a side note, those 10,000 spots at \$495 per head, sold out in 4 minutes).

So to Dan's white wine selection; the **Tesch 'Unplugged' Riesling Trocken 2013 (Nahe) Germany.**

Riesling is a favourite at Bullion Cellars. It represents the best value in the world of wine and for us is a real "rock star", so it is a bit of a puzzle why it is not more popular.

This great dry wine from the Nahe Region of Germany will convince anyone of the merits of Riesling. There is a mouth feel and texture to this wine that you just don't get in most Australian Riesling. The Tesch Unplugged is full of green apple and citrusy characters with plenty of zip and energy. It is racy, refined and incredibly refreshing on the palate.

Weingut Tesch has been family-owned since 1723 and is now run by Dr Martin Tesch, who in his early 40's, is a microbiologist by training, a winegrower by choice and an old punk rocker at heart!

When Martin took over from his father, there were 30 ha of vines, producing over 50 different wines, of various varieties and sweetness levels. There



were loyal customers for his wines, but the reputation of German wine was ebbing away and the Rieslings were getting sweeter. So what is a young gun winemaker to do? Well for Tesch the answer was to create a "Punk Rock Winery".

First; he got rid of all the poor vineyards, letting them revert back to nature, helping to establish greater biodiversity in and around the vineyards. Second; he got rid of all the "Other Varieties", leaving him with just Riesling and Pinot Noir. Third; in 2001 he started producing only dry wines. And this is where the Punk Rock Winery comes into the equation. You see this was seen as reckless and dangerous. Whilst he felt "the time was ripe for dry Riesling" he was a little ahead of the curve.

In the first six months he lost 40% of his sales. He felt the brunt of some very harsh criticism from his existing customers and the German wine critics. He was accused of going against the grain of tradition and destroying his 300 year old heritage. Tesch, like a good punk rocker, ignored all this and stuck with his convictions.

Within two years, sales recovered, new customers had been found and Tesch was receiving accolades rather than snide comments. Ultimately Weingut Tesch even became a business case-study taught by the London School of Economics. Quite a story and quite a wine.

Chile is often regarded as the smaller brother to Argentina in terms of wine. But their exports are growing as people realise the incredible value and

Continued back page

bullion CELLARS
SOMMELIER SELECTED AND DELIVERED

THE WINES

2009 FIVE GEESE CABERNET SAUVIGNON *McLaren Vale*



The fruit for this wine was sourced from Sue Trott's McLaren vineyard. Pruned for low yields, with minimal intervention throughout the year, the iron-rich soils anchor the vines against the fierce winds from the nearby Pacific Ocean. Nestled in the north-eastern end of the Willunga Basin, Blewitt Springs lies about 180m above sea level. This slightly higher elevation provides a cooler climate than nearby McLaren Vale and Willunga. These cooler temperatures and moderating afternoon sea breezes, allow the fruit time to develop more complex flavour ripeness, without the excessive alcohol levels found in warmer areas.

The wine is made by ex Penfolds winemaker Mike Farmilo, who has over 40 years experience in South Australia and his knowledge of the McLaren Vale region is second to none. He and his team put the wine through a complex barrel aging process with new French, and used American oak barriques for a period of 20 months. 2009 was a dry, but not necessarily hot vintage and the result is a wine with complex aromas of ripe berry and mocha-coffee oak and a delicate hint of mint. It is a full bodied wine with black fruits, enhanced by fine velvety tannins. The great thing about this wine is its age. At 6 years, it is in the prime of its life but it has the structure and weight to last another 3-4 years in the cellar. But I won't be waiting; I just love drinking this wine right now.

FOOD MATCHINGS

Red Meats, either grilled or roasted would be a match made in heaven.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

This wine is in the zone now, but will safely handle another 3-4 years. Decant for 10 minutes before serving and just drink it!



2013 TESCH 'UNPLUGGED' RIESLING TROCKEN *Nahe, Germany*



Tesch is based at Langenlonsheim, a small village in the Nahe region of Germany. This area of the Nahe is hilly, described by Martin Tesch as a "mini-Rheingau". The Tesch vines overlook a huge flat plain once occupied in pre history by the river Rhine. Now they face the winding river Nahe instead – a mere trickle in comparison. The valley is closed to the west, thereby offering protection from rain and wind and creating a microclimate of calmer and warmer conditions, especially at night.

The estate has a total vineyard holding of 18 ha, with the fruit for this wine coming from 35 year old vineyards. The grapes are destemmed and lightly crushed; they remain in contact with the skins for 4-8 hours before pressing to stainless steel tanks. In common with all Tesch wines, this wine is not aged in oak at all. Martin Tesch, a great rock music fan, believes that Riesling needs no amplification; therefore he describes this as Riesling 'Unplugged'. The wine is filtered before bottling. Being German, the numbers for the wine really count and here they are – Alc 11.5% Residual Sugar 2.7 g/l, acidity 7.5 apH3.2.

Lovely green apple, freshness on the nose and palate with a cracking acidity. Racy, refined and refreshing, it also has this awesome spiciness on the back plate that adds real depth and complexity. Pure honest and dry. This one will wake you up from the deepest slumber with a mouth watering finish and laser like intensity. Be careful, Unplugged could make you wired.

FOOD MATCHINGS

Perfect with prawns and seafoods on Xmas morning.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

This wine is for drinking young, but you can cellar for the next 2-3 years. I, however, will be drinking over the next 3-4 weeks and on Xmas morning.

Season's Greetings



2012 GARCIA + SCHWADERER BRAVADO *Itata Valley Chile*

Carignan 50% Syrah 45% Grenache 5%

Garcia and Schwaderer follow a pretty common theme in wine regions around the world. Two winemakers, working for large wine companies meet, fall in love and decide to make their own wine. Infact their former employers got so annoyed when their side project started to gain a lot of attention, they were asked to choose between the two. They chose love and moved full time into their own project. They are some of the movers and shakers behind the MOVI organisation in Chile and are at the fore front of quality winemaking in the South of the county in Maule and Itata.

Itata was one of the first regions to be planted in Chile, but around the mid 1800's it lost its prominence, when easier to grow and larger scale viticulture was found in central Chile. There, the wine culture followed the "Bordeaux" model since the wealthy families travelled to France, bringing back French varietals and the concept of the large scale Chateau. The South remained a little wild and very small scale, focusing on traditional varieties like Carignan and Cinsault. Today younger winemakers have realised the potential of these old sites and unique grape varieties and is where most of the excitement in Chile can be found.

This Bravado is a great example. It is a blend of three grape varieties sourced from 2 vineyards in Itata. The vines are over 60 years old, with the Carignan

being the major part of the blend. The wine spent 22 months in older oak barrels, but it is the fruit that really shines through. Dark and very brooding in appearance. It offers intense blackcurrant and bitter cherry flavours, with a lively, almost crunchy acidity. Medium to full bodied, this is a luscious opulent wine that feels bright and festive; simply a joy to drink.

FOOD MATCHINGS

Roast lamb, or even spicy middle eastern lamb. Great with BBQ meats as well.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Decant for 20 minutes before serving. This wine can be kept for another 3-5 years.

DID YOU KNOW?

Itata is the one of the oldest wine regions in South America, with the first vineyards planted over 400 years ago. It was also the first place to plant Malbec on this continent, and it is from these vines, that the first plantings in nearby Mendoza Argentina were taken.



2013 CANTINA ZACCAGNINI - MONTEPULCIANO D'ABRUZZO DOC *Italy*

Ciccio Zaccagnini was founded in 1978 under the name Fattoria Zaccagnini in the village of Bolognana. Back then, only one thousand bottles of wine per year were produced. A growing reputation led to the need for expansion, and in 1984 the winery moved their operations to Contrada Pozzo in the centre of the Zaccagnini estates.

With over 80 hectares of vineyards they are the pride of the wine-making sector in Abruzzo. They have fertile, sun-drenched vineyards at about 200 metres above sea level, with winds blowing in from the gorges of Popoli. All of these factors combined with the complete lack of humidity and fog, provide the perfect conditions for growing indigenous varieties.

Montepulciano d'Abruzzo is one of the most widely exported Italian wines, enjoying an excellent reputation for its quality and value. This region does not have the "Hollywood" persona of Tuscany, so here the wines really have to shine and stand on their own feet.

The grapes were hand harvested and after fermentation were matured in French oak barrels for only 8 months. Drinkability and freshness are what this wine is all about, not oak and tannins. It is medium bodied at best, but it has this freshness and great length of palate that make it such a joy to drink. Red Cherries flood the palate and it has this great acidity and freshness that give the wine a lot of structure and weight.

FOOD MATCHINGS

Tomato based Italian foods, obviously, but also a wine that can be enjoyed by itself. It will also be great with Turkey and ham at Xmas lunch.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

This wine is drinking in the zone now, but can be cellared for another 1-2 years. But really you should drink this wine over the Xmas period.



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.

Continued from front page

quality. Chile is a little like Australia in that the wine industry is dominated by a small number of very large wineries, creating a very healthy but conservative industry known for its blazers, generations of family ownership and very formal wine tastings.

But in the past 15 years a new generation of smaller, younger, irreverent, (dare I say "punk rock") producers have emerged, turning their back on this tradition and heritage. Their aim is to produce a new style of wine based on the country's oldest and previously disparaged grapevines, from regions barely mentioned 15 years ago. Regions to the South of the country like Maule and Itata. These winemakers originally came to these regions due to the cheap cost of land and grape prices, but they have stumbled onto a gold mine, with very old vines, planted in the late 1940's mainly to Cinsault and Carignan. 10 years ago these varieties were virtually worthless, but as consumers around the world begin to look for wines with a sense of place, from grape varieties other than Cabernet and Shiraz, these wines are now shining.

In 2009 a small number of committed small-scale wine producers banded together to gain some critical mass. They formed MOVI, Movimiento de Viñateros Independientes. (The Movement of Independent Vintners in English). In Australia we have something a little similar - The First Families of Wine - however this is on a larger in scale to MOVI.

Dan has chosen a wine from one of the founders of this group. The **Garcia + Schwaderer Bravado 2012**. This winery was founded by two senior winemakers of very large wineries, who also happen to be a couple. This is a blend of Carignan, Syrah and Grenache and proves again to us why Carignan is one of the most under rated varieties on the planet. All of our favourite wines seem to have a splash of this variety in the blend.

Continuing the small scale nature of winemaking is Dan's third selection, the **Five Geese Cabernet Sauvignon 2009, from McLaren Vale**. Dan was offered a parcel of this wine direct from the winery and after tasting it, we snapped up the last stocks. It is quite rare to find an Australian wine still for sale at 6 years of age, but this is a beauty. The Trott family is the owner of this small 30 hectare vineyard planted in 1927 and then again in 1965. It is a strange name, something to do with some geese the family had in 1999, but a pretty sensational wine, showing the benefit of perfect cellaring. It seems strange to write this, but McLaren Vale is an under rated wine region in Australia, overshadowed by the likes of the Barossa and trendy cool climate regions. However it has some of the oldest

vines in Australia and is full of individual, quality focused producers. (Think D'Arenberg). This Five Geese Cabernet is right up there in quality. It is full of dark fruits, with a complexity and structure that makes it a joy to drink.

Now onto the last wine from a region called Abruzzo on the Central East coast of Italy and the DOC of Montepulciano d'Abruzzo. If you know a little bit about Italian wines, this is when it gets a little or a lot confusing. You see Montepulciano is the name of the grape variety grown in this area, and it is also the name of a village in Tuscany, where they also make a wine called Vino Nobile di Montepulciano, but this wine is made from Sangiovese. There is no apparent explanation why this town is named after the grape variety, or vice versa. A little confusing for non Italian speakers.

Dan has chosen the **Cantina Zaccagnini Montepulciano d'Abruzzo DOC, 2013** from this region. Today this winery is well established and very respected, exporting to over 43 countries. But they certainly didn't start off like that. They also have a little "Punk Rock" attitude. Marcello Zaccagnini grew up working in the vineyards owned by his father, selling grapes to the local winemakers. In 1977, barely into his twenties, they found themselves in a position where no one would buy their grapes. With nothing else to do, he decided to make the wine, starting out in their garage, producing a tiny 1000 bottles in the first year. The rest as they say is history.

This a medium to full bodied wine, that is softly textured and downright opulent on the palate. Aged in French oak barrels for eight months, followed by several months in the bottle prior to release, this is a wine - rife with succulent ripe fruit and is just so fresh, lively and vibrant.

It is a great counterpoint to the bigger and slightly richer reds from McLaren Vale and Chile Dan has chosen and a great way to start an evening of Unplugged and Raw.

Merry Xmas, happy New Year and enjoy the wines!

Matt – The Bullionaire



Stu Freeman and Matt Eagan