

the bullionaire

BULLION 178

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Through the Looking Glass ...

Adrian Filiuta of the Merivale Group is on the Spittoon this quarter. I have mentioned this before, but Justin Hemmes, the owner of Merivale, has done a sensational job of upping the ante of dining and hospitality in Sydney. For a long time, Melbourne was the centre of fine dining in Australia, and you could still argue this is the case, but now it will be a pretty fierce and two sided argument and for that Justin Hemmes can take most of the credit. His bars and restaurants around Sydney are all world class, with food and wine at the centre of it all; something we love at Bullion Cellars. Adrian works at The Paddington and Fred's and if you want to join the Sydney / Melbourne argument, make a reservation at either of these two places and join the discussion.

I always enjoy working with Adrian, who brings a very intellectual stance to his selections, with a very impressive knowledge on the wines, regions and styles. So to his first wine through the looking glass; a white from one of my favourite Regions. But first a bit of a preamble.

You may have noticed a lot more Pinot Gris and Grigio on the wine lists of late. Thankfully, people are getting a little bored of Sauvignon Blanc. They have not yet fully embraced Chardonnay, but they are turning to Pinot Gris. These have more texture and flavour than Sauv Blanc and at Bullion Cellars we cannot get enough of them. (Pinot Gris and Pinot Grigio are the same variety, but made in different styles. The Gris style is a little fuller in body in comparison to the Grigio Style, offering greater textural elements and complexity.) We have sent a number of these wines before and it is great to see their popularity grow. So let's jump on the Gris bandwagon and get stuck in!

The wine Adrian has chosen is the **2013 Andre Kientzler Pinot Gris** from Alsace France. The spiritual home to the Gris style. Some of these styles can be off dry, meaning they have a touch of sweetness, which is a common style coming out of NZ, but this wine is in a slightly dryer style.

The Kientzler Vineyard has been handed down from father to son for over five generations, sustaining their passion for outstanding dry and gastronomic wines. Grown with a great respect of land and environment, they are a small producer with only 14 hectares of vineyards, with nearly half classified as Grand Crus.

These are wines just crying out for food, and if you are thinking of matching a wine with Asian food, then look no further.

Carménère and Chile is a bit like Malbec and Argentina, or Shiraz and Australia – the star of the country. But a good wine also needs to have a good story and Carménère has beauty, stretching back over 200 years.

Back in the 1990s, grape growers in Chile were puzzled why some of the



vines in their Merlot vineyards ripened so late, and why their leaves were so different, turning bright crimson late in the season. You see if they were all the same variety, then the vines should all look the same. So in 1994 they brought in a respected French botanist, Jean-Michel Boursiquot, who after some study, declared the vines weren't Merlot at all. They were Carménère. Carmen - What, they are all said!

Carménère had been considered nearly extinct. In the 1800s, it had been one of the grapes used in Bordeaux wines to boast their colour. But it was finicky and difficult to grow, so when the great phylloxera plague nearly wiped out the vineyards of France in the 1870s, growers didn't bother to include it in their replanting plans. Carménère was lost to the world, or so they thought.

As luck would have it, just before Phylloxera hit Europe, a few cuttings of Carménère were planted in Chile's warmer, Mediterranean-style climate, where it flourished. Even if for most of its life, it was called Merlot.

The wine Adrian has chosen is from a winemaker with plenty of experience and a very strong pedigree. The **2014 Vina Marty Pirca Carménère** - Maule Valley Chile. A French winemaker who has set up shop in Chile, after spending most of his time with one of the most famous wineries on the planet. Chateau Mouton Rothschild. He was responsible for establishing their Joint Venture partnerships. Opus One in the Napa Valley, then Almaviva in Chile, eventually creating his own winery in 2008.

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SOMMELIER SELECTED AND DELIVERED

THE WINES

2013 ANDRE KIENTZLER PINOT GRIS *Alsace, France*

The Kientzler domaine is a small family-run estate consisting of just 12 hectares of vines, of which 3.7 hectares are classified Grand Cru. The total output is a tiny 6000 cases, so as you can imagine their focus is very much on quality.

These Grand Cru sites have been identified over the past 300 years as the region's best. They produce some truly amazing wines, in fact one of the best wines I have ever tried is a Riesling from this estate- The 2008 Riesling Grand cru "Geisberg". It is expensive, but worth every cent. These wines make up a tiny percentage of the 6000 case production, so it is with the village wines of Pinot Gris and Riesling that the estate is judged on year after year.

For the past 30 years this Domaine's passion has been for dry and gastronomic wines, which are revealed in each and every vintage. The grapes for this wine were hand harvested from a number of vineyards around the village of Ribeauville. After pressing, fermentation takes place in temperature-controlled vats (at 18 to 24°C). The wine is raked just once, before natural clarification during the course of the winter. The wine is lightly filtered just before bottling.

An unoaked style of wine which is all about mineral freshness and floral aromas, all brought together with this lovely nuttiness and cracking acidity. You also get a touch of apple and pear aromas with a juicy and refreshing palate.

I can see why this winery is regarded as one of the region's top producers.

FOOD MATCHINGS

You don't want to over chill this wine. Enjoy it at 8°C with all manner of seafood (poached, grilled, smoked, marinated or in creamy sauces), or at the start of a meal as an aperitif where it would be perfect with goat or sheep cheese. It is also just amazing with most spicy Asian dishes.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Drinking well over the next 3-5 years. But in the zone now at almost 4 years in the bottle.

2014 VINA MARTY PIRCA CARMÉNÈRE *Maule Valley, Chile*

Viña Marty was established in 2008 when Winemaker Pascal Marty set out to create his own project in Chile. Marty had been with Baron Phillippe Rothschild in Bordeaux for 14 years before he became one of the key winemakers /Directors responsible for setting up Opus One in California and then Almaviva in Chile. (These two world class iconic wineries form part of the Rothchild's portfolio and produce some of the best wines on the planet.) After his time with these giants of the wine world, Pascal decided to remain in Chile and set down his roots into Chilean soil with an array of winemaking consultancies before he went solo to create Viña Marty. He combines the experience he gained in France, California, Chile to create wines with history and soul.

The Maule valley is one of the oldest wine regions in Chile, located 250 km south from Santiago. It has recently come to the forefront of the Chile Wine industry as younger winemakers re-discover the potential of these old vine sites. Some of the most exciting wines are now coming from this region.

The fruit for this wine is sourced from a specific zone called Pencahue Valley in the greater Maule Valley. They have 26 hectares planted between 1997 and 2008, with Cabernet Sauvignon, Carménère, and Syrah. This valley is well known for its dry-warm climate and rocky soils. At the same time, moisture is well retained by the soils due to the clay content. It is an ideal place to produce full-bodied Carménère.

The fruit is hand harvested and taken to the winery, where is fermented in stainless

steel for 8-12 days at a coolish temperature 24-26 degrees C. It is then aged for 8 months in French Oak.

Toasty, herbal aromas of smoked meat, leather and black fruits are in the lead. It's plush and thick, with flavours of baked blackberry, herbs, spice and pepper that finish with a mocha flavour and chewy tannins.

FOOD MATCHINGS

Carménère is a bit soft for big grilled steaks. But it's great with complex beef and pork stews, roast lamb, venison, spicy barbecue and pasta with spicy tomato sauce. Finally, the lower tannin in Carménère makes it a friendly option for lighter, less fatty dishes. In short, this is one to keep around for just about everything. Still, make note of the keen matches to try with Carménère above.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Decant for 40 minutes before serving as initially the wine's Red Capsicum / meaty / herbaceousness can be a little powerful. You will then be rewarded with a plush opulent wine. This wine can be safely cellared for the next 6-8 years.



2009 BODEGA ENGUERA PARADIGMA “MONASTRELL”

Valencia, Spain

A single variety Monastrell is a rare beast, really only seen in Spain. Monastrell is what the Spanish call Mouvedre, a grape variety better known in the great red wine blends of the Rhone and Barossa Valleys’.

Bodega Enguera is a relatively new winery, founded in 1999, producing wines from their own vineyards. They now own 160 hectares, so whilst not being a large winery, they are certainly not a boutique operation. Paradigma is made exclusively with old Vine Monastrell from a high altitude vineyard at their Casa Lluch property. The 2009 vintage was warmer than previous years, so the winemakers aimed for less extraction and only 7 months aging in new french oak.

The nose is vibrant and racy, with aromas of red cherries and blood oranges, denoting freshness and excellent ripeness. The most prominent characteristic of this wine is its age. It is so rare to find a current release wine at 7 years of age, drinking this well.

It is medium bodied and elegant with these very polished tannins and a subtle personality of red berries and prominent floral notes. Plus it has this strong white chocolate character which typifies the variety when grown in it’s native soil.

An excellent glass of wine to enjoy over the cooler months with slow cooked stews and casseroles. Of note, this winemaker has also gone down the route of Carbon Proof Certified. They neutralise their emissions through forest planting and forest management projects.

FOOD MATCHINGS

Great with stews, roasts, baked and grilled red meats, game and sausages. More specifically try with Roast Beef and mushroom sauce, Rack of Lamb (Garlic and rosemary) or try something Spanish, Beef Tenderloin and Chorizo sausage skewers with a plum and coriander sauce.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Decant the wine for 5-10 minutes before serving. This wine should be enjoyed within the next 6-12 months. You could cellar this wine for another 2-3 years, but why wait. Drink now!

2014 TRIPE ISCARIOT “MARROW” SYRAH / MALBEC *Margaret River*

Tripe Iscariot is the newish venture of winemaker Remi Guise who began his journey through wine in his country of birth, South Africa. After finishing University he spent 2 years around Cape Town, before moving to the Margaret River in 2007. During the past 10 years he has been involved with some of the most progressive wines and wineries of the region. He began Tripe Iscariot in the 2014 vintage.

Moving away from the traditional Margaret River Chardonnay or Cabernet, this is a medium bodied red blend from hand-picked Syrah (81%) and Malbec (19%). He sources the fruit from specific sites in the Southern end of the region, specifically chosen for their longer growing season, cooler climate, vibrant acidity and the resulting intensely perfumed, premium wines.

All vines are at least 15 years old and well established on their own roots. All fruit is dry-grown and hand-picked.

Part of the harvest was fermented as whole-bunches, submerged under the remainder of the fruit, which was cold-crushed on top. After a two day cold-soak the fruit was warmed and fermentation began. After 10 days on skin the wine was basket pressed and allowed to finish fermentation in barrel. The wine was barrel aged for 10 months, during which the barrels underwent battonage every four weeks. The wine was then removed from barrel, clarified and bottled.

Dark perfumes of glazed plums, mulberries and liquorice give way to more subtle

tones of citrus blossom and freshly zested orange. Aromas of toffee and cracked allspice linger on the palate, elegantly finishing with plummy tannins. This wine is full of flavour, energy and vitality. You really can sense the winemaker in his attempt to squeeze every part of the grape to get the flavour profile he wanted.

Only 100 cases of this wine were produced and this is a winery to watch.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Can be cellared for 5-7 years. Decant for 20 minutes before drinking

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 ever wanted to try some “game” recipes (Rabbit etc, then this is the wine for it) Try also with chicken and even some anti pasto plates and some cheeses (Brie).



ABOUT THE SOMMELIER

Adrian Filuta - Sommelier at "The Paddington" part of the Merivale Group

Since moving to Australia, about 7 years ago, Adrian Filuta has been a sommelier on the Sydney wine scene in "hated" restaurants such as Quay and Est. From 2012 he has been with the Merivale Group, at Felix, Paddington and Fred's, working with extensive wine programs.

Adrian 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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Carménère is known for its deep colour, plush tannins and unique, spicy aromas and flavours. Carménère is a little different on the nose to most wines, making it one of the easiest of wines to pick in a blind tasting, a little like Marlborough Sauv Blanc. The winemaker of this wine has provided a great summary of the aromas and flavours of great Carménère. *"I purposefully choose and plant vineyards that provide a more vegetative / herbaceous note, more on the red capsicum side, also offering beetroot/ smoked meat characters. There is obviously more going on in the glass, but these are very good descriptors of the best Carmeneres from Chile"*. But, it is really on the palate where these wines shine. Plush, lush and vibrant, finishing with soft velvety tannins that make them a joy to drink with most red meats.

Spain continues to offer the best value in the world at the moment. The third wine Adrian has chosen is no exception. The **2009 Bodega Enguera Paradigma** is from Valencia in Eastern Spain. The great news about this wine, is that at almost 8 years of age it is drinking in the zone right now. Perfect for your next dinner party.

When I tasted this wine with Adrian, I was immediately impressed by the quality, elegance and sophistication. It has these lovely aged, mellow secondary characters, but it still packs a punch with its fruit and structure. It is made from the grape Variety Monastrell, which in Australia we call Mourvèdre. (This is the M, in our GSM blends - Grenache / Shiraz / Mourvèdre) It is really only in Spain that you get single variety Monastrell, and this example is a beauty. Bodega Enguera is a relatively new winery, founded in 1999 and based on the Estate model, meaning all of their wines are produced from vineyards they own. They now own 160 hectares, so whilst not being a large winery, they are certainly not a boutique operation.

Valencia is Spain's third largest city, situated on the Mediterranean and is known for its balmy climate, long white beaches, exuberant night life and the creation of Paella. The vineyards and wineries are slightly inland from the city, which in the past have been known for producing large quantities of indifferent bulk wines. But, as with other once, marginalized Spanish wine regions, a younger generations of growers and winemakers are keen to shed this image, by fully understanding their terroirs and what varieties are best suited to the region. Over the past 15 years there has been remarkable improvements in quality, with a growing interest in exploiting premier inland sites, which contain some higher-altitude old-vines. This wine is a prime example.

The vineyard is situated in the Alforins Valley, some 650 m above sea level.

The soils are littered with white limestone and a high proportion of sand, dramatically improving the drainage of the vineyard. The result is a wine distinguished by mineral overtones. Trust me, there is nothing generic or bulk about this Wine.

The fourth and last wine, is Adrian's "Aussie". The Margaret River is rightly regarded as one of the premium wine regions of Australia. They grow just three percent of Australia's total grape production, yet produce over 20 percent of our premium wine market. They also claim some of the best Cabernet and Chardonnay in Australia, but there is little challenge for a Sommelier to choose one of these wines, so the wine Adrian has chosen is a Syrah / Malbec blend: the **2014 Tripe Iscariot "Marrow" Syrah / Malbec**.

Nose to Tail - Berry to Stalk. I was not sure what this meant when I saw it on the label, but it certainly sounded very trendy and hip; dare I say almost Hipster. I have become slightly jaded by all these cool and trendy winemakers. In most cases I find their stories more interesting than the wines. This wine is not one of those; but he can certainly write a good story and yes he does have a pretty decent beard. From the Winemakers Website:

Tripe.Iscariot is an experiment in flavour, texture and style. Inspired by nose to tail eating, "berry to stalk" winemaking is the judicious use of skins, stalks, seeds, lees, whole-bunches and crushed fruit. The result being wines which represent the "whole beast", an approach to varieties and wine style which seeks to challenge the over-purified and homogenous industry standard. Nose to tail eating has always held a special place in my heart, and the concept is very much the same. Throw both ideas into the cauldron and you have tripe. Iscariot: "Berry to Stalk".

This is just a beautiful glass of wine. From the uber popular Margaret River, offering everything you want in a glass of wine. It all about Texture, Flavour and Quality.

Tripe Iscariot is the venture of South African winemaker Remi Guise, who has been based in the Margaret River for the past 10 years. He has been involved with some of the most progressive wines and wineries in the region and he started Tripe Iscariot in 2014.

So there are the latest 4 wines from Bullion, perfect as we head into the cooler months.

Matt , The Bullionaire