



the bullionaire

BULLION 23D

WHERE DID 2023 GO?



Roux Family Vineyard - Burgundy, France.

Hard to believe we are in December and the silly season is fast upon us. As you know the Australian festive season starts with the Melbourne Cup and finishes with Australia Day and we all need a little extra booze over these coming months to keep things running smoothly. It could be worse. I was recently in the Philippines, and they refer to the "Ber" months of September to December and the extended Christmas celebrations they have. I was there for work in early October and was a little shocked to see Santa Claus decorations around all the shopping malls.

But back to Australia and the end of year wine selections for Bullion Cellars. **Matt Dunne** is back again this year, and he is one of our favourites. He used to work at Aria but now works as a Wine Ambassador and educator for one of the largest wholesalers and importers in Australia.

His selections this time have tapped into a recent trend running through most countries and wine regions, with people now looking for more freshness and elegance in the wines they drink. Sure, everyone loves a big full-bodied red, but you really cannot drink these wines every night. This is showing in the sales figures, as more people are turning to lighter wine styles such as Pinot Noir. But there is a lot more than just one varietal in this trend, with lots of regional styles produced in this lighter style too. You only have to think about the light and fresh styles of regions like Valpolicella in Veneto, the Dolcetto's from Piedmont and you cannot forget the Gamays from Beaujolais. Then of course there has been the explosion in the sales of Rose. Australia is also producing these styles, from Grenache based wines coming out of warmer regions like the Barossa and McLaren Vale. Here they are using Pinot Noir like



Inama Vineyard - Soave, Classico, Verona, Italy.

wine making practices to make fresh and elegant styles, very different to the Grenache Shiraz Mourvedre blends. These lighter wine styles are perfect as we head into the warmer months, as they can be served slightly chilled – say 10-12 degrees Celsius, or about 20 minutes out of the fridge on a warm summer's day in Australia.

Matt has chosen two red wines that perfectly fit this description. A Pinot Noir from France and a Grenache from Sardinia in Italy. He has then chosen a red wine with a little more grunt; a Malbec from a great producer in Argentina, who also happens to be the first woman in Argentina to receive a degree in enology back in 1981. Her wines are now seen in a lot of the great restaurants of the world. The white wine he has chosen is a favourite from Northern Italy, a Soave Classico made from the Garganega grape variety.

But back to the lighter style red wines. The first is from a winery in the Saint Aubin region of Burgundy who have been producing wines since 1885. The **2022 Les Cottes Pinot Noir**. The Roux Family of Domaine Roux is one of the larger producers in Burgundy with over 70 hectares of vineyards spread over the prime regions of the area, including Saint Aubin, Chassagne Montrachet, Puligny Montrachet, Meursault and Santenay. They produce a number of premier cru wines from some of the most highly regarded vineyard sites, with prices in the hundreds of dollars, but they also produce wines from some of the lesser-known areas, plus from vineyards outside the region of Burgundy. This Pinot Noir is sourced from vineyards both within and without Burgundy and at a price that means we can all afford to drink it. Something that is very uncommon with the wines of Burgundy.

the wines



2022 LES COTILLES PINOT NOIR *France*

Domaine Roux Pere et Fils is a family-run business based in the hills of St-Aubin, at the southern end of the Cote d'Or in the famous Burgundy Region. The family's winemaking heritage stretches back to 1855 and they now own over 70 hectares of vineyards across the region - from Bourgogne up to Grand Cru - making it one of the largest independent domaines in Burgundy.

Five Generations are behind the current team in charge of production, which consists of brothers Mathieu, who makes the wine, and Sebastien who manages the business. Their passion and energy have been the driving force behind a notable rise in quality. If you love Burgundy, then you should look out for some of their premium (read Expensive) wines. However, this entry level wine is pretty sensational.

It is made from fruit sourced from various sites both within and outside the Burgundy region. It has a medium garnet colour, and you should expect vibrant aromas and flavours of plum and cherry with slight floral notes and nicely developed secondary flavours - a touch of forest floor. It is quite a full-bodied style of Pinot, so it is considered more of a medium bodied wine, and it has very balanced acidity and nice tannins.

FOOD MATCHINGS

A perfect match for grilled salmon alongside mixed greens. Also nice by itself at the end of the day slightly chilled.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Can be cellared for the next 2-3 years but best enjoyed over the next 6-12 months.



2021 SARAJA INKIBI CANNONAU DI SARDEGNA (GRENACHE) *D.O.C Sardinia Italy*

Saraja can be best described as a winemaking super group of Sardinia, consisting of 5 highly experienced winemakers in what is a relatively new operation. Sardinia is a large island off the West coast of Italy famous for its tourism and wines. Vermentino for the whites and Cannonau (the local name for Grenache) for the reds. The fruit for Saraja's wines comes from 49 hectares that they collectively own on the finest sites of the island. This wine is 100% Cannonau (the local name for Grenache) from a number of their vineyards with an average age of 20 years.

Grapes are hand-harvested at the start of September and are then destemmed and macerated for 14 days with regular pumping over. Fermentation is in stainless steel at 22-28°C, and malolactic fermentation takes place too. The wine spends 2 months on fine lees with batonnage (stirring), then a further 4 months in stainless steel, before being released after 2 months in bottle. No oak treatment was used, in an attempt to keep the wine as fresh and elegant as possible.

Expect to see aromas and flavours more on the red fruit spectrum, cranberries, cherries and pomegranate that are combined with spice and warm earthy notes. It is bright and fleshy on the palate with juicy red berries and forest fruits, balanced by fresh acidity and firm but subtle tannins.

FOOD MATCHINGS

Mushroom risottos would be great, or beef and lamb ragu and pasta.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Sever slightly chilled 10-12 degrees - Can be safely cellared for the next 2-3 years.

SEASON'S GREETINGS



2020 BENMARCO VALLE DE UCO MALBEC *Mendoza, Argentina*

BenMarco is all about viticulture. Having planted more than 3,000 acres of vineyards across Argentina's diverse terroirs. Owned by the very influential Susana Balboa and founded in 1999, BenMarco is one of the larger and more influential wineries in Argentina. Susana was the first female to graduate as a winemaker back in 1981 and she was the first female president of "Wines of Argentina". Mendoza is the crown of Argentina's winemaking industry representing 60% of the total production and this region combined with Malbec is the reason Argentina is known around the world for its fine wines.

BenMarco wines are made with minimal intervention to allow for the purest interpretation of what's in the vineyard on the pretty extreme sites where the grapes are grown. The winemaker says, "What I really like to see is what the vines can do, without any kind of winemaking influence." I like this kind of thinking and despite the wine being full bodied, it continues the theme of the wine selections being fresh and vibrant. Little to no oak was used in this wine, with the power of the Mendoza soil and vines combining to make an intriguing wine.

Expect to find a wine that is smooth and elegant with prominent jammy fruit flavours, with a touch of savouriness. Think black cherries, plum, raspberry, and notes of raisin. There are also hints of coffee, tobacco and black pepper. A very morish wine.

FOOD MATCHINGS

I hate to be boring - but the best match is medium rare steak or short of that all red meats.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Decant the wine for 20 minutes before serving - Can be safely cellared for another 5-7 years.



2022 INAMA VIN SOAVE CLASSICO *Veneto, 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.

Located in the Veneto region, the Soave Classico region is all about white wine made from the Garganega grape variety. This Soave Classico is the most important wine for Inama, as it represents almost half of their total production. The wines are very mineral and flinty and quite full bodied. And they offer generous flavours of spicy pear and red apples with a hint of lime and wet stone (think Minerals). It has a very textural palate that finishes dry with excellent acidity and a lingering, slatey, almond like after taste.

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.

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There are five generations behind this wine and this experience shows with the elegance and class of the wine. This is a different style of Pinot Noir than what you will get in Australia. It is darker in colour and a little fuller on the palate. On the nose, it offers a lovely combination of red and black fruits (strawberry, cherry). It is lively and structured in the mouth with a well-rounded and supple backbone. Tannins and fruit go hand in hand and match the power of the secondary aromas. This is a great example of a lighter bodied red that can served slightly chilled. It offers great complexity but elegance at the same time. Perfect for the coming summer months.

Next up we have an example of a modern, elegant style of Grenache from the island of Sardinia off the West Coast of Italy. Sardinia is one of the favoured locations for luxury yachts as they cruise the Mediterranean, but despite its tourism it is also known for some special wines. There are of course the white wines of Vermentino, but very close behind are the red wines of Cannonau, or as we know it, Grenache. These are mainly planted in the centre of the island on warm gravelly/pebbly soils, limiting its natural productivity. This wine offers plenty of complexity and flavour, but it is a mid-weight wine, that can also be enjoyed slightly chilled over the summer months. The wine Matt has chosen is the **2021 Saraja Inkibi Cannonau di Sardegna DOC Italy**. Saraja is a relatively new operation, when 5 highly experienced winemakers joined forces to gain some economies of scale. They are in the process of building a new winery on the island, but in the meantime, they are getting their wines made in their friends' wineries. This wine really impressed me when I drank it. When you drink it, expect intense aromas of dark red berries, plum and tobacco which are also reflected on the palate of the wine. This is an elegant, light to mid bodied wine. But do not confuse a lighter body with lack of flavour. This wine is incredibly complex and offers plenty of character and aromas.

The next red is a little different, in that it is from Argentina and a more full-bodied example. Malbec is to Argentina; what Shiraz is to Australia. It is their number one variety and the wine they are known for on the global stage. I regret to say, I have never been to Argentina, but I am a little jealous, for the wineries are set in quite spectacular settings. The vineyards are mainly located at high altitudes around the Andes Mountain Range and the images of rolling vineyards against the backdrop of towering snowcapped mountain ranges is very impressive. It is a place I really need to visit. Argentina is the 5th largest wine producer in the world, with 60% of the wine coming from one region: Mendoza. The first thing to know about Argentina is that that they love beef and steaks; the second is they eat

their dinner very late and the third is, the Malbecs of Mendoza are really good with a big medium rare steak. A good thing medium rare steaks are also very popular around the world. The Wine Matt has chosen is the **2020 Ben Marco Malbec Valle de Unco Mendoza**. BenMarco is owned by the very influential Susan Balboa and she owns a winery group with over 3000 acres of vineyards across Argentina. This wine is sourced from a subregion of Mendoza, Los Chacayes, known for its sandy, rocky, loam soil that allows good drainage and limits the growth of the vine. This struggle is what all good regions provide for the winemaker. You do not want fertile soil, as the foliage of the vine will grow at the expense of the fruit. Malbec from this area will give you aromas of black berries with notes of violet, pronounced acidity, firm tannins and a great mouth feel. Steak anyone?

The last wine Matt has chosen is a white wine from Northern Italy. The **2020 Inama Vin Soave Classico Verona**. Inama is a young winery by Italian standards, with a little over 50 years experience. They are based in the Northern Italian region of Veneto and make wines from 2 distinct regions. The region of Soave Classico, famous around the world for its textural and mineral based white wines and the lesser known Colli Berici, home to some exotic red wines. But it is the Soave Classico that this winery is really known for.

The Soave Classico region dates back to the Roman times, where they identified the volcanic soil as an ideal place for white wine production. In fact, this soil type is unique to this part of Italy. During the '60s Giuseppe Inama, the estate's founder, began to purchase small plots of vineyards in the heart of the Soave Classico. Although Soave was the most famous Italian white wine at the time, few producers really understood the importance of owning the best plots to secure a future of top-notch quality wines. This foresight really paid off as they have some 30 hectares of the best vineyard sites in this unique region. Made from the Garganega grape variety, expect mineral and florals on the aroma and palate, on what is a full-bodied wine. Very textural with lingering flavours of pear, red apple and melons.

So there are the last wines of 2023 for Bullion Cellars. Thanks for all you support this year and I hope you have enjoyed the wines as much as we have!

Enjoy the break over the Christmas/New Year period and please stay safe.

Enjoy,

Matt, The Bullionaire



ABOUT THE SOMMELIER

Matt Dunne has left the role of Sommelier after many years at Aria and has joined the 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".