

the bullionaire

BULLION 138

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The Hottest Restaurant wines for the Cooler Months!

Matthew Dunne is the head sommelier for Aria in Sydney and Brisbane plus their new restaurant Chiswick in Sydney. We like the sommeliers to create a theme behind their selections and Matthew has settled on **"The Hottest Restaurant wines for the Cooler Months"**. If you haven't already been to Aria or Chiswick, do yourself a favour, make a booking and say hello to Matthew when you get there. Not only is the food sensational, the wine list is just amazing; A wine for everyone and every budget.

But back to the wines!

Matthew and I love White Burgundy and in fact most high end Chardonnay. Chardonnay is going through a renaissance in Australia. Gone is the over blown oaky chardonnay of the 1980's and 90's. These are being replaced by leaner and crisper styles. However you cannot scrimp. You need to be spending above \$25 a bottle and more before you get wines of distinction and quality. Below this you will get the sweet tropical commercial wines that make you want to grab a bottle of Riesling or Pinot Gris

Even higher in price are the white wines of Burgundy. It is not uncommon to be paying \$200 and more for some of the village appellations and even higher for the single vineyard wines. As a result these wines are not for everyday drinking. But when you do find a wine that gives these fancier appellations a run for their money, well then you buy up.

This is one such wine; the **2011 Chanterives, Bourgogne Blanc**. Despite being from a humble region it is a side project for some serious winemaking talent with a wealth of Burgundy experience. When Matthew and I tasted this wine at Aria I realised I had found a Burgundy I didn't have to justify to my accountant everytime I opened a bottle. This wine has a richness and elegance that cannot be ignored and is framed by a racy acidity that makes you want to drink more. Plus at only 13.0% alcohol, it is easy to go onto the second bottle.

We have flirted with the wines from the South of Rhone a few times. You might recall the wines from Lirac and Carriane. These are Grenache based wines from the warmer part of the Rhone valley. Well this is the first time we have looked at the Northern Rhone, with the **2009 Cave de Clairmont, Crozes Hermitage**.

In the North, it is all about cool climate Shiraz or as the French like to say Syrah. In this part of the Rhone you have world famous regions like Hermitage and Côte-Rôtie. They produce some of the most sought after wines on the planet, with prices to match. Surrounding these small towns and vineyard areas, is the larger region of Crozes Hermitage. The engine

room of this area so to speak. The Syrah's from this area will not have the richness of South Australian Shiraz but what they do have is this magic combination of black cherries and white pepper, framed by juicy acidity in a medium bodied style. A perfect match with roasted meats.

For the Australian wine Matthew has returned to Lark Hill Wines around Canberra and the **2005 Lark Hill Exaltation**. We previously selected a Pinot Noir from the Carpenter family, but this time Matt has convinced them to offer us their flagship wine. This wine normally retails for \$45 and is probably worth another \$30. Amazing quality and elegance. It is made in tiny quantities and only in certain vintages and is a homage to the Super Tuscan wines of Italy. A blending of traditional Italian and French grape varieties made in a rich and opulent "New World" style. In the case of the Lark Hill Exaltation, it is a blend of Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Shiraz in roughly equal proportions. From the 2005 vintage and at 8 years of age, this wine is just sensational.

We have said this before, but Spanish wines are the new black. As Tapas restaurants and bars are popping up all over the country, Matthew just had to include a wine from this "Hot" country with the **2010 La Tremenda**. This wine is made from a grape variety called Monastrell, known in Australia as Mourvèdre.

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THE WINES

2009 GAVE DE CLAIMONT CROZES HERMITAGE

Northern Rhone – France



The Crozes Hermitage region is the engine room of the Northern Rhone. In the Southern Rhone it is all about blends (Up to 19 different varieties), whilst in the North it is all about Syrah. In fact this is the only red grape variety that can be used under their appellation laws. In Australia we call it Shiraz, and it is largely due to the success of Australian Shiraz that other countries are now using Syrah, rather than Shiraz.

An interesting side point is that the North of Rhone and the Côte-Rôtie is where they started the very trendy co-fermentation of Syrah with Viogner, now copied in most countries, and in the Crozes Hermitage it is not uncommon to have Syrah co-fermented with the white grape varieties Roussanne and Marsanne.

The Crozes Hermitage is dominated by large winemaking cooperatives; however Cave de Clairmont is one of the smaller ones. Founded in 1972, it was the dream of three families who wished to share their love of vineyards and wine. The business has now grown to embrace seven families and over 125 hectares of vineyards.

Their winemaker and viticulturist carries the responsibility of these seven families on her young shoulders, but she is doing a great job. The wines are stately, but have this lovely perfume and elegance.

The 2009 vintage was a classic vintage in the Northern Rhone and you can see this in the wine. The cooler climate of Northern Rhone produces a more medium bodied wine, without the richness and fleshiness that you get from warmer climates like the Barossa or McLaren Vale. Instead you get these lovely spicy and peppery characteristics. In fact this cooler climate style of Shiraz is now all the rage in Australia. These are wines you want to drink, not just taste.

This wine is made from 30 year old vines and 100% Syrah. The fruit was handpicked and went through a 20 day maceration period. The wine was then aged for 16 months in larger older oak barrels. This wine is all about elegance and structure. It has a deep maroon colour and an engaging nose that is almost floral and perfumed. The palate is both graceful and harmonious showing fine tannins with generous fresh strawberry fruits alongside white pepper and black tea. A great example of this region and style and a wine that can be enjoyed again and again

FOOD MATCHINGS

You will appreciate this red Crozes-Hermitage with grilled or roast lamb, as well as cold meats or roast turkey. You can also match to any of the slow cooked stews (beef or lamb) you can dream up. The spicy peppery nature of the wines, perfectly balances the sweetness and richness of these dishes.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Decant this wine for 20 minutes before serving as the wine will open up considerably. You can safely cellar this wine for another 5 years in confidence as the 2009 was a great vintage.

2010 ENRIQUE MENDOZA, LA TREMENDA, MONASTRELL, D.O. ALICANTE

Spain



Spain seems to be taking over Australia at the moment. Not a day goes by without a new tapas restaurant or bar opening up. Plus all we seem to hear about is the great food of Frank Camorra of MoVida. There are other great Spanish restaurants as well; Stu and I still talk about a dinner at Ortiga in Brisbane a few years back. So make sure you get out and try some Spanish food and their great wines. The La Tremenda is an excellent example of what the Spanish are doing very well. Fleshy, juicy, drink now styles of wine that are just perfect with their food.

Enrique Mendoza is a producer based in the DO region of Alicante. Located a few hours south of Cataluña, along Spain's East coast. It

encompasses 37,000 acres divided into two sub-regions. There is the coastal strip, right on the Mediterranean; however the best vineyards and producers are based an hour's drive inland. This part of Alicante is high altitude (up to 1000m) with very dry, poor soils and a climate that is hot by day and freezing by night. Just the type of extreme viticulture perfectly suited to the Monastrell grape variety.

Monastrell is better known in Australia as Mourvèdre or Mataro and very popular in the Barossa and their GSM blends. (The "M" part). Although coming to Australia from the French, it's originally a Spanish variety, native to regions in the South-East, where Monastrells of particular distinction are produced.

"Enrique Mendoza" is the family patriarch's name, the winemaker is Pepe Mendoza and the business is run by his brother Julian. They are a fairly big concern, but the importer in Australia has focused on their Monastrell wines. Here they have the original clones of the variety which gives a somewhat fresher-juicier wine suited to straight varietal bottling. There also remain patches of old ungrafted, pre-phylloxera vines, which are very rare in Europe!

'La Tremenda' is the name of the single vineyard supplying organic grown fruit from 30 year old bush vines at an altitude of 600 m. These vines are not grown on the trellising system we normally associate with viticulture, so instead of nice neat rows you get bush like vines. The wine is fermented in stainless steel and aged for 6 months in French and American oak, in a drink now style.

On the nose the dark fruits are saturated with lovely floral notes. It's a delicious wine with a wonderful mouth feel. An opulent wine with a palate that is just plush, with a mineral freshness that is so drinkable. It's dark, soft and satisfying but never heavy, with a surprising length and a fresh spicy exit. An outstanding wine!

FOOD MATCHINGS

Spanish wines are naturally great with the broad spectrum of Spanish traditional cuisines. But the real revelation is the ability of these wines to match well with a range of cuisines. The juicy and spicy nature of the wine makes it perfect for roast or grilled red meats and Barbecues. Typical Mediterranean dishes that involve a lot of olive oil and garlic would also be perfect with this wine. (Lot's of vegetables, red meats and pork etc.) Don't forget all those lovely tapas. This wine would be perfect for that tapas bar that has just opened up around the corner.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Made in a drink now style, I would still decant the wine for 5-10 minutes before serving. You can cellar for the next 3-5 years, but it should ideally be consumed within 2 years.



2005 LARK HILL EXALTATION – SANGIOVESE / CABERNET SAUV / MERLOT / SHIRAZ

Canberra Australia



This wine was a real find by Matthew, and I must admit we had to stretch a lot to fit this wine into our pack. It sits outside our normal pricing, but when I tasted the wine I knew it had to be part of this selection.

This is the second Lark Hill wine we have sent to our members and it also happens to be one of the favourite wineries of Matthew Dunne. Their cool climate vineyard was established in 1978, at 860m above sea level by Sue and Dave Carpenter in the Lake George area of Canberra. It is a real family affair now, as they were joined by their son Chris in 2002. In 2003 they sought Biodynamic certification for their vineyard (minimum 5 year transition) and in 2008 they released the first vintage of 'Certified Biodynamic Wine' under the Lark Hill label. They are one of the leaders of this trend and if you want to learn more about Biodynamics, visit Max Allen's excellent website www.redwhiteandgreen.com.au

The Exaltation is their flagship wine (named after the collective noun for larks) and only produced in the best vintages, where the fruit shows exceptional flavour, intensity and balance. This is one of only three vintages made (2003 / 2005 and the yet to be released 2009)

The wine is a blend of 4 grape varieties and pays homage to the Super Tuscan wines of Italy. A personal favourite of Chris, and also a wine style I love. These wines are a blend of traditional Italian and French grapes, made in a rich opulent "new world" style. It is rare to find this blend in Australia and even rarer to find a wine 8 years old that is still being sold by a winery. This is a real labour of love by the Carpenter family so I asked Chris for his thoughts so I could share them in our newsletter.

"Our Exaltation 2005 (and the previous & following vintages; 2003 & 2009) are inspired by the Super Tuscans of Italy. The 2005 is around 25% each of Sangiovese, Merlot, Cabernet

Sauvignon & Shiraz. The key to this wine is that we combine 4 very intense, ripe components and age the blended wine in larger, older oak barrels for 3 years before bottling. This maturation delivers great softening of the wine, and integrates the fruit characters well, but amazingly preserves the freshness of the wine (as we can check & top up the barrels as much as we need; usually around once a fortnight). The wine is then aged for a minimum 3 years in the bottle before release - and is released as a fully-mature, pre-cellar reserve.

We don't like selling wines on faith; many wineries release 'Reserve' labels with a premise (or promise!) that the wine will be great in 5, 10 or 20 years. This is a wine released ready to drink; it can be cellared well for 5-10 more years, but there is no point; it's done the majority of its maturation already." Chris Carpenter- Winemaker/Director

There really is nothing more to say. This is a wine of elegance and structure and a wine I know you will enjoy. It is hard to believe this wine is 8 years old. So fresh and it really does have a European style to it. Red plum and currant fruits are framed by toasty oak and velvety tannins, but this wine is all about the length and structure.

FOOD MATCHINGS

I like to drink this wine by itself which can be a bit indulgent; however it is a very versatile partner. Being fully aged it has soft tannins, so you want to avoid too many strong flavours that might overpower the wine. Roast Lamb, Chicken or Pork dishes would be ideal.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

See Chris's comments above, but I would decant the wine for 5-10 minutes before serving. This will freshen up the wine. Remember it has already been in the bottle for 5 years.

2011 CHANTERIVES, BOURGOGNE BLANC, BURGUNDY

France



What do you get when you mix Japan, Germany and Burgundy. A winery to watch! Chanterives is a new producer in the Savigny-lès-Beaune region of Burgundy. This is one of the lesser known regions of Burgundy, but one that is known for its value, which if you know anything about Burgundy is pretty relative.

Chanterives was founded in 2010 by Guillaume Bott (the right-hand man of Simon Bize, one of the famous names of the Savigny-lès-Beaune area) and Tomoko Kuriyama, who was the Winemaker of Friedrich Altenkirch in Rheingau Germany (2007-2011). Tomoko obviously hails from Japan, but she moved to Germany with her previous husband and kind of fell into winemaking. A vintage in

2005 at Simon Bize would lead her into a new relationship and a new winemaking venture in Burgundy.

They purposefully describe themselves as 'négociant-vinificateurs'. This is to underline the fact that they buy the grapes, then make and mature the wine rather than the typical négociant that simply purchases finished wine to bottle under their label. In the early years new wineries in this area struggle to get good grape contracts, but this is where the experience and contacts of Guillaume have really brought dividends. They have been able to leap ahead of other smaller producers and make some amazing wines. Jancis Robinson no less gave a rave review of their first vintage (2010) and it all but sold out.

Elegance and purity is the hallmark of the 2011 vintage and this wine has a real femininity to it with its floral and citrus aromas framed by this lovely nutty complexity. The palate is densely structured with excellent acidity alongside savoury flinty notes. This is the type of white wine I

just love. Plenty of flavour, but in balance with the acidity and structure. This is a wine that you can really sink your teeth into and is a great introduction to the white wines of Burgundy. But be careful if you fall in love with these wines, as they can get very expensive, particularly when you start to investigate the village and single vineyard wines.

FOOD MATCHINGS

You really cannot go past seafood with a White Burgundy. You want a strongly flavoured fish like Tuna or Salmon. If you are eating Sushi or sashimi even better. Despite the wine being full bodied, it has the acidity necessary to match these flavours. The wine is also robust enough to handle BBQ'd pork dishes which are just a match made in heaven

CELLARING POTENTIAL

The finish is long, elegant & pristine. The wine is tightly crafted so decanting is recommended if drunk fresh and young. You could cellar this wine for another 3 years, but I would enjoy the wines over the next 12 months. It is drinking so well now. You may notice some crystals at the bottom of the bottle. Please note these are completely harmless Tartaric Crystals and are a natural part of the winemaking process. As Chanterives strive for minimal winemaking intervention, they do not cold stabilise the wine prior to bottling, which would normally remove these crystals. In their opinion this process can also strip the flavours of the wine.





(Continued from page 1)

This is from an elevated cooler vineyard in the coastal area of Alicante. This wine has the typical fleshiness and acidity that are common to Spanish wines. Perfect with Mediterranean type foods or just by itself. 2010 was a great vintage though out most of Europe and Alicante was no exception

So there you go; four wines perfect for your next dinner party or BYO. As you know Bullion Cellars is very focused on dinner parties and food matchings, but I was talking to a friend the other day who gave me a new perspective. He told me that whenever he drinks really good wines it doesn't matter what he eats, as it always tastes bloody good. Not sure if I 100% agree, but an interesting point as you begin your journey on these 4 wines. Why don't you also try some food matching experiments!

Matt – The Bullionaire



Stu Freeman and Matt Eagan – Bullion Cellars

MATTHEW DUNNE – ABOUT YOUR SOMMELIER

In the past ten years of his professional life as a sommelier Matthew Dunne's career has covered a multitude of areas such as managing fine dining restaurants, creating wine lists, food retail merchandising and food and wine training.

His career started in 1996 working at The Observatory's Galileo Restaurant, where he helped the restaurant obtain its first, 'Chefs Hat' in the Sydney Morning Herald's, 'Good Food Guide'.

He then started his international experience in 1999 working for the following prestigious accounts

Charlie Trotters – Chicago USA- Wine Spectator magazine named the restaurant (with its 1,500+ wines) America's best restaurant in 2000.

The River Café - London.

Returning to Australia in 2003, Matthew initially worked for Simon Johnson Quality Foods

After four years of working as assistant sommelier at ARIA Restaurant, Matt was appointed Head Sommelier in August 2008. ARIA has one of Australia's most prestigious wine lists and showcases an extensive selection of both well known and boutique producers. The ARIA wine list has received numerous awards:

Sydney Morning Herald's 2009, 'Good Food Guide Wine List of the Year', and the Hall of Fame' status in the 2008, 2009 and the 2010 Australian Wine List of the Year Awards.

Matthew's career highlight was being awarded:

Sydney Morning Herald's 2011 'Good Food Guide Louis Roederer Sommelier of the Year

