

the bullionaire

BULLION 16D

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PERFECT! ... for the silly season

Dan Sharp of Six Penny is the Sommelier this delivery. If you have not been to Six Penny in Stanmore NSW, then you should really think about making a reservation. They have recently maintained their "Two Hat's" and continue to receive rave reviews for their Scandinavian sensibility and their paddock-to-plate attitude. The wine list is also bloody impressive.

Dan wanted to choose wines with the festive season very much in mind. We are heading into the silly season with plenty of entertaining involved and a rather large Xmas lunch/dinner around the corner. He has chosen wines that will match any menu you plan; from seafood through to roast turkey. The wines are all medium bodied, fresh and full of energy, perfect to drink around this time of year. We have also changed the mix slightly to reflect this theme, with two white wines, rather than the normal one.

So now, to the first of the white wines. This is from one of my favourite varieties, regions and winemaker. I am talking about Riesling, Alsace and Trimbach. **The 2014 Trimbach Riesling** to be precise.

Alsace is one of the most picturesque wine regions of the world. It is full of medieval villages with cobble stone streets and quaint houses with thatched roofs, surrounded by hill side vineyards. They also have some of the finest restaurants in France; not a bad place to spend a few days or a few months. But Alsace is first and foremost about white wines, and Riesling in particular. These wines are dry, distinctive and beautiful to drink.

The Trimbach family can trace their viticultural origins back to 1626 and after 13 generations they are regarded as one of the top producers from this region. They're based in Ribeauvillé, roughly in the middle of the Alsace wine region, which consists of a narrow strip of vineyards running north to south in the north eastern corner of France, on the German border. Over the past 200-300 years this region has been controlled by both German and France, and during this time they have developed their own customs and culture. Not quite French, yet not quite German either. Trimbach own 27 hectares from sites around the villages of Ribeauvillé and Hunawirh, including 1.25 hectares of the Grand Cru vineyard Rosacker, from which they produce one of the most famous white wines of the world, the **Clos St Hune Riesling**, which in Australia will set you back \$300 a bottle.

The Trimbachs have a purist vision, producing wines which are structured, long-lived, fruity, elegant and balanced. Bottles remain in the cellar for several years before reaching the marketplace, ensuring the wines are both ready to drink upon release, but also hold great aging potential.

The 2014 vintage of this estate wine is the current release. It is super crisp with a real energy and a suggestion of green apples and lime, with a sherbet like intensity on the palate. Great stuff.

The next white is a Chardonnay from Burgundy in France.



Dan and I both love Chardonnay, which is going through a renaissance in Australia, both at the producer level and at the consumer expectation level. Gone are the over blown, oaky chardonnays of the 1980's and 90's. These are being replaced by leaner and crisper styles, but wines packed full of flavour and elegance. I have been known to say that Chardonnay is the "New Black", and there is none blacker than the white wines of Burgundy in France. But the price can be a little scary.

Burgundy is made up of tiny vineyards, grown in the many villages of this region, by a seemingly endless number of producers. It is a region that demands attention and people become fanatical about their red and white wines. It is not uncommon to pay \$200 and more for some of the village appellations and even higher for the Premier and Grand Cru single vineyard wines. The quality of these wines can be very hit and miss and you really need to know the reputation of the producer. As a result these wines are not for the faint hearted, for you can spend a lot of money and end up with some disappointing wines.

Dan, true to the spirit of Bullion Cellars, has chosen a great Chardonnay from one of the lesser known regions in Burgundy, but one that still offers the class and quality we expect, but at a fraction of the price of more fancied appellations. It also happens to be made by an Australian, Andrew Nielsen, and is a seriously good wine.

Andrew used to work in advertising with publications such as The Economist and The Week. Wine became his passion in 2006, after drinking a bottle of high end Red Burgundy. He packed in his corporate gig and managed to get vintage work in some of the most prestigious winemakers around the world;

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bullion CELLARS
SOMMELIER SELECTED AND DELIVERED

THE WINES



2014 TRIMBACH RIESLING *Alsace, France*

Trimbach is regarded as one of the top producers in Alsace and this is the wine that made their fortune. A wine of quality and distinction, but one that is accessible and easy to match with a wide variety of foods.

They source the fruit from a number of vineyards, some of which they own, the others under contract. These are vineyards at the beginnings of the hills of Alsace. The grapes are normally harvested in late October and fermented in temperature-controlled stainless steel and concrete vats. There is no secondary malolactic fermentation in order to maintain as much natural acidity as possible.

Whenever I taste a great Riesling from Alsace the most immediate characteristic is green apple and this wine has this in spades. Bright straw-yellow in colour, green apple and lime on the nose and palate. Juicy and spicy finishing with a lovely mineral tang and lemony acidity, or what I refer to as a sherbet like intensity. In 2014 they did not produce any of their higher quality Cuvée M Riesling, as it fermented to completion and ended up too dry and austere. The decision was made to blend this higher quality wine into this larger blend, the result a more focused, intense and better quality wine. Bring on more mistakes like this.



FOOD MATCHINGS

Seafood — Asian food or simply by itself

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Trimbach cellared this wine for 12 months before release and the wine is drinking in the zone right now. Short term cellaring would be fine (2-3 years) but my recommendation is to drink over these summer months



2015 DU GRAPPIN MÂCON-VILLAGES *Burgundy, France*

An Australian making wine in Burgundy is not uncommon these days. Plenty of winemakers head over for a vintage, and end up staying. This is the case for Andrew Nielsen. In little over 10 years he has changed roles from advertising to winemaking, along the way securing jobs at some of the most prestigious Pinot Noir and Chardonnay producers in the world. These are highly sought after gigs, so he must have had plenty of skill and talent even before he learnt what he was doing. He now works as a negociant, buying small parcels of fruit from growers he has developed friendships with over the recent years. He makes some Red Burgundy in tiny quantities, but it is in the Du Grappin range of wines that he excites us. Taking fruit from some of the lesser known regions of Burgundy and giving them the care and attention they deserve. The result is wines of high quality and great value. Two things you do not see in Burgundy very often.

Fruit for this wine has been sourced from a 25 year old vineyard on the outskirts of the village Péronne, considered the best part of the Mâcon-Villages appellation, just north of Pouilly-Fuissé. Macon is on the southern part of the Burgundy region, planted in clay/limestone soil and the fruit from this part of the Mâcon-Villages appellation tends to keep its acidity, due to a cooler microclimate, resulting in bright and fresh wines.

Winemaking is kept as simple as possible, with the use of larger older oak in the maturation. This wine is all about the fruit. The result is a beautiful glass of wine. Plenty of ripe melons and stone fruits. But is it on the palate where this wine really shines. There is a lush and juicy mouthfeel, held in tension with a taut mineral backbone. Only 300 cases were made and we are proud to have this wine in our pack.



FOOD MATCHINGS

Perfect with light and delicate seafood like prawns, shellfish and crab. Also great with sushi and sashimi. It can also handle slightly richer dishes like salmon, lobster and the white meats of chicken and pork. A very versatile wine.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Drinking very well now, but will benefit from 2-3 years in the cellar.

Season's Greetings



2015 COLOMBO PINOT NOIR *Martinborough, NZ*

Martinborough is near Wellington down the bottom of the North Island of NZ. It began its life as a wine region around 30 years ago when they discovered the soils and climate were pretty much the same as Burgundy. After some early plantings and some great wines, a new regional star was born; right beside the names of Burgundy, Oregon, Central Otago and the Yarra Valley. Pinot Noir has become very popular in the past 10 years as the winemakers outside of Burgundy have come to understand the variety and their regions a little better. The result has been a dramatic improvement in quality, but more importantly the wines are a lot more affordable than the wines of Burgundy.

Colombo is an international family affair, owned and operated by a husband and wife team, Carolyn Irwin from Northern Ireland and Baptist Sieber from Switzerland. Baptist began his career working for a large winery in Switzerland who was then transferred to Marlborough, managing one of the large vineyards there. In December 2013, Baptist and Carolyn took over a 16 year old Pinot Noir block on the Martinborough Terrace. They have since built a small winery and cellar door. They are a great example of the new wave of young wine producers picking up the baton from the established winemakers in Martinborough, revitalising the scene and adding a modern take to what has already been achieved.

This is a big, rich, juicy, red-fruited Pinot Noir with distinctive toasty oak. If you like a slightly richer style of Pinot then you will love this wine. The fruit has been handpicked and with the use of indigenous yeast and approximately 10% whole bunches, there is a lovely silkiness and complexity to the wine. It has been aged for 9 months in French Oak (40% new) and is just a beautiful glass of wine. The term often used to describe a great Pinot Noir is an "Iron fist in a velvet glove", this perfectly sums up this wine.



FOOD MATCHINGS

The combination of great acidity, silky tannins and subtle flavours is what makes Pinot Noir so successful for pairing with a tremendous variety of foods. Pinot Noir is light enough for salmon but complex enough to hold up to some richer meat including duck, game birds and of course stews like beef bourguignon. In a pinch, when everyone orders a vastly different entree at a restaurant, you can usually win by picking Pinot Noir; it will make everyone happy. It is also a great match for Roast Turkey on Xmas day.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Ready to drink now – decant for 20 minutes before serving. Can safely be cellared for the next 4-6 years.



2015 LUCIANO SANDRONE DOLCETTO D'ALBA *Piedmonte, Italy*

Luciano Sandrone is new to the world of Piedmonte, scratching together his savings to buy a small plot of land in Barolo in 1977. He started off making wine in his parent's garage and he slowly learnt his trade and developed his vineyard. In 1989 and 1990 he leapt onto the world stage with the help of some great ranking and reviews from Robert Parker and he has never looked back. For the past 20 years he has been considered one of the elite producers of Piedmonte. Luciano now has holdings in some of the most legendary plots in Barolo, including Cannubi Boschis. It is with the wines from Barolo that he has made his fame, selling out on release each year, but it is from his Dolcetto d'Alba that he gains most enjoyment.

Sandrone's Dolcetto has earned its place as the varietal's top ranking in Piedmonte. The beauty of this wine lies in its superb structure, texture and balance that can only come with perfectly ripe fruit. The opulence of the fruit is perfectly balanced by superb freshness, a product of the high altitude vineyards from which this wine is sourced, all between 350-450 metres above sea level. Only Natural yeasts are used during the fermentation stage and a very gentle and hands off approach is carried out. The idea of this wine is to be fresh and approachable when young and as such it is made without any wood or oak contact. The result is a fleshy, pulpy wine with mouth filling flavours of dark cherry, blue plum and anise. It is inky dark, a characteristic of the 2015 vintage, but the wine is full of energy and freshness. There's also subtle and complex hints of earth and minerals.



FOOD MATCHINGS

Dolcetto is a great food wine. It can match with simple grills of steak or lamb, but is also loves earthy and rich casseroles. A really good match with a mushroom risotto, but it has enough tannins and plushness to handle Roast Turkey and cranberry sauce on Xmas day.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Drink now or over the next 3 years, however I would recommend drinking over the next 6-12 months. The freshness and vitality of the wine is great right now. Decant for 5-10 minutes only.



ABOUT THE SOMMELIER

Dan Sharp is the head sommelier at Sixpenny in Stanmore, one of Sydney's leading restaurants with "Two Hats" to their name. 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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Kosta Browne in California, Felton Road in Central Otago and Coldstream Hills in Yarra Valley. Finally ending up at Simon Bize in Savigny les Beaune, where he was able to live and breathe Chardonnay and Pinot Noir.

He has since gone on to start his own venture, seeking out parcels of fruit from overlooked or under-appreciated areas in Burgundy, making wines with all the class and elegance of more fancied appellations. It also helps that his wife kept her corporate finance gig in London, as this is an expensive exercise.

The **2015 Du Grappin Mâcon - Villages** comes from a parcel of vines outside Peronne. The fruit is pure and precise with a nice bit of weight and complexity. It's luscious and full, but with plenty of acidity to keep it all very fresh. Brilliant and a testament to how good Macon-Villages can be.

The first red is a Pinot Noir from Martinborough in New Zealand. The **2015 Colombo Pinot Noir**. Pinot Noir is super trendy at the moment, with a lot of wines being rushed onto the marketplace, made with young vines and winemakers who have not come to terms with this very difficult grape variety. Frankly a lot of these wines do not justify their high price. This wine is not one of those. Pinot Noir needs a unique combination of climate, soil and winemaker to make great wines, with two regions from NZ at the forefront of this production - Central Otago in the South Island and Martinborough in the North Island.

If you are into Pinot Noir, these regions will be on your radar, as they regularly top the many Pinot Noir tastings from around the world.

Pinot Noir is a lighter bodied wine, but what they lack in colour, they make up for in complexity and character. I really think you need to be in a contemplative mood when drinking good Pinot Noir. The flavours and aromas are not immediate and they do not whack you over the head like a Cabernet or a Shiraz. What they do offer is elegance and character. So sit down with a nice meal and enjoy this wine. Colombo is a small producer with a lot going on. A seriously lovely wine, that is on the fuller side of Pinot's, with lots of energy and complexity.

The last red is from Piedmonte in Italy. One of the most famous regions in the world of wine. If you love wine, you have likely heard of Barolo and Barbaresco. These are wines made from the grape variety Nebbiolo, sourced from vineyards around the villages of the same name in northern Italy. These are wines very much on the lighter to medium bodied style, but very elegant and prestigious. Prices for these wines start at around \$100 and can end around \$1000. Nice wines to taste, but not something you can or will want to drink every day.

This is where the **2015 Luciano Sandrone Dolcetto d'Alba** comes into the equation. These are wines you can drink more regularly, but still offering the complexity and structure we love at Bullion Cellars.

Dolcetto is the name of the grape and d'Alba is the name of the town around which the vineyards are planted. Dolcetto D'Alba has traditionally been made in a lighter, entry level type of wine, but this is no longer the rule. Many Dolcetto's are being made in a bigger, bolder style. The fruit is left to hang on the vine longer, resulting in higher alcohols and more age worthy wines. The better examples are these more modern interpretations. The "new" Dolcetto's are deep purple in colour, with aromas of black raspberries, violets, coffee and chocolate covered cherries. They are not big wines, but offer a sense of energy and plushness that make them perfect for a plate of antipasto, or a match with roast turkey on Xmas day. These are wines that should be drunk within 3 years, but why wait, just drink them now.

So there you have our Xmas Summer selection. Thanks Dan and Merry Xmas to you all.

Matt the Bullionaire



Stu Freeman and Matt Eagan