

the bullionaire

BULLION 17C

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Change is Good

You may have noticed something a little different with this delivery. Yes the wines are obviously different, but so is the box. After 6 Years we thought a change was in order and so we have produced what might be the thickest box ever made. This is important to us, as it helps prevent potential damage during delivery, but we really like the new simpler look and we love the quotes.

But back to the wines! Kim Bickley is the Sommelier this time and we love working with her. Kim is on maternity leave, which judging by her Instagram posts, has given her more time to drink and taste some sensational booze. When looking at the wines she has chosen, they are all elegant, sophisticated and polished, but more importantly they are meant to be drunk with your favourite friends and dishes. These are not big showy wines, but rather wines to savour, enjoy and discuss.

First up is an Australian white wine from the cool climate of Tumbarumba. Tumbarumba sounds like a pub band from the 1980's but in reality, is a cool climate region of NSW, in the foothills of the Snowy Mountains.

The alpine location of the region provides a very different environment to the normally warm and flat landscape of Australia. The elevation of the region reaches 842 metres and they focus on sparkling wines and aromatic white grape varieties. Kim has chosen a slightly left of field Austrian Grape variety; a Gruner Veltliner from one of the better winemakers in Australia. The **2017 Nick Spencer Gruner Veltliner**. Nick Spencer is a youngish winemaker who is generating a lot of buzz. He burst onto the Scene in 2009 when he picked up the Jimmy Watson Trophy, the Oscars of wine shows in this country, for the Eden Road, The Long Road Shiraz. Around this time he was also a Len Evans Tutorial Scholar and a finalist in the Young Gun awards.

So what is Gruner Veltliner, or "Gru Vee"? Gruner Veltliner is an indigenous grape variety to Austria, or as the Austrians often say, "No, we are not Australian!" This wine style has proved to be extremely popular on the wine lists around the world, as it is particularly food friendly, but also very easy to say. (It seems too obvious, but people like to order wines they can pronounce) Common descriptors include citrus and peach flavours with spicy notes of pepper and tobacco. They also have a dry crisp minerality making them a perfect match for modern Australian-Asian cuisine. In Australia it is still somewhat of a rarity, but plantings have begun to grow, mainly in high altitude cool climates. This is the first release of Gru Vee by Nick Spencer and it is a pretty special wine. It is a full flavoured with great structure and weight. Perfect with Asian foods or afternoon salads.



Spain continues to be a favourite of our Sommeliers and our customers as well. We will probably need to ask the sommeliers to take a break for a while, but when the wines are this good, we don't want to stop them. Kim has chosen a sensational wine from one of the oldest wineries in the Region of Rioja (Pronounced Ree-Oh-AA). The **2013 CVNE Crianza**. But first a little history on CVNE and Rioja.

C.V.N.E (always referred to as CUNE, pronounced Coo -nay) was founded in 1879 by the Real de Asua brothers (Raimondo and Eusebio) of Bilbao. The company is still run by a descendant of the Real de Asua brothers and is one of the largest and most respected wineries in the area. Rioja began its life as an outpost of the Bordeaux Wine trade. This makes more sense when you consider the widespread destruction of the vineyards of Bordeaux by Phylloxera in the late 1800's. (Phylloxera is a ravenous aphid that preys on the roots of European vines, destroying the crop and eventually the vine) The Bordeaux wine merchants needed to find alternative wine supplies to satisfy their customers, so they turned to Rioja in Spain, which had a direct train line to Bordeaux. (It is often the most mundane and simplest of things that makes the world turn.) The train station at Haro became the centre of Rioja and where most of the wineries based their operations, including CUNE.

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bullion CELLARS
SOMMELIER SELECTED AND DELIVERED

THE WINES

2017 NICK SPENCER GRUNER VELTLINER *Tumbarumba, NSW*

Gruner Veltliner is an Austrian grape variety that is finding a home in Australia. A favourite of sommeliers for their versatility and food friendliness. It requires a cooler climate, so in Australia think, Adelaide Hills, Canberra and Tumbarumba. It also has the coolest sounding nick name, which is "Gru Vee" baby.

The 2017 is Nick Spencer's first release of Gruner Veltliner and he has certainly hit the road running. It comes from the oldest vineyard in the Tumbarumba region, planted in 1993 at 650 above sea level. The cool temperatures and the old volcanic soils on this site make it an ideal location for this Austrian variety.

Nick's taken handpicked fruit and, pressed it to a mixture of stainless steel and older oak, then bottled it after two months on lees. (A mixture of 1000 litre Fourde, 500 litre New Oak Puncheon and the balance in Stainless Steel) Normally these wines see only stainless steel, but the extra barrel time and the short time on lees has amped up the texture of this typically crisp variety. This gentler but pronounced winemaking has paid dividends as you get the delicacy and minerality expected of this grape variety, but with a fuller mouthfeel and greater complexity.

A lovely delicate perfume of white flowers and lime. It's got crunch in the mouth but the edges feel well rounded and softened by the subtle oak handling. A sprinkle of white peppery spice on green apple, lime and pear flavours. It's slick, crisp, and mineral-charged. A lovely glass of wine.

FOOD MATCHINGS

Asian food, or Modern Australian seafood and white meat dishes. Plus a lovely wine to drink as an aperitif.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

You could safely cellar for 2-3 years, but this wine is best consumed within 12-18 months.



2013 CVNE CRIANZA, TEMPRANILLO *Rioja, Spain*

CVNE or CUNE — Pronounced Coo NEEY is winemaking royalty in the region of Rioja. CVNE (Compagna Vinicola del Norte de Espana) is one of the most renowned and historic bodegas in all of Spain. Founded in 1879 by the Real de Asua brothers, Eusebio and Raimundo, the company has been an integral part of Rioja during its ascendance in the world of fine wine. They have been able to meld the traditional with the modern and are consistently looking to improve their vineyards and their wines.

In fact CVNE were the first producers in Rioja to produce a Crianza style wine, a wine aged for at least two years, at least one of which, is in oak. This is their biggest selling wine and offers incredible value. It is a modern and fresh take on the Tempranillo based wines of Spain.

All CVNE wines are Tempranillo based (85%) with the balance a blend of Garnacha, Graciano and Mazuelo. These fill out the palate and add greater complexity and freshness.

The nose starts with notes of creamy oak which soon give way to aromas of ripe berries, blackcurrants and plums that are quite spicy and showy (revealing hints from both American and French oak). The palate is medium bodied, polished and soft, with light tannins and very well-integrated oak. It is easy to understand why this wine is so popular across the world. It combines Old World earthy goodness with New World-ish soft tannins and smooth texture. It is a seamless mid weight wine that offers the complexity and structure we love, but with the freshness and vitality that make you want to drink glass after glass.

FOOD MATCHINGS

Tempranillo pairs well with all types of food because of its savoury qualities. Spanish cuisine, which includes roasted vegetables and cured meats is a natural fit, but it will also work with other dishes like Lasagna and tomato based Italian dishes. Also perfect with Barbecue grilled-meats.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Decant for 10-15 minutes before serving. You could safely cellar this wine for the next 3-5 years.





2014 FATTORIA COLSANTO MONTEFALCO ROSSO *Umbria, Italy*

Umbria is the home to Sangiovese based red wines, but with the addition of the local grape variety Sagrantino. The DOC of Montefalco Rosso requires the blend to be comprised of 60-70% Sangiovese, 10-15% Sagrantino, and the remainder from other red grapes (typically Merlot).

The Fattoria Colsanto estate was established in 2001, in Bavegna, a locality within the Montefalco DOCG production area in the heart of Umbria. The original eighteenth century farmhouse is surrounded by 20 hectares of vineyards that boast 7500 vines per hectare of Sagrantino, Sangiovese and Merlot. They have a very modern winery, plus they boast 6 beautiful villas on the estate which can be rented out.

Their wines are defined by a rich deep colour, earthy complexity, dusty tannins and concentrated red-black fruits. It is a wine that is ready to drink now, but will benefit from short term cellaring. This Montefalco Rosso has a swagger, but it is moderated by bright tannins and an underlying freshness and minerality. This is a beautifully balanced wine that offers the complexity and structure you want, but it is not going to whack you around the head with too much flavour and oak. A lovely wine, with rich, complex layers of black cherry and spice, tied together with medium tannins.

The wine is aged for 15 months before bottling (70% oak Barrels — 30% Stainless Steel).

FOOD MATCHINGS

We like this wine with matured Cheeses, or a nice antipasto plate, or grilled red meats, think lamb / steak. A very food friendly wine that will match with most Italian foods, Break out your new Pizza oven. (Add some truffles to the Pizza if available, or Truffle oil, for a great match.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Decant for 30 minutes before serving. Can be safely cellared for the next 5-7 years.



2015 CLOS DES FEES - LES SORCERIES *Cotes du Roussillon, France*

Beginning in 1998, Clos Des Fees settled in Vingrau, on the high cool slopes of the northern edge of Roussillon. They recognised the quality potential of the cooler, higher sites of these magnificent limestone based vineyards, sitting well above the valley floors, where most producers work in easier and more fertile soils.

The wine is a blend of Syrah 50 %, Grenache 30 % and Carignan 20 % from the sensational 2015 vintage. The Grenache and Carignan are selected from old vines, between 40 and 80 years old, with the Shiraz coming from younger vines. These vineyards are mainly on limestone-clay soils. The grapes were picked by hand, with fermentation taking place in small stainless steel tanks. What is amazing about this wine is that it does not see any oak, and only minimal quantities of Sulphur dioxide added during ageing and bottling. Amazing, because oak is considered a prerequisite for quality red wine. But when you have vineyards at 80 years of age, and skilled winemaking, I guess not.

This is a really thought provoking wine. It is all about minerality and freshness. It has a laser like precision that opens into a fleshy, silky wine that is opulent and engaging. Aromas of black cherries and liquorice are intertwined with earthy qualities and some meatiness and spice. The palate is full bodied with finely structured tannins, explosive fruit flavours and a silky texture. I guess you have realised I really like this wine.

FOOD MATCHINGS

This elegant silky wine is perfect for long slow cooked roasts of pork or lamb that may even be a little bit fatty (shoulder of lamb and lamb shanks, for example). It will also match stews with dark, winey sauces too.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

This wine needs to be decanted for 20 minutes before drinking, and will improve in the cellar over the next 6-8 years.



ABOUT THE SOMMELIER



Kim Bickley is one of the top Sommeliers in the country, previously working at “Hatted” restaurants Glass Baserie and Black by Ezard. She decided to spend some time on the other side of the counter, working with one of the largest drinks distributor in Australia, and for the past 12 months has been on maternity leave. She remains an active committee member of Sommeliers Australia NSW chapter.

A CMS Certified Sommelier, who finished in the top eleven students who were certified by the Court of Master Sommeliers in Australia in 2008. Kim is also a wine show judge, a Len Evans and Sommeliers Australia Tutorial Scholar and was the first, of only two Australians in the International ‘Landmark Australia’ Tutorial 2010. She is also active in the education sector, heavily involved in the Wine and Spirit Education Trust. She is also the mother of Jackson.

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CVNE started their life as negotiant buying and selling other people’s wines, before they began to purchase vineyards and eventually morphing into an Estate based winery and one of the largest and most famous wineries of Spain. They now control, or own, over 500 acres of vines and are responsible for some of the best value and best quality wines in the region.

A common complaint of Rioja from 10-15 years ago, was that the wines were dull and over oaked, with any semblance of vitality and complexity drowned out by too much vanilla scented oak. This over oaking was a direct result of Rioja’s quality rating, which is determined by how long the wine spends in oak. So we have Joven (Young - less than 12 months) Crianza (2 Years) Reserva (Over 3 years) Gran Reserva (Over 5 years).

Regardless of the quality of the wine, if it spends 5 years in Oak, it can be called a Gran Reserva and you will be charged a premium. As a result, Rioja used to be awash with over oaked and simple wines that were outrageously expensive. Thankfully times have changed. This CVNE Crianza is a great example of the modern take on a Rioja Classic. It is their biggest selling wine and a favourite around the world. Lovely expressive cherry, red fruit aromas lead to a savoury mid weight palate with good acidity and a velvety smooth palate. CVNE also achieved a first, when in 2013 their 2004 CVNE Imperial Gran Reserva was voted No# 1 in Wine Spectator’s Top 100. The first Spanish wine to be awarded this result.

Next up Kim is taking us to Italy. We have not had an Italian wine for a while, so it is great to have another wine from this incredibly diverse part of the world. Wine is made in every part of Italy and it can take a while to get your head around the different regions and grapes. Like most of Europe, the region is the most important name on the label, but similar to Burgundy, the name of the winemaker is just as important. There are literally thousands of small wineries all making wine from the same grapes and regions. Sadly most of them are not equal. There is a lot very average wines produced, so thank heavens for our Sommeliers.

Umbria is located in the centre of Italy, next door to the very famous Tuscany, but largely ignored by the rest of the world. Whilst it may have flown under the radar for the rest of us, to Italians it is widely known, with most of the wines locally consumed. The Italians know a good wine when they taste one. These are Sangiovese based wines with the indigenous grape variety Sagrantino being the star “Side-Kick”. The wine Kim has chosen is the **2014 Fattoria Colsanto Montefalco Rosso**, a blend of Sangiovese and Sagrantino. Fattoria Colsanto is located in the commune of Bevagna

(Umbria) in the DOCG of Montefalco and is a modern winery with 20 hectares under vine. This is medium to full-bodied wine with intense red fruit flavours, soft tannins and a long finish. Like all the wines in this selection, it is all about freshness and vitality. (A blend of 75% Sangiovese and 25% Sagrantino).

The last wine is from the Languedoc Roussillon region, the engine room of France and responsible for the majority of their everyday drinking wine. A lot of this is cheap and cheerful, but over the past 10-20 years quality minded producers have moved in taking over older, higher altitude vineyards. Clos des Fées is one of these new producers. The wine Kim has chosen is the **2015 Clos Des Fees - Les Sorcieres**. Members who have been with us for a while, will remember this wine from a pack we sent out in 2014. It has been a favourite of ours and Kim wanted to revisit the sensational 2015 vintage. We are starting to see some of the wines from this stellar European vintage, with Southern France being a standout. (Keep an eye out for the 2015 Wines from the Cote Du Rhone and Chateaneuf-du-pape – these are wines to fill your cellar and laydown for a few years.)

Hervé Bizeul, the owner and winemaker, is a former sommelier, restaurateur and wine critic, who left the boulevards of Paris for the wild tracts of Roussillon in 1998. Almost 20 years on, his winery is the talk of the region and the Restaurants of Paris. They have gradually amassed dozens of tiny plots, of which many are magnificent mature vineyards spread throughout these cooler slopes on limestone based soils.

This is a blend of Grenache, Syrah and Carignan and it is just a seamless elegant, beautiful glass of wine. It never fails to surprise us, but the wines we really like often have a splash of Carignan in the blend, be they from Southern France or Eastern Spain. There is a juiciness and fleshiness which is so prominent in these wines, making them a delight to drink. The Grenache and Carignan for this wine, are sourced from old vines – 40-80 years. A rarity for a wine at this price.

So there you have our latest selection, wines to savour and enjoy with freshness, elegance and vitality. **Change definitely is Good!**

Matt, The Bullionaire.



Stu Freeman and Matt Eagan