



the bullionaire

BULLION 200

Australian Wines are all the Rage!

At Bullion Cellars we love Australian wine, but our focus will always remain on Imported wines. However, what we strive to offer is the best example of a regional style, be that from McLaren Vale or Rioja. We want to offer our customers something new and provide a sense of excitement and enjoyment on discovering a great wine.

Over the past 10 years or so we have found good Aussie wines a little harder to find in the retail landscape. This is largely due to the explosion of "Private Label" wines which the supermarket wine retailers are offering. You may be surprised to know that 30-40% of all the wines you see in a place like Dan Murphy's are labels which they own. This has forced most of the smaller wineries to focus on the restaurant scene and their own cellar doors. Sure, it is easy to buy Penfolds and Yalumba from the large retailers, but not so much the up and coming producers. This is where Matt Dunne has come into his own with this current selection of three Aussie Reds.

Matt Dunne has left the Aria Group where he was the head sommelier for a long time, moving to a Wine Ambassador role for one of the larger wine wholesalers. He is getting more involved in the education, training and sales side of things and in talking to him, really enjoying the change of pace and spending more time with his family. When we tasted through a selection of wines on a Saturday afternoon, it was these three Australian reds that really stood out. A Pinot Noir, a Shiraz/Syrah and a Cabernet Franc. All great wines, but all offering something a little different and unexpected. It was a pretty nice way to spend a Saturday morning by the way, even if we did spit most of the wines out, as I did have to drive home.

The first wine is a Syrah from one of the great Pinot Noir Producers in the Mornington Peninsula. The first indication something is a little different is the spelling of Syrah. You see Australian producers who are trying to differentiate from the producers and styles of the warmer regions, think Barossa and McLaren Vale, will use the French spelling of the grape variety. This is the very same reason NZ producers use this spelling as well. It is an indication the rich, ripe, oaky flavours will not be at the forefront. In some cases, these wines can be a little austere and savory, but the good producers and good wines tend to marry the balance and produce exciting wines. The **2018 Yabby Lake Vineyard Syrah** is one such wine.

When the Yabby Lake vineyard was first planted around 20 years ago, the brightest minds were brought in to map the soil and put the right vines in the right places. No expense was spared. Tom Carson joined the team in 2008, with a very impressive winemaking career behind him.



Yabby Lake Vineyard

Tom had worked in the Clare Valley, Yarra Valley, Burgundy and Champagne and was named International Winemaker of the Year at the International Wine & Spirit competition in London, also becoming the youngest chairman of Australia's National Wine Show. Through his skill and dedication Yabby Lake is now at the forefront of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay production in Australia. One of Carson's biggest moments was winning the Jimmy Watson Trophy with his 2012 Block 1 Pinot Noir, the first ever Pinot Noir to win this coveted award. However, it is not Pinot Noir we are talking about, for whilst they are fantastic, they are a little too expensive to go into one of our packs, rather it is their Single Vineyard Syrah. This wine is medium bodied beautifully perfumed and spicy. It is concentrated, yet silky and smooth with bright red fruit characters, combining a wonderful elegance and depth. Stored carefully, this wine will age gracefully for another ten years.

The Second wine from Matt is a Pinot Noir from the very on trend Tasmania; the **2019 Hughes & Hughes Pinot Noir**. Tasmania is red hot right now, for the very reason it is so cool. As winemakers deal with climate change, and temperatures getting warmer and warmer and picking dates for the fruit getting earlier and earlier, they are looking for cooler regions and Tasmania is where most are now heading. It also helps that consumers are turning towards fresher, elegant styles of wines, with Pinot Noir at the forefront of this trend. So, Tasmania is shining, taking advantage of the incredible demand for Pinot Noir and cool climate white wines, think Chardonnay, Riesling and Pinot Gris, and that is before we even mention their Sparkling Wines.

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the wines



2018 INAMA VULCAIA SAUVIGNON IGT VENETO *Northern Italy*

During the 1960s Giuseppe Inama, the estate's founder, began purchasing small plots of vineyards in the heart of the Soave Classico zone. His idea was to assemble the best vineyards of old-vine Garganega, and fashion wines capable of restoring Soave's reputation. Today the estate is managed by Giuseppe's son Stefano and his three grandsons Matteo, Luca and Alessio. In 1991 they began experimenting with the Sauvignon Blanc grape variety and have been releasing exciting wines every year since. It has the humble IGT classification, as they are not permitted to use the Soave name, but if you like whites with a bit of texture, complexity and character, then you will love this wine.

The vines are now nearly 20 years old, grown on the volcanic soil which is a feature of the region. After destalking and crushing the fruit was pressed and transferred to stainless steel vats for fermentation. The wine undergoes malolactic fermentation, giving it an added level of complexity and palate weight.

It has an intense yellow colour, with a nose of citrus and apples, with a prominent mineral edge. These mineral characters carry over to a full-bodied palate and a pretty sensational glass of white wine, and not a gooseberry in sight!

FOOD MATCHINGS

Try with most grilled seafood, but also can handle a dish with a little spice. Think Thai takeaway, or simply as wine to drink by itself on your deck, or a deck of a boat.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Designed for early drinking, you could cellar this wine for another 2-3 years, but it is so enjoyable now, so why wait.



2018 THE OTHER WINE CO. CABERNET FRANC *Kangaroo Island, South Australia*

This is a separate project by Shaw + Smith in the Adelaide Hills, their mission is to make good, early-drinking wine from grapes and regions separate from their more traditional flag-bearers. However, don't confuse these wines for being simple or one dimensional. They are anything but. For each wine they ask; "Are we passionate about this place? Does this grape excite us? Can we have fun with it?" The answer to all these questions was yes for this Cabernet Franc from Kangaroo Island.

The aromatics really hit you as soon as you open the bottle. It is dark and brooding, but the nose is fresh and inviting. Juicy black fruits think blackcurrants are combined with floral, violet notes, with a spicy chocolaty, dried herb type finish. I look for complexity in a wine, and this wine has it in spades. If you like Cabernet Sauvignon you will love this wine, as it offers something a little different and more!

This is the second vintage of this wine, and likely to be the last for a while, as the vineyard was severely damaged in the Bushfires of 2020. A great Shame.

FOOD MATCHINGS

Try it with roast chicken, pork, roasted or grilled, beef, duck, sausage, lamb, veal, hearty fish dishes and even hard or soft cheese. A very well-rounded wine that matches a wide variety of dishes.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

This wine really needs to be breathe. It gets better as it sits in the glass, so decant for 25 minutes before serving and it can be safely cellared for another 5-8 years.



2019 HUGHES AND HUGHES PINOT NOIR *Tasmania*

Brothers Matthew and Jonathan Hughes established the Mewstone Vineyard in 2011 on the banks of Tasmania's D'Entrecasteaux Channel in the tiny hamlet of Flowerpot. The small, boutique vineyard is a former cherry orchard, with planting to reach a maximum of just 3.5 hectares. The Hughes & Hughes range of wines is what they are concentrating on as this vineyard gains a bit of age and brings together fruit sourced from around Tasmania, with the aim of producing wines that are high on quality, natural acidity and drinkability.

Fruit for this wine was sourced from the D'Entrecasteaux Channel and the Coal River, Derwent and Huon Valleys. Each batch was individually fermented with the R71 yeast, then held on skins for 18-22 days before being pressed to oak. In total it has 9% whole bunch, mainly from a small carbonic ferment designed to be blended into the whole. It was matured for four months on lees while undergoing MLF and bottled on the 13th September.

This wine has a beautiful ruby hue. There's bright red fruits and earthy undertones. The tannins are fine and highlight the earth and spice balanced by length and intensity and makes a very versatile wine. Only 6540 bottles were produced without fining.

FOOD MATCHINGS

This fruitier version makes a great match with salmon or other fatty fishes, roasted chicken or tomato-based pasta dishes.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Decant the wine for 15 minutes before drinking. This wine can be safely cellared for the next 3-5 years



2018 YABBY LAKE VINEYARD SYRAH *Mornington Peninsula*

The Yabby Lake Vineyard was established by the Kirby family in 1998, in Tuerong, which is in the northern end of the Mornington Peninsula. Over the past decade, the vineyard has built a reputation for Chardonnay and Pinot Noir of great purity and character under its Single Vineyard and Single Block labels.

Led by winemaker Tom Carson, the Yabby Lake philosophy is to craft wines that speak of their site and the season in which they were grown. But it is not Pinot Noir we have chosen but their Syrah. The 2018 season was characterised by a warm and extended summer. The wines are intensely flavoured, yet poised and balanced, ensuring their longevity.

The fruit was handpicked and gently de-stemmed into traditional oak open fermenters (a small portion of whole bunches 10%). After 10-14 days on skins, the wine was pressed into tight grain 500L French oak puncheons for malolactic fermentation and maturation. The wine remained in oak for 11 months and was racked once during maturation.

A perfumed and spicy Syrah, medium-bodied in style. The palate is concentrated and silky, with finely structured tannins, bright fruit characters, wonderful elegance and depth.

FOOD MATCHINGS

Works well with grilled beef, lamb and other roasted or braised meats, plus BBQ Chicken. Peking Duck is also a great match, as the floral nature of the wine, lends itself to these subtle Asian styles. Try with Thai take away as well. A very versatile wine.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Decant for 20 minutes before serving. Stored carefully, this wine will age gracefully for ten years.

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Hughes & Hughes is a new winery that was named Best New Winery in 2019 by James Halliday. It is a story of two brothers who both have economics degrees. One took the more traditional path working for Macquarie Bank, JP Morgan and Morgan Stanley. The other decided a life in wine was more interesting, if less financially secure. He worked a string of vintages in both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres, working for several high-profile wineries, including Felton Road in Central Otago. Fast forward 15 years and the brothers joined forces, planting a vineyard in their home state of Tasmania and their success and their wines are spectacular.

The third wine also has a story to tell, The **Other Wine Co. Cabernet Franc 2019** from Kangaroo Island. Kangaroo Island was in the news earlier this year when nearly half of the Island was burnt during the terrible bushfire season of 2019/2020. The Vineyard where this wine was sourced was also damaged, so we won't be seeing any wine from 2020 or probably 2021 for that matter, so I was happy we could support this region a little. The Other Wine Company is a label owned by the Adelaide Hills Shaw and Smith and it was created in 2015 to focus on wines and regions that are a little left of centre. The "Other" allows the winemaking team to play with varieties and regions which don't really fit the Shaw and Smith style, and the goal is to present wines that are of a place and offer drinkability, freshness and quality.

Cabernet Franc is the other Cabernet, so it makes a lot of sense to be part of this range. It is mainly used as a blend component and marginalised to the back label, where it is listed as part of a "Bordeaux Blend". A Bordeaux blend is so called, for the 5 grape varieties which can be used to make the red wines of Bordeaux. The main varieties are Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, the rest being Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot and Malbec. (The 6th can sometimes be a little of Carmenera.) The only region focusing on this variety is the Loire Valley of France and the sub regions of Chinon, Anjou, Bourgueil, and Saumur-Champigny. It is particularly unusual to find a 100% Cabernet Franc in Australia and certainly not one as good as this.

The aromatics hit you as soon as you open the bottle and you are initially drawn to the comparison of a medium bodied Cabernet Sauvignon, but the more you smell the wine and the moment you drink it, you notice this is something a little different. You then realise you are drinking a Cabernet Franc. It is quite dark and brooding, with juicy black and purple fruits combining quite floral and violet notes. It is a joy to drink, with the continuing theme of freshness and vitality

coming to the forefront. A lovely bottle of wine, even if there is a sad ending to the tale.

We only have two rules with our Sommeliers; one you must choose three red wines and one white wine and two, you can never choose a Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc. I have tried a few wines from Marlborough in the past 12 months which have caused me to think before I spit them out in a tasting, but I am still not a massive fan of this style. I understand the popularity, it is just not a good fit for our Sommeliers or me. Plus, why would you want a Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc from Bullion, when you can get them from literally anywhere else. They are certainly not hard to find.

So, you can imagine my apprehension when Matt placed a Sauvignon Blanc from Italy in front of me. Now I love the wines from the French regions of Sancerre and Pouilly Fume, where they produce a more mineral based and complex wine from Sauvignon Blanc, but I had not thought Italy had jumped on the bandwagon. This wine is why we work with Sommeliers, as we get to discover great wines like the **2018 Inama Vulcaia Sauvignon from Veneto in Northern Italy**.

Soave in North Western Italy is a famous white wine from the region of Veneto. Primarily sourced from the Garganega grape variety it makes a wine described as being quite textural, well rounded with a spicy palate featuring pear and lime flavours. This wine is not a Soave, but being from the same region, it is hard not to escape the style.

Inama first planted Sauvignon Blanc in 1991 in this region, but due to the DOCG regulations, they cannot place the Soave name on the label. There is an interesting debate whether the region dominates the wine style, or whether the grape variety is more important. I think the region wins here, as there really is a Soave slant to this wine, offering more than what most Australian's would expect from Sauvignon Blanc. But this is what makes this wine so interesting, as I don't want to taste a Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc from Italy.

So, what can you expect; minerality with a nose of citrus and apple. Melons then explode on the palate, with guess what, more minerality. The wine is quite full bodied with a little creaminess at the end of the palate. A great wine and an example of why there is always something new to discover in the world of wine.

Thanks, Matt, for the Selection. I really enjoyed these wines and can't wait to enjoy them over the next few months and years.

Matt, The Bullionaire

About the Sommelier

Matt Dunne

Matt has recently joined Joval Wine Group as Group Wine Ambassador, focusing on Imports, Wine Education and Plumm Glassware. Matt completed the Court of Master's Sommeliers Certified Sommelier Examination in 2009 and is an active wine show judge across Australia. In 2015 he was awarded a scholarship to the prestigious Len Evans Tutorial held annually in the Hunter Valley which legendary wine writer James Halliday refers to as the 'most exclusive wine school in the world'. Matt was a regular host for the Solotel Hospitality events program across all venues when he was in his previous role of Group Sommelier. Matt is an experienced as a keynote speaker, educator and has a fresh and approachable take on wine. Matt was featured as one of the NSW wine judges on the TV series called 'Battle of Vines' on the Food Network in June 2018.

