



the bullionaire

BULLION 21C

Springing in the Wines ...

Well lock downs and the Delta Variant seem to be dominating the Australian landscape at the moment. I think these issues will be with us for a while. At least while I begin writing this newsletter, we had the Olympics and I was drinking some great wines. How good was the swimming, by the way! Not sure what will happen in the next few months, but I think we will all be spending a bit of time at home, which is why I am overjoyed to show you the selection of wines Matt Dunne has chosen. There is a strong Tasman slant with two Aussie wines and one Kiwi selection shining through, with the fourth a lovely Italian red. As we head out of winter and into the warmer months, he has chosen wines that are more medium than full bodied, but wines that pack a punch and over deliver on flavour and complexity. Complexity and structure are what we look for in great wines, and the four wines Matt has chosen cover all the bases.

First, we start with a Chardonnay from New Zealand and a winery that is regarded as one of the top wineries in the country and the world. It is a little like Penfolds, only much younger. Craggy Range was founded by a US born, QLD based businessman in Waste Management (No, nothing like Tony Soprano) who wanted to create something special in NZ. He looked to the Hawkes Bay Area on the East Coast of the North Island, and what he has created has to be seen to be believed. I visited this winery a few years back and I still consider it as one of the most beautiful winery sites I have ever seen. (Do yourself a favour and google the winery). No expense has been spared and he partnered with the best of the best. If you want, you can stay on the site and eat at the five-star restaurant. What they don't really highlight is the vines around the winery are purely for show, not going into any bottle bearing the Craggy Range label, but they source their fruit from some of the best winemaking regions of the North Island (Hawkes Bay / The Gimblett Gravells and Martinborough).



Craggy Range Winery

These regions are all about Chardonnay/Cabernet/Shiraz and Pinot Noir. But it is the Hawkes Bay Chardonnay that Matt has chosen.

The **2020 Craggy Range Kidnappers Chardonnay Hawkes Bay**. The Hawkes Bay is considered one of the warmest regions of NZ and for a long time has been the holiday destination of the Well Heeled of Wellington and Auckland. The Gimblett Gravells is a sub region of Hawkes Bay and in the past 20 years has placed itself on the world map for its stunning Cabernet Blends and Syrah based wines. The wider Hawkes Bay area however is all about Chardonnay. Their new Aussie Winemaker Julian Grounds seems to be adding another level to this world class estate. In New Zealand the Chardonnay style has never really gone away from the broader oakier style, but whereas this wine style can be a little clumsy, the delicate touch of Julian and the incredible vineyard and winery resources at his disposal have created a sensational wine. Medium to full bodied, with plenty of flavour but balanced with elegance and structure. If you like Chardonnay you will love this wine.

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the wines



2019 BRUNO ROCCA TRIFOLE DOLCETTO D 'ALBA *Piedmont, Italy*

The Rocca Family have been making wines in the Barbaresco region of Piedmont since 1834. However, it was not until 1978 that they started to make wine under their own label. From this moment on, they have grown to become one of the best producers of Barbaresco, focusing on great vineyards of the area, growing Nebbiolo, Dolcetto and Barbera. The latest generation is now in charge and they are taking the wines in a slightly different direction, tempering the “modern” style of the past 30 years (small new oak and rich powerful wines) with more of the traditional style, longer slower fermentations and less of the small oak, in favour of larger, older oak. Whilst their reputation is based on their stellar wines of Nebbiolo and Barbaresco, their other wines from Dolcetto and Barbera always offer superb expressions of these lovely wines

Dolcetto d 'Alba is a DOC classification that ensures only the Dolcetto grape variety is used in a defined region around the village of Barbaresco.

It has a deep dark red colour with bright purple red hues. Dark cherry aromas mix with liquorice, fresh herbs, earth and spicy characters. This wine is medium to full bodied with a vibrant, youthful feel showing dark cherry flavours intermingled with fresh herbs and spices. Bright acidity finishes off the palate creating a great mouthfeel and an added level of complexity that I look for in a wine.

FOOD MATCHINGS

One of Italy's classic food wines that's best with richer, darker meats and vegetable dishes with roasted tomatoes, eggplant, and garlic.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Decant for 20 minutes, can be safely cellared for 3-5 years.



APHELION CONFLUENCE 2020 GRENACHE *McLaren Vale, South Australia*

Aphelion is a small husband and wife winery that began its life with a small parcel of Grenache in 2017 and from there they have never looked back. They produce several wines in tiny volumes and they are best known for their Grenache. Only 260 dozen were produced of this wine. Grenache can be made in a variety of styles, with Aphelion choosing to go the medium bodied style, with strong Pinot Tendencies. The wine does not taste like a Pinot, but is has a similar mouthfeel and palate weight, just a little more tannins and structure.

It is handpicked from 85-year-old bush vines from a single vineyard in the highest point of the Blewitt Springs district of McLaren Vale. A single ferment which contained 55% destemmed whole berries and 45% whole bunches, a typical Pinot Noir winemaking technique. The majority free run juice with a small percentage of light pressings was then sent to a single 2,400L French oak barrel for ten months before bottling. This is a complex, aromatic and very food friendly wine that evolves in your glass.

Vibrant red and purple hues with raspberry, spicy and liquorice aromatics jumping out of the glass. The palate shows nice length and complexity without being heavy or cloying. A wine of great balance and just a joy to drink.

FOOD MATCHINGS

Dark meats should be sought out and more specifically pan seared duck will match the spice and body of the wine well. Great with cheese, especially a top-quality Camembert or washed rind, which complements the wine's flavours and won't dominate its delicate structure.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Decant this wine for 20-30 minutes before drinking. Can be safely cellared for another 7-10 years.



2018 HEAD THE CONTRARIAN SHIRAZ

Alex Head came into the wine industry with a degree in biochemistry and a passion for the wines of the Northern Rhone, especially the Shiraz based wines of the Cote Rotie. He gained experience in fine wine retail stores, wholesalers, importers and an auction house, followed by vintages at wineries he particularly admired: Tyrrell's, Torbreck, Laughing Jack and Cirillo Estate. Head Wines was started in 2006 focusing on single site Rhone Varietals from the Barossa and Eden Valleys. Each Head wine shows a distinctive house style, of powerful fruit weight balanced by elegance, freshness and finesse. Yields are low, grapes are handpicked, ferments use indigenous yeasts with some retention of stems in the ferment and maturation is in larger format oak barrels. Minimal Sulphur is used, and bottling is without fining or filtration. What this all means is Head Wines are providing high quality Barossa style wines with a very European slant, favouring elegance, complexity and flavour over just power and excessive oak and alcohol. His wines are in high demand and is one of the rising stars of the Australian Wine industry.

Barossa Valley, South Australia

Sourced from the Flaxman vineyard at 480m elevation. This is a 35-year-old vineyard that Alex believes develops flavours at lower than usual alcohol levels and shows nice ripeness in the stems. He uses 50% whole bunches in the ferment (providing structure and savouriness) and the wine matures for 12 months on fine lees in larger natural French oak Barrels.

This wine is gloriously rich and supple. Medium bodied with a velvety mouthfeel of dried herbs, spice, sweet dark fruits and chocolate.

FOOD MATCHINGS

You need to think about Red meats here. Roasted or BBQ' d, all you need to do is choose a top-quality cut, cook to medium rare and let the wine and protein weave their magic together.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Decant for 20 minutes. Can be safely cellared for another 5-8 years.



2020 CRAGGY RANGE KIDNAPPERS CHARDONNAY *Hawkes Bay, New Zealand*

Founded in 1998 by the Peabody family by way of the US / QLD and now Hawkes Bay. From the very beginning their goal was to be one of the top wine estates of the world, and by any judgement they have achieved this goal. No expense has been spared in the vineyard or winery and the wines are exceptional. Their flagship wines can be seen in the top restaurants of the world and all their wines show a level of complexity and class that reminds me of Penfolds. There is a halo around all their wines that provides an added level of excitement whenever you are about to open one of their wines. As I have reported, their winery is in one of the most beautiful locations I have ever seen.

This Chardonnay is sourced from their Te Awanga Vineyard near Cape Kidnappers in the Hawkes Bay. (hence the name). The winemakers are striving for a lighted oaked "Chablis" style and I think they have nailed it.

There is a richness of fruit that dominates the wine, with oak to support the flavours but not dominate. You get plenty of white peaches and melons, balanced by a pithy grapefruit texture, with an every so subtle almond flavour. Excellent acidity and freshness makes this a great wine to match with most seafoods, or to drink by itself on a warm afternoon. The wine was matured in a mixture of older oak and stainless steel.

FOOD MATCHINGS

Most seafoods or subtle Asian dishes - (not too spicy).

CELLARING POTENTIAL

This is a drink now style. But can be cellared for the next 2-3 years.

About the Sommelier



Matt Dunne

Matt has 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 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".

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The first red is the **2018 Head The Contrarian Shiraz Barossa Valley**. The Contrarian name kind of gives it away. This is not a normal style from the Barossa and why I consider this one of the better wines I have tasted this year. It is elegant, powerful, flavoursome and delicious. In a few short years, Head Wines has become one of the rising stars of the Australian wine industry making a different style of Barossa wine. Firstly, they are based in the Eden Valley of the Barossa which is the higher, cooler part of the Barossa and second the owner is looking to the Northern Rhone Cote Rotie for his inspiration. This wine is the Pinot Noir for the Barossa (sort of). They use Whole Bunch Fermentation and larger, older, neutral oak for maturation. The result is a medium bodied wine packed full of flavor which is distinctly Shiraz in profile, dark berry fruits with spicy overtones, but it has this elegance and dare I say European style on how it drinks. Both Matt Dunne and I love this wine and I am sure you will too.

The next red is a Grenache from McLaren Vale. The **2020 Aphelion Confluence Grenache**. Grenache is the most widely planted grape variety in the world, but in Australia it is a secondary wine behind Shiraz, Cabernet and Pinot. However, if I have a favourite variety, it is Grenache in all its glory from the South of France to South Australia to North Eastern Spain. Grenache is made in a wide variety of styles from full bodied monsters to light and delicate styles. It is the latter style that Matt has chosen.

A recent trend of the past 15 years in South Australia is for their Grenache to be made in a lighter bodied style. This kind of makes sense when you realise that most winemakers love Pinot Noir, yet South Australia is too warm to grow Pinot, except for the Adelaide Hills. So, what do winemakers do who love Pinot Noir, but cannot make it? Well they take Grenache and make it in a Burgundian / Pinot style. Lots of Whole bunch fermentation, aging in larger older oak and shorter maturation periods. The results are very flavoursome wines that are lighter bodied and just delicious. This wine from Aphelion is made from 85-year-old bush vines and it has level

of complexity that was unexpected but thoroughly enjoyed. It has plenty of flavour and structure and despite its mid weight, had a sensational mouth feel through the palate.

We have had a few Italian wines in the past few selections which makes sense. There are literally hundreds of wine styles from all the different regions up and down the boot of Italy. There are a few regions that have developed more of a reputation outside of Italy, with Tuscany and Piedmont leading the way. Tuscany is all about Sangiovese, Chianti and Super Tuscan. Piedmont is all about Nebbiolo and Barolo. However, Piedmont is more than this, and Matt has chosen a great Dolcetto D 'Alba. The **2019 Bruno Rocca Trifole Dolcetto d'Alba**. Dolcetto is the name of the grape variety and it ripens a month earlier than Nebbiolo and is made in a full-bodied rich style that is one of the more versatile food friendly wines from Italy. The wine is sourced from vineyards around the Barbaresco village from a producer that has long links to this famous wine region. An inky dark wine with strong cherry and liquorice flavours that is just a joy to drink.

So, there you go, four great wines as we head into more COVID uncertainty.

Please enjoy and stay safe! **Matt The Bullionaire**



Stu Freeman and Matt Eagan, The Bullion Cellars Team