



# the bullionaire

BULLION 23A

## Greetings wine lovers...



It's time for another edition of our Wine-d Up newsletter, where we take a humorous look at some of the finest (and not so fine) wines available. Today, we're uncorking four unique wines that are sure to tickle your taste buds and your funny bone.

First up, we have the 2019 Domaine De L'Espigouette Vacqueyras. Try saying that five times fast after a few glasses! This French red wine is bold and full-bodied, with notes of black cherry, plum, and a hint of spice. It's perfect for sipping with a baguette and some cheese, or for making up ridiculous names for it (our personal favourite is "Vacqueyras-lypso").

Next, we have the 2016 Cantina Boffa Barbera D'Alba. This Italian red wine is smooth and fruity, with hints of raspberry and blackberry. It's the perfect wine to pair with a plate of spaghetti or to pretend you're in The Godfather while sipping it. Just be careful not to spill any on your suit.

Moving on to Spain, we have the 2016 Abtole Rioja Reserva. This rich and complex red wine has notes of blackberry, vanilla, and oak. It's perfect for sipping while discussing the finer things in life, like art, philosophy, or why your ex won't text you back. Just don't let it go to your head or you might end up like one of those Spanish bulls chasing after a red flag.

Last but not least, we have the 2022 CRFT Gruner Veltliner Adelaide Hills. This Australian white wine is crisp and refreshing, with notes of lime, green apple, and a touch of honey. It's perfect for sipping on a hot summer day or for making up ridiculous names for it (our personal favourite is "Gruner-vator: Rise of the Vineyards").

Well, that's all for now wine lovers. We hope you've enjoyed this edition of Wine-d Up and that you'll raise a glass to the absurdity of it all. Cheers.

Well, that was an interesting experiment. I have been reading a bit about Chat GPT, the new open AI program and how it can write an essay or carry out projects for you. I thought it would be fun to see how it would handle a Bullionaire Newsletter. So I punched in the 4 wines and asked it to write me a funny newsletter. I have to be honest I was expecting a little more, but I guess it did the job and it is kind of funny. So let's see if I can do a little better. Or is this the Chat GPT section and the above is my writing. I can see how you could quickly head down an existential; slippery slope with this stuff.

Kim Bickley is joining us again and as always she has chosen some beautiful wines. There is a little bit of repetition on two of the wines from the previous selection but we could just not pass up on the quality and bottle age of these wines from Kim. We were also able to negotiate some great pricing as we took the last of the stocks available in the country.

The first selection is the white wine. The **2022 CRFT KI Gruner Veltliner** Adelaide Hills. CRFT, pronounced Craft is a relatively new venture which began in 2013 by two life and business partners with plenty of winemaking experience behind them. NZ-born Frewin Ries and Barossa-born Candice Helbig. Frewin's experience includes Cloudy Bay and the iconic US, Sonoma Pinot Noir producer Williams Selyem, amongst a number of other wineries. Candice is a 6th-generation Barossan, gaining her experience at Hardy's then onto Boar's Rock and Mollydooker. CRFT sources fruit from seven vineyards across the Adelaide Hills, Barossa Valley and Eden Valley, with just two to three tonnes picked from each block and produced in small batches of about 2,000 bottles. They have developed quite a reputation for Gruner Veltliner, as they produce 4 different wines from 4 different vineyards, something no other winery in Australia is offering.

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# the wines



## 2019 DOMAINE DE L'ESPIGOUETTE VACQUEYRAS *Cote Du Rhone, France*

**80% Grenache, 15% Syrah and 5% Mourvèdre**

Based in Sablet, Domaine de l'Espigouette has been in the hands of the Latour family for four generations. Now run by Bernard Latour and sons, their wines offer powerful expressions of the differing terroirs of their vineyards and surrounding areas. Latour's grandfather was one of the first to plant Syrah in the Vacqueyras in the 1960s, where this wine has been sourced.

Deep dark red with purple hues. There is an explosion of black fruits and herbs reminiscent of the local garrigue. (Think rosemary, thyme etc) Intense black cherry and blackberry on the palate sweetened by a touch of vanilla and more dried herbs. Powerful and well-structured with softly coated tannins and balancing acidity. This is a complex and structured wine that I cannot get enough of. Extremely high quality!

### **FOOD MATCHINGS**

Red meats of most kinds, but especially a leg of lamb with crunchy vegetables and nicely roasted potatoes. Spices will not frighten this wine.

### **CELLARING POTENTIAL**

Decant for 20-30 minutes, can be safely cellared for the next 4-7 years.



## 2016 CANTINA BOFFA "BUSCHET" BARBERA D'ALBA *Italy*

This small but progressive winery is located in the heart of Barbaresco, just a stone's throw from the famous Barbaresco Tower, with stunning views over the surrounding hillsides and their beautiful terraced vineyards. It also happens to be next door to one of the most famous wine estates in the World- Gaja. They only have a total vineyard area of 4 hectares, so production is extremely limited. The viticulture and winemaking is looked after by Carlo Boffa, whilst his wife Laura takes care of the running of the business. They specialise in the great reds of the region – Nebbiolo, Barbera and Dolcetto, The wine cellar utilises the most modern technology, whereas the winemaking itself remains resolutely traditional.

There is Barbera and then there is Barbera, as it is the most planted variety in Piedmont, accounting for nearly 50% of all red wine production. This however is serious stuff, rich, elegant and beautifully perfumed. Hailing from the prestigious single vineyard site of 'Buschet'. Whilst the fermentation takes place in temperature controlled stainless tanks, it is then decanted into Slavonian oak casks where it is aged for 12 months before release. It has a ruby red colour with violet hues and is an elegant wine that emphasises ripe blackberry and stewed cherry fruit flavours, with hints of spice and very smooth tannins

Although we usually recommend most wines from this region to be enjoyed with food, the inherent smoothness of this wine means it can be enjoyed equally on its own.

### **FOOD MATCHINGS**

If you are feeling adventurous try with Pappardelle with hare sauce, slow-cooked ragu' or wild boar sausages with truffle oil. Failing that drink with some sort of cheese that is not for the faint-hearted.

### **CELLARING POTENTIAL**

The great thing about this wine is the age, with almost 7 years under its belt it is drinking really well right now. But it can be safely cellared for another 3-4 years.



## 2016 ABTOLE RIOJA RESERVA TEMPRANILLO *Rioja, Spain*

Rioja is all about Tempranillo and it delivers the greatest wines from this diverse, large and very arid environment. Rioja is regarded by many as Spain's top wine region and it is certainly the most famous. The vineyards follow along the route of the Ebro River for roughly 100 km between the towns of Haro and Alfaro, with a vineyard area of over 64,215 hectares, 91 % of which is planted with red grape varieties.

Abtole is made by Bodegas Marques de Reinoso from vineyards planted in the Rioja Baja subregion. It was fermented in stainless steel, before being transferred to age in a mix of French and American oak barriques for 24 months. Expect a totally opaque, black dark red colour with a dark red hues. Prominent liquorice notes show excellent intensity out of the glass with ripe blackberry, vanillin oak, earthy mocha and spicy aromas. Medium to full in body with a plush feel, the palate is generously endowed with rich liquorice, black raspberry and toasty vanillin oak flavours. Mocha, earth and spice characters also chime in. Ripe polished tannins have a sturdy underbelly. The wine finishes long and opulent. I really rate this wine.

### **Food Matchings**

Best with tapas, beef / chicken stews, pork, lamb and chorizo.

### **CELLARING POTENTIAL**

Decant for 20 minutes before drinking. Can be safely cellared for another 2-3 years. Remember it is already 7 years old.



## CRFT 2022 GRÜNER VELTLINER *The K1 Vineyard, Adelaide Hills*

CRFT has become something of a Gruner Veltliner expert in Australia. They currently release 4 different Gruner's from 4 different vineyards. This wine has been sourced from a very famous vineyard called K1, owned by Geoff Hardy, a descendant of the famous Hardy Wine making family. This is the 10th release of their K1 Gruner, with the winemaking style evolving over the past decade. In the early days they fermented in stainless steel tanks using commercial yeast, without solids, Malo or oak. Now they wild ferment in tank and oak, leave wild MLF to take its own path and tinker less with the wine. They are trying to achieve a more textural style of Gruner. Expect a nose of citrus and floral notes with honeydew melon and peach. The palate, as expected is textural, with fine acid, white pepper, lime and pear.

### **FOOD MATCHINGS**

The herbal tones of the wine allows it to also match handsomely with dishes that contain herbs, especially tarragon, parsley, dill, and mint. Think seafood and white meats that match well with these herbs. It can also be enjoyed by itself.

### **CELLARING POTENTIAL**

Can be safely cellared for the next 5-8 years. However, it can also be enjoyed right now.

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To be honest there is not a lot of difference between the 4 wines, but don't tell the winemakers. It was fun to taste the different wines however and we came out selecting their K1 Vineyard. CRFT are looking for a textural style of wine, that offers fullness across the plate and I believe they have nailed this brief. Recently we sent you a Gruner from the ancestral home in Austria, and I believe this wine is on par and maybe even a little more drinkable. They mature the wine in older oak to help gain this texture and complexity and when you drink it you will get these lovely aromas and flavours of honey dew melon and peach and then these exotic white pepper and pear characters which are a hallmark of great Gruner.

We now move to the three reds and specifically the 2 wine styles that we are repeating from the last selection. We have the **2016 Abtole Rioja Reserva from Spain and the 2016 Cantina Boffa "Buschet" Barbera D Alba** from Piedmont in Italy. The first thing you will notice is the 2016 vintage year for both wines. It is difficult to find wines in Australia with a bit of age, as it is expensive for the wineries and importers to hold onto the stock. These wines with 7 years under their belt are drinking extremely well and as we have taken most of the remaining stock we were able to get a great deal. (Two of the four wines, would normally fit outside the pricing of our Sommelier packs, which is why we love dealing with our sommeliers. They can get us some great wines and some great deals)

First up the Tempranillo from Rioja. We have offered a number of wines from Rioja in the past, yet we do not normally get to offer a Reserva. Rioja quality rankings are based on the time that the wine has spent in oak and aged in bottle before release. It is a rather old-fashioned system, with many wineries by passing the ranking, yet it is still used by the majority of producers in the region.

- Crianza 2 years ageing / Oak and Bottle
- Reserva 3 years ageing / Oak and Bottle
- Gran Reserva 5 years ageing / Oak and Bottle

Abtole was the original name of the old Rioja town of Autol, and is home to Bodegas Marques de Reinoso, who makes this excellent and generous Rioja, loaded with plenty of fruit and prominent toasty vanillin characters from the 24 months aging in French and American oak.

Bodegas Marqués de Reinoso was founded in 1956 and takes its name from the Marqués de Reinoso, a key figure in the development of Rioja wine over a century ago. They have extensive vineyard plantings around the Rioja Baja sub regions and an ultra-modern winery which was completed in 2000. Since that time the quality of the wines has increased dramatically and they have focused on increasing their international markets, including Australia. American oak is prominent on the nose, yet on the plate you get these classic cocoa and cigar box characters, plus a pulpy cherry like fruit forwardness. At 7 years of age, the wine is still showing plenty of life and vigour.

We now move to Piedmont in Northern Italy, home to the great wines of Barolo and Barbaresco. These are villages area in Piedmont that make their famous wines from the grape variety Nebbiolo. These wines generally start at \$100 and above. But the wineries in these areas also make other wines, mainly from the Barbera grape variety. They cannot use the famous village name on the label, but they are made in the same winery and the same geographic area at a fraction of the price.

The **2016 Cantina Boffa "Buschet" Barbera D Alba** is from a tiny winery that is smack bang in the middle of Barbaresco. It also happens to be right next door to one of the most famous wineries and vineyards in the world – Gaja. Gaja is the king and queen of Barbaresco and widely regarded as one of the greatest estates in the world, producing coveted and collectible labels. But enough of Gaja, this is the story of Carlo Boffa, which is blessed with a stunning winery position and a cellar door perched on top of a hill offering stunning views over the region. It also offers a beautiful B&B if you are ever looking for a base to explore this pretty special part of the world. They only have 4 hectares of vineyards and this Barbera D'Alba is pretty serious stuff. Rich, elegant and beautifully perfumed. Hailing from the prestigious single vineyard site of 'Buschet', its pedigree is evident from the moment the cork is pulled. An abundance of dark fruit flavours are complemented by notes of spice and dark chocolate and smooth tannins to create a silky, harmonious wine.

The last selection is a wine that I am extremely excited by. I have had a love affair with the Grenache based wines of the Cote Du Rhone for a long time. The Cote Du Rhone is a large generic region in the south of France that makes a wide variety of wines and quality levels. At the top you have the uber famous wines of Chateaufeuf du Pape, and the Syrah based wines of the Northern Rhone, Cote Rotie and Hermitage. There are however a number of secondary village wines that offer some great characteristics and can offer some incredible value for money. Think of the wines from Crozes Hermitage, Gigondas, Carriane, Lirac, St Joseph and the wine Kim has chosen Vacqueyras.

These wines are all blends of predominately GSM (Grenache Shiraz Mourvèdre) but there are another 7-10 different varieties that can also be used, including the odd white wine. Another thing to keep an eye out for is the bottle. A lot of people choose wines by the label and how pretty it looks. I find a much more meaningful quality sign is the type of bottle used. You see bottles can be expensive, especially the bottles that are embossed with a logo on the front. Most of these Village wines use these embossed bottles and not only do they look pretty smart, it is also a good sign that the winery thinks the wine is pretty good too.

The wine Kim has chosen is the **2019 Domaine De L'Espigouette Vacqueyras**.

Domaine de l'Espigouette has been owned by the same family for four generations. The vineyard is now run by Bernard Latour, his wife and two sons, Julian and Emilien. The estate's vineyard is located in the village area of Vacqueyras. Bernard Latour has been a rising star in the southern Rhone for the past 10-15 years and is one of the more serious producers in the area. They produce very low yields from their 32 hectares and their Domaine is on track for Organic conversion, however little has changed in their vineyard practices for generations. This is a very serious wine and one that I believe rivals some entry level Chateaufeuf Du Pape's. It has that complexity, structure and weight that I find in all good wines. Plus it has the prominent "garrigue" characters which are the regional wild herb characters that are so enticing and a feature of the good wines from this area.

So there we have the first wines of 2023 and my first experiment with Chat GPT which I think will soon become a pretty important part of our lives.

I wish you all a great 2023 and I hope you will enjoy the wines.

**Matt the Bullionaire**