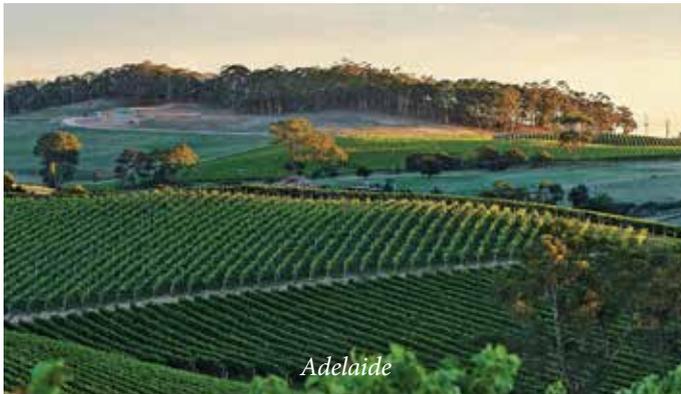




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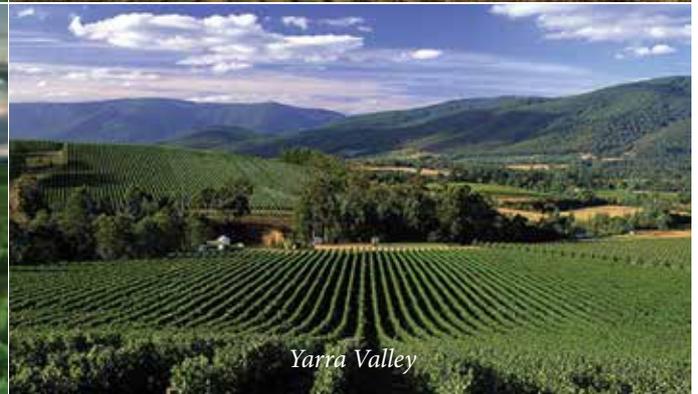
Adelaide



Canberra



South Australia



Yarra Valley

It is all about Australian wine for this selection. The big four Aussie wines are included, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon. In the past we have asked our sommeliers to generally stick to 3 imported wines and 1 Australian wine, but we have relaxed this over the years and now we look for any wines that are drinking well in the moment. And Australian wines are drinking very well right now, going through a bit of a golden patch with extremely high quality and a wide diversity in our wine styles.

Our Chardonnay has never been better, our Shiraz has moved away from the over the top bombastic 16% alcohol monsters, to wines of sophistication, elegance and structure, whilst still maintaining that distinctive Australian style. Our Pinot Noir from the cooler climates are really hitting their straps, with some added vine age coupled with more experience from the winemakers and our Cabernet, which does tend to fall in and out of trendiness, has never been better. Ironically this is at the same time when our reputation around the world is a little tarnished. We are no longer the flavour of the month in the UK, and in the US, with the success of Yellow

Tail, we are considered just a place for cheap quality wine. Whilst in China we have not recovered from the import restrictions the Chinese government imposed on Australian wines, in retaliation to the poor diplomatic relations between our two governments. It really devastated the industry a few years back, as we saw the wine exports to that country drop from over \$1 Billion a year to a little over \$100million. There is talk about better relations being developed between China, but a lot of wine companies have never really recovered from this huge revenue loss. But there is always a silver lining to any dark cloud, as this just means there is more for us to drink in Australia. So here we go with our Australian selection for the winter months.

First up we have a Chardonnay, which is a wine style I just cannot get enough of at the moment. If you just rely on international wine show results alone, then our Chardonnay is at world class levels, winning numerous top awards around the world. In our humble opinion the best three regions to look at are the Adelaide Hills, Coal River in Southern Tasmania and the Margaret River.

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the wines



2022 CRFT THE LANSDOWNE CHARDONNAY (ORGANIC) *Adelaide Hills*

This is the first release of the CRFT Chardonnay from the organically farmed Lansdowne Vineyard in the Adelaide Hills. In our opinion the Adelaide Hills is one of the top 3 regions for Chardonnay in Australia and this wine is a great example of why. Expect plenty of flavour and complexity. The nose has summer fruits of nectarine, apricot and fresh pears, matched with the savoury elements of cashews, nutmeg, and a hint of butterscotch. The palate is zingy with plenty of crisp acidity, with hints of shortbread biscuits, butterscotch and soft tannins. I really great example of why Australian Chardonnay offers world class quality and value.

The fruit was hand picked from this organic vineyard and transferred to the CRFT winery. The fruit was then wild fermented in tank for a few days before being transferred to French oak (20% new) to finish the ferment and “battonage”. The stirring of the yeasts cells for added complexity and structure, creating a hint of creaminess. The wine was only lightly filtered before bottling in October 2022.

FOOD MATCHINGS

All things Seafood, or simply as an aperitif. We love this wine with Roast Pork and crackling as well.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Can be safely cellared for the next 3-5 years.



2021 POACHERS PINOT NOIR *Canberra District*

The wines of Poachers in the ACT started from very humble beginnings as an artisan smokehouse, for cured meats. It has grown to include the Smokehouse Restaurant, which is extremely popular as a wedding and event destination, surrounded by a vineyard focusing on the cool climate varieties of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. The fruit for this wine was handpicked from the estate. The wine was fermented in steel, before being transferred into 20% new French oak for 11 months maturation. This vintage was awarded the Best Pinot Noir at the 2022 NSW Wine Awards, and I can see why. This wine boasts fresh wild plum, violet and strawberry aromas leading to a crunchy medium-bodied finish with lovely soft tannins. But what really sets this wine apart for the price, is its flavour profile. A lot of Pinot's can be on the lighter side in palate weight, but this wine explodes around the mouth and makes for a very enjoyable glass of wine.

FOOD MATCHINGS

Most non spicy Asian dishes. Peking Duck pancakes an absolute speciality. Also, if you are at a restaurant and your friends have ordered a wide array of dishes, Pinot is always a safe bet, as it goes well with a wide range of dishes from seafood, through to red meat.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Decant for 20 minutes. Can be safely cellared for the next 4-8 years.



2018 SALOMON ESTATE CABERNET SAUVIGNON *Finnis River, SA*

A fantastic example of a South Australian Cabernet from the masters of Gruner Veltliner in Austria. Through a love affair of Australia and Penfolds, this winemaking family, with almost 230 years in Austria, purchased a block of land near McLaren Vale and planted a vineyard in 1995. Bert Salomon has become the ultimate flying winemaker, doing vintages in each hemisphere since 2002. Not a bad way to spend your time.

The soils of this vineyard are typically gravel and sand over red and orange sandstone, with the vineyard falling gently away towards the northwest, providing ideal exposure and plenty of warmth to ripen the grapes. Balanced by the cooling breezes which roll off the Southern Ocean in the late-afternoon, ensuring excellent acid retention. There is a richness to this wine which is so enjoyable. It is very deep red in colour, with expressive aromas of blueberry and blackcurrant, with hints of dark chocolate. However, it is on the palate where this wine really shines, as it is just so drinkable. It finishes with lovely velvety tannins. Like most Cabernets, there is always another variety blended in to help fill out the middle palate, in this case 10% Merlot. The wine is barrel aged for 18 months in 300-litre hogsheads (approx. 50% new French oak). A very classy, elegant, moorish glass of wine.

Food Matchings

Think red meats and protein. A great medium rare steak would be your best bet.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Decant for 20 minutes before drinking, this wine can be safely cellared for the next 6-8 years.



2019 TOOLANGI PAULS LANE SHIRAZ *Yarra Valley*

Toolangi is one of the top wineries in the Yarra Valley with vineyards first planted in the area in 1995. They are specialists in cool climate Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Shiraz, with the latter being a particularly great example of the style. Shiraz in Australia is mainly grown in more warmer climates, so it is great to see different styles being produced.

Expect a very perfumed nose of roses, spiced plum, smoked charcuterie, with a slight hint of fennel seeds. The palate is medium bodied and full of flavour and personality that just oozes class and warmth. This is a wine that you just want to drink more and more of, with velvety soft tannins. Dark plums and red fruits dominate the palate with plenty of spices and a just a hint of white pepper. This is a textbook example of cool climate Shiraz.

The fruit has been sourced from selected rows of the vineyard planted in 2001. The fruit was picked in optimal dry conditions and transferred to their onsite winery. Traditional Pinot Noir winemaking techniques of whole bunch fermentation (40%) was used to produce a softer more elegant style of Shiraz, further enhanced by the use of French oak.

FOOD MATCHINGS

Roast lamb and beef a speciality, especially if served medium rare. Stews and casseroles are also a great match- Perfect as we head into the cooler months.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Decant for 20 minutes before drinking. This wine can safely be cellared for another 5-7 years.

Continued from front page

I am probably going to write something a little controversial, but I think the Margaret River is resting on its laurels a bit. They have always and still continue to produce exceptional wines, but to be honest most of the excitement comes elsewhere. For Chardonnay this excitement is coming out of the Adelaide Hills and Tasmania. In Tasmania you have great wines from the likes of Tolpuddle and Pooley and in the Adelaide Hills, you have all the great high end Penfolds Chardonnays and Shaw and Smith. Which leads us very nicely to the Chardonnay we have chosen, the **2022 CRFT Lansdowne Chardonnay Adelaide Hills**.

The Adelaide Hills is a short 30–40-minute drive out of the Adelaide CBD and it really is a great way to spend an afternoon. The Cellar doors and restaurants are awesome, and the wines are world class. You will remember this CRFT winery as we sent out one of their Gruner Veltliners in the last pack. This back-to-back selection is a little unusual, but when we tasted the wine amongst a number of different white wines, it was the clear standout. As a brief reminder, 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 2-3 tonnes picked from each block, producing around 2000 bottles each.

The fruit for this wine has been sourced from the Lansdowne vineyard, which has been certified Organic since 2018. This is CRFT's first vintage from this vineyard and it certainly shows great promise. It gives you everything you want in high class Chardonnay. A good dose of flavour, think pears and melons etc., but then it offers the complexity that you search for in great wines. You will find butterscotch, cashews and a great tangy finish. The class of this wine really shines through the whole palate as you begin to really taste and drink this wine.

Next up we have a Pinot Noir from the cool climate of the Canberra region in the ACT. Pinot Noir has become super trendy over the past 10 years. I do recall 20 years ago though when the Pinots from Australia were always considered a bit of a novelty as people always compared them unfavourably to the red wines of Burgundy in France. Just as a reminder, Burgundy in France is made from the Pinot Noir grape variety and they produce some of the most expensive and sought after wines in the world. The very best wines are made in very small volumes and have reached cult-like status. Every winemaker loves Burgundy and wants to try and produce their own little bit of magic. The problem is you need a cool climate to grow Pinot Noir and some vine age, with the Australian vineyards and winemakers really only coming into their own now.

What is really encouraging now is that I don't hear many comparisons or references to Burgundy. Rather the Pinot Noirs of Australia and New Zealand are really starting to stand on their own two feet. But these wines are expensive and there is just no way to get around that. It is hard to find a good Pinot under \$75, which is why we jumped at the chance to select this wine when we tasted it. The **2021 Poachers Pinot Noir, Canberra District**. After a bit more research we discovered it was awarded best Pinot Noir at the 2022 NSW wine awards. This does not really surprise me, for the wine certainly packs a punch well above its price range. As you know Pinot Noir is a lighter bodied wine, but the good wines offer plenty of palate weight and complexity. This wine literally jumped over my palate when I tasted it, and it is certainly an impressive glass of wine. A very seductive, floral nose, with plums and red berries, leading to a savory, long and elegant finish.

Poachers was a new name to me, but I discovered they are a small family business started over 30 years ago, focusing very much on food and wine. They started off with an artisan smokehouse business based around fine meats, which has grown into a Restaurant and vineyard business which is extremely popular for weddings and events. I have not personally been to the restaurant, but I have been told very good things and I can certainly vouch for the wines.

Next, we have a bit of a favourite of Bullion Cellars, as we have selected previous vintages from this winery over the years. The **2018 Salomon Estate Finnis River Cabernet Sauvignon**. First up is the age of this wine, it is unusual to find wines from the 2018 vintage and the extra time in the bottle has really helped to make this a great glass of wine to drink right now. Don't get me wrong you could still safely cellar for another 7-10 years, but the wine is in the zone right now.

A quick recap of Salomon and their Australian outpost. Bert Salomon is the eighth generation of Salomon Undorf, one of Austria's greatest wineries. They make amazing Riesling and Gruner Veltliner at Krens on the River Danube, just an hour's drive outside Vienna. Bert Salomon's journey into wine began when his mother encouraged him to gain some experience outside the family, taking a job with a wine importer in New York. Here he discovered a love and joy of international wines and the contacts that would lead to a successful import/export business, still in operation today. It was through these contacts that he was the first person to bring Penfolds into Austria, beginning his love affair with South Australian Reds. Frequent trips to Australia led him to claim a piece of Australia for his own, planting a vineyard in 1995, not far from McLaren Vale. So here we have a winemaking family with over 230 years' experience in Austria and almost 30 years in South Australia. Not a bad accomplishment; but only notable if the wines are good. And yes, they are petty bloody good. The 2018 vintage is a rich full-bodied style, with plenty of blackcurrant and cedar characters. However, it still maintains plenty of freshness and vitality.

The last red is a Shiraz from the cooler climate of the Yarra Valley in Victoria. Historically this region has been known for Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, but Shiraz has always been a bit of a sleeper, producing really elegant wines from plantings in the slightly warmer sites. We have selected the **2019 Toolangi Paul's Lane Shiraz Yara Valley**. Toolangi was first planted in 1995 and has gone from strength to strength, recognized as one of the better wineries in the area. Cooler climate Shiraz is a different beast from the warmer regions like the Barossa or McLaren Vale. For a start the wines tend to be more medium to full bodied and lower in alcohol. In the past this was seen as a negative, but today these elegant distinctive wines are being appreciated for their quality. What also tends to happen is the winemakers in the cooler areas tend to copy some of the winemaking techniques used in Pinot Noir, especially the use of whole bunches in the fermentation process. A process that leads to softer, more elegant wines. It was no surprise to learn that 40% whole bunches were used in this wine, as well as maturation in French oak, versus the American oak normally used in the Barossa and McLaren Vale. What this all means is that you end up with an elegant distinctive wine that is medium to full bodied, with spicy fruit flavours favouring plums and red berries. This wine is extremely moorish and has lovely, perfumed aromas with a just a hint of white pepper that is a traditional characteristic of the cooler climate Shiraz. This is the type of wine that you can savour and enjoy with or without food.

So, there is our Australian selection. Quite a diversity of wines and styles and again showing why we are still one of the great wine producing countries on the planet.

Matt the Bullionaire