

the bullionaire

BULLION 16A

www.bullioncellars.com.au

Our niche, so to speak...

Matt Dunne is a seriously busy boy. He is the Group Sommelier for Matt Moran's restaurant group MorSol, who seem to be opening a new venue every other month. If he is not tasting wine at Aria, he is heading off to Prowein in Germany to taste wines over there. Great job if you can get it.

Matt has decided to focus on Australia for this selection with two wines, rather than the normal one. When we started Bullion it was not our intention to focus on imported wines, but with the positive feedback from our members, it is something we have encouraged. (If you don't recall, we aim for 1 Australian wine and 3 imports in each selection). We don't do this because we think Australian wines are inferior, rather, because it is relatively easy to buy good Australian wines in Australia, but less so imported wines. All the good imported wines are sold through the top restaurants, which is where our sommeliers come into the equation. Our niche so to speak!!

But the quality of Australian wines over the past few years, has never been better. In fact the overseas wine press are now starting to refer to us as "New Australia". Gone are the days of overblown, over oaked and over extracted wines. Now we are looking at freshness, vitality and energy. Wines we love at Bullion.

So to our March selection. Matt wanted to look at wines which are a little lighter, reflecting the end of the warmer months. But wines still packing plenty of flavour and structure.

First up, we have a great South Australian Shiraz from a very famous Austrian name. Yes Austria! Bert Salomon is the eighth generation of Salomon Undorf, one of Austria's greatest wineries. They make amazing Riesling and Gruner Veltliner at Krems on the River Danube, just an hour's drive outside Vienna.

Salomon's journey into wine began in a rather regrettable way in 1971 when his father died. He was still in secondary school, so his older brother took over the wine making and management of the winery. But he was always going to be involved in the business, no matter his age. On the encouragement from his mother his first job after school was with a wine importer in New York. Here he discovered a love and joy of International wines and the contacts that would lead to a successful import/export business; still in operation today. It was through these contacts and whilst working for an importer in Austria, that he was the first person to bring Penfolds into Austria, beginning his love affair with South Australian Reds. Frequent trips to Australia led him to claim a piece of Australia for his own, planting a vineyard in 1995, not far from McLaren Vale. He is a frequent visitor to the vineyard during vintage, getting fully involved in the community, even so far as his children attending



the local school. It has now progressed to another generation, with his 25 year-old son working the 2014 vintage at Wirra Wirra.

So here we have a winemaking family that in 2015 celebrated 225 years in Austria and 20 years in South Australia. Not a bad accomplishment, but only notable if the wines are good. And yes they are petty bloody good.

The Salomon Shiraz is from the great 2012 vintage and a good example of the New Australia. In fact a lot of very well-known international critics have reflected on how this wine combines the great characters of South Australia and the Northern Rhone. But in reality these are the styles of Shiraz being produced in Australia at the moment. Full bodied yes, but not over the top!

This is a serious wine, but still playful and engaging. It has plenty of lovely chocolate and dark fruits, but it has an energy and acidity that make it a joy to drink.

Malbec and Argentina are beginning to be an old story at Bullion Cellars. We have had a number of wines from South America chosen by different sommeliers over the past 12 months. No surprise really when you consider the quality. Matt has continued the trend with the **2014 Chakena Estate Malbec (Organic)**, which is a great example of what makes Mendoza and Malbec so special.

Founded in 2002, the Pelizatti family revived an old family legacy when they purchased a vineyard in Mendoza. (In the late 1800's their ancestors made wine in Valtellina Italy.) The winery is located in the heart of winemaking country in Mendoza, surrounded by 150 hectares of vineyards. This is a sizeable operation and based on reviews and pictures, no expense has been spared in the winery or the vineyards.

Continued back page

bullion CELLARS
SOMMELIER SELECTED AND DELIVERED



THE WINES



2013 DOMAINE DE VIRANEL 'TRILOGIE' *St Chinian, Languedoc - Roussillon, France*

Syrah 33% Cabernet 33% Alicante Boushet 33%

The grapes were hand harvested and vinified separately at the winery. The Syrah and Cabernet coming off 30 year old vineyards and the Alicante Boushet off a vineyard planted in 1946. Only a few vineyards of this age are still planted to this rather obscure grape variety and it only has been kept, as the fruit produced is amazing. The Maceration period was kept relatively short, so as not to dry out the fruit, ensuring the wine remains juicy and fleshy. Maturation for 10 months took place in stainless steel and concrete tanks. They have a large number of concrete tanks of varying sizes, which is a little unusual for an old or modern winery. But the Bergasse brothers swear by them and continue their use. Zero oak influence allows nothing but the gorgeous fruit to shine through.

Dark plum, violet nuances are evident, along with just the slightest hint of spice cake. The wine has a medium bodied nature, with perfumed floral notes that engage and excite. These are the traditional southern French aromas and flavors of lavender, violets and blackberries.

You will need to use a really big glass and decant, letting it open up. The wine has hints of the "Pinot-esque" about it, with a floral perfumed nature, yet it has this rustic, robustness that makes it a joy to drink.

FOOD MATCHINGS

The Trilogie is a Languedoc red that can be paired with a wide variety of cuisines, including roast duck, grilled sausage with lentils or grilled tuna steaks. I would also match with some Asian dishes, like Chinese or Thai. A very versatile wine.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

You will need to decant for at least 20 minutes before serving and place in your largest glasses to really let the wine open up. You could safely cellar for another 3-5 years.



2012 SALOMON ESTATE SHIRAZ *Finnis River, South Australia*

A fantastic example of a South Australian Shiraz from the masters of Gruner Veltliner in Austria. Through a love affair of Australia and Penfolds, this winemaking family with over 220 years in Austria purchased a block of land near McLaren Vale and planted a vineyard in 1995. Bert Salomon has become the ultimate flying winemaker, doing vintages in each hemisphere since 2002. Not a bad way to spend your time.

The soils of this vineyard are typically gravel and sand over red and orange sandstone, with the vineyard falling gently away towards the northwest, providing ideal exposure and plenty of warmth to ripen the grapes. Balanced by the cooling breezes which roll off the Southern Ocean in the late-afternoon, ensuring excellent acid retention.

A great example of "New Australia" Shiraz. Gone are the lashings of sweet US oak and alcohols above 15%. Rather we have elegance and power combined. The fruit is handpicked and then transported to a winemaking facility in McLaren Vale the family leases. It is barrel aged for 18 months in large 300 litre French

hogsheads (approximately 50% new). It is the use of French Oak that gives the wine its elegance.

It is a classic "New" South Australian Shiraz with an expressive bouquet of black fruits, liquorice and dark chocolate. A full bodied wine, but in no way over the top. It has plenty of structure and impeccably integrated tannins.

FOOD MATCHINGS

Almost any red meat, but also a joy just to drink by itself. Roasted lamb would be a match made in heaven.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

You will want to decant this wine for a good 25 minutes and use one of your largest glasses. You could safely cellar this wine for another 7-9 years.

Best Wishes for 2016



2014 CHAKENA MALBEC (ORGANIC) *Mendoza, Argentina*

Carignan 50% Syrah 45% Grenache 5%

Chakana literally means “a bridge” in the ancestral indigenous language and refers to the link between the Andean culture and the modern world. Owned by the Pelizzatti Family, this modern business is located south of the city of Mendoza. The wines are made from their own grapes grown in the 150 Ha estate at the foothill of the Andes.

Mendoza and Malbec are as synonymous as the Barossa Valley and Shiraz. The wines come in all prices and weights, and this wine from an organic vineyard is a great example of why these wines are so popular. Medium to full bodied, the wine has great freshness and acidity which can be lacking in big wines. It has a richness and fleshiness that make it a joy to drink. This is not made in a hedonistic style, which in our opinion makes it more enjoyable to drink.

Produced from the original 35 year old vines at Chakana Estate, 2014 is the first vintage that can claim “Organic”, with the vineyard currently undergoing the conversion to Bio Dynamic. Following 12 months ageing in oak barrels the

wine retains concentrated plum and dark fruit characters, but also develops exotic spicy flavours with hints of chocolate and violets. Rich, with a full-bodied mouthfeel as well as silky tannins, it should be consumed over the next 2-3 years.

FOOD MATCHINGS

Steak, Steak and Steak. For the Vegetarians out there, Steak. Seriously though, Malbec from Mendoza is a great match for Grilled or BBQ'd meats.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

As with most Reds at Bullion Cellars — Decant for 20 minutes. The wine is a mid term cellaring potential, 2-3 years.



2014 BETWEEN FIVE BELLS - WHITE WINE *Geelong, Victoria*

Chardonnay / Pinot Gris / Riesling / Pinot Meunier

Working with two local Geelong growers, David Fesq isolated small parcels of Riesling, Chardonnay, Pinot Gris and Pinot Meunier to be harvested within a few days of each other. Almost equal quantities of each arrived at the winery, where they were whole-bunch pressed into 1,600L tanks for a co-fermented primary ferment. Extended solids-contact and 100% completion of malolactic fermentation round out the main winemaking influences.

But is not the varieties or the winemaking that frame this wine, rather it is the collective sum and the “Vibe”. The wine is largely left alone as it spends a year in tank, so the resulting profile is a combination of clean white fruit, creaminess and complexity from extended lees contact, plus a tang of gentle oxidation. It has a lovely copper tone to the colour (thanks to the Pinot Meunier) and you can expect the aromas and flavours to change dramatically in the glass, at once tart and crisp, then warm and rich.

This wine is all about texture and there is a creaminess and richness to the wine. Full bodied with cracking acidity and a palate that seems to linger for ever. There

is also a weight to this wine which is unusual for most white wines. The list of descriptors used to describe this wine could take up this whole newsletter. Just open it up and enjoy it.

This is one of the most exciting and distinctive white wines I have tried for a long time and I am so pleased it comes from Australia, or should I say the “New Australia”. Only 270 cases were produced.

FOOD MATCHINGS

A joy to drink by itself, but will match almost any cuisine. To be safe stick to white meats, salads and most Asian dishes.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Designed for immediate drinking, however you could cellar for another 2-3 years, but why wait, it is so enjoyable right now.

BUT — use your biggest glasses and let the wine open up for a few minutes before drinking.

ABOUT THE SOMMELIER

Matthew Dunne

Aria, Sydney, Brisbane / Chiswick / Chiswick Art Galley / North Bondi Fish

In the past 12 years of his professional life as a sommelier, Matt 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.

Matt's role now as Group Sommelier for MorSol, has him in charge of the commercial, creative and training aspects of the group wine program, which includes the award winning 1100 bottle wine list at ARIA Sydney and ARIA Brisbane's 550 bottle wine list, as well as the ARIA Catering wine list at the Sydney Opera House. Matt created the wine list at CHISWICK Restaurant in Woollahra Sydney, which won the 'Best Small List' for 2014 and 2013 at the Australian Wine List of the Year

Awards. Matt also writes the wine list at North Bondi Fish and most recently for CHISWICK at the Gallery.

Matt completed the Court of Masters Sommeliers Certified Sommelier Examination in 2009. Matt is an active wine show judge and in 2015 he was awarded a scholarship to the prestigious Len Evans Tutorial held annually in the Hunter Valley. He is experienced as a keynote speaker, educator and has a fresh and approachable take on wine.

Matt also has his own Yarra Valley wine project featuring chardonnay and pinot noir, which is now in its fifth year.

Drake Sampson.



Continued from front page

In 2012 Chakana started the lengthy conversion process to Biodynamic, with their vineyards in Argelo being certified organic from vintage 2014 and (biodynamic) "in conversion". This is very long process, but one that has delivered great results if this wines is any indication.

The Bergasse brothers are generally described as the pin up boys of Languedoc-Roussillon in the South of France. Charming and articulate, they exude French charm and are known to behave with the enthusiasm of boisterous teenagers. They are however very serious about their wines and their 400 year old family estate in the St Chinian sub-region. This is considered the oldest winemaking area in this region of France, with vineyards being cultivated since ancient Roman times. This region does not have the fanfare of Burgundy or Bordeaux, for this is the engine room of France, but there are pockets of brilliance; Pockets like St Chinian and the **2013 Domanie De Viranel "Trologie"**. This wine is a blend of three grape varieties, Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon and the rather evocatively named Alicante Bouschet. Long-time members might remember this varietal from a few years back.

According to the bible - Wikipedia - there are between 5-7000 different grape varieties, but only 1300 or so are used to make wine on a commercial basis. One of these 1300 is Alicante Bouschet from the Languedoc in Southern France. This is a grape created in 1855, when it was crossed with another obscure grape variety and Grenache to make a very thick skinned grape. It makes a wine of incredible colour and fragrance and when matched with old vines and a winemaker who gives it focus and attention, you get an amazing wine. The fruit used in this wine comes from a vineyard planted in 1946 and it really adds to the core and structure of the wine, giving a rich dark colour, engaging floral aromas and juicy acidity. The thing that distinguishes this wine though is the lack of wood in the maturation. Zero oak has been used, rather a use of stainless steel and concrete tanks. There is a freshness and a delicate nature to this wine. Medium bodied at best. If you love Pinot Noir, you will love this wine and the way it changes and evolves in the glass. Likewise if you love Cabernet and Shiraz you will like the wine for the same reasons.

And now to the white wine, which according to Matt is from one of the most talked about wine labels in Australia at the moment. After tasting the wine with Matt I can see why. It is another great example of the "New" Australia I have been talking about.

It is the rather cryptically named **2014 Between Five Bells White Wine**. An amalgamation of philosophy, art and skill, which could very easily sound pretentious, but in reality, is anything but!

Between Five Bells are the last three words in the first stanza of Kenneth Slessor's famous poem, Five Bells. (To be honest I had never heard of this poem, but it obviously had a big impact on David Fesq, the driving force behind this label.) Summing it up in his own words, "We didn't want a name that suggested the immediacy of something like geography, or the personal, like my actual name. I wanted something that summed up the intangible nature of wine. Something that said- no matter how much we think we know, and how much we think we can control it, wine is, and should be, something mysterious."

David Fesq conceived this label with two friends over a large number of drinking sessions and a desire to put drinkability first and varieties, marketing and expectations second. For all three parties, this is a secondary project to their main jobs, with no great pressure to be a success, which is probably why it is going so well. David is the eighth generation of a large Sydney based wine merchant and wholesaler, Ray Nadeson is the owner/winemaker of Lethbridge in Geelong and where the wines are made and Josh is the group sommelier of a large restaurant group. They tick all the boxes.

The wine is an equal blend of Chardonnay, Pinot Gris, Riesling and Pinot Meunier. This last grape is the reason for the rather unique coppery, bronze colour, but in no way should this scare you. (This is a red grape variety that with Pinot Noir is used to make the great white sparkling wines of Champagne). The four grape varieties were all picked separately but co-fermented together in a sort of field blend. There is a richness and complexity to this wine that has to be tasted to be believed. It is not mainstream, as the winemakers are striving for complexity rather than just primary fruit or oak. Enjoyable to drink and utterly delicious!

So there is Matthew Dunne's Selection, showcasing the "New" Australia with a little bit of French and South American flair thrown in for good measure

Enjoy!

Matt The Bullionaire



Stu Freeman and Matt Eagan