



the bullionaire

BULLION 25A

New Wines to welcome the New Year



Coal River in Tasmania



Coal River Wine Region

Well, here we go again, another year, another tasting session for Bullion Cellars and another great selection of wines. As you all know, wine is my passion and a big part of my life, both professionally and socially. I love tasting and drinking new wines, finding new regional styles, as well as exploring the regions and wines I am familiar with to see what is new and what has changed. I cannot understand a life without drinking wine and enjoying great meals with family and friends. So, it saddened me when I read in 2024 that wine sales in Australia have fallen. This is following a global trend as people drink less, but better-quality wine, combined with a general trend of the younger generations drinking more spirit-based drinks. I still cannot believe the love, interest and plethora of Tequilas sold in the market, using celebrity owners to drive their brand and multi-million-dollar sales. I feel like it is up to us, the more enlightened amongst the general population, to take up this slack, drink a little more wine and convince our children, nieces, nephews, younger work colleagues and grandchildren to put down their tequila and take up a glass of wine. You could tell them the famous quote from Hemmingway, *"I drink beer when I am thirsty, whiskey to get drunk and wine for enjoyment,"* but then you would have to tell them about Hemmingway!

On that point let us get to the four wines to begin the year of the Snake and 2025. (I was writing this newsletter around the time of Chinese New Year, so the year of the Snake was front and centre.

Let's begin with the two red wines, a great Grenache, Syrah blend from the Cote Du Rhone, a long-time regional favourite of Bullion Cellars and a striking Pinot Noir from the Coal River in

Tasmania. Pinot Noir is an intriguing variety for me. In the early 2000's, I could never get my head around the wine. Sure, there were great wines, but I could not understand the quality value ratio. The prices being charged for these wines, especially in Burgundy, just did not justify what I was tasting and drinking in the glass. There are a number of reasons for this. Pinot Noir is a tricky grape variety to grow and make into wine. It is only suited for unique soil and climate combinations favouring cool and quite isolated locations. Winemakers tend to be fastidious and very pedantic when it comes to Pinot Noir, and it is made in small quantities. All this leads to high prices. So, to me the wines were good, but I could get more value and quality from other grape varieties. However, the times sure are a changing!

The reason for these changes are because the wine regions of the new world, (Australia, New Zealand, and the US), which have concentrated on Pinot Noir have now got a lot more age and experience behind them. The vines are older, the winemakers are older, and the wines are better. They are still a little pricey, but now the quality is beginning to match the prices being asked. The other thing about Pinot Noir, is that the wines are not full bodied and in your face. The best wines are elegant, medium bodied and can often be described as "ethereal" in nature. As I get a little older, I am looking for more elegance and complexity in the wines I drink, and a good Pinot Noir offers this and more.

In Australia, the regions you should concentrate on are the cool climate regions of the Yarra and Mornington Peninsula, but it is the region of Coal River around Hobart in Tasmania that is generating all the buzz from Australia.

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the wines



2021 DAUVERGNE ET RANVIER *Cotes Du Rhone Villages, France*

Dauvergne Ranvier is the association of two enthusiasts who decided to create their own brand by purchasing unbottled wines from different winemakers and villages and then labelling under their own label. François Dauvergne and Jean-François Ranvier began this very new world type winery in 2004 in the Rhône Valley. The range extends from Côte-Rôtie in the north to the Luberon in the south, including Gigondas, Châteauneuf-du-Pape and Costières de Nîmes.

In 2013, they took over the operation of Domaine des Muretins in the Tavel and Lirac appellations. They produce excellent wines year in and year out, without the added cost and headaches of vineyard operations.

The grapes were harvested at good maturity and benefited from a long fermentation (over 30 days) at controlled temperature. The wine was then matured partially in vats and barrels for about a year. Lots of freshness and deliciousness in this wine that exudes blackberry and raspberry, a bouquet of red berries and a hint of liquorice. On the palate we find the fruitiness, accompanied by flavours of spices and garrigue on a full and round palate, with beautiful balance.

FOOD MATCHINGS

A very versatile red wine what will match with most roasted and grilled red meats. Great with Pizza, lasagne, and other tomato-based pasta dishes.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Decant for 20-20 minutes before drinking. Can be safely cellared for the next 5-7 years.



2019 MORNINGSIDE PINOT NOIR *Coal River, Tasmania*

Morningside Vineyard is located at Tea Tree in southeast Tasmania's Coal River Valley wine region. Tea Tree is a 30-minute drive from Hobart (35 kilometres) and just a few kilometres from the historic village of Richmond. The Morningside vineyard produces both Pinot and Chardonnay that are brimming with potential - powerful, redolent wines with rich colour and varietal typicity. The site is perched on peaty, rich soils, with a precious sliver of limestone.

The name 'Morningside' was given to the old property on which the vineyard stands because it gets the morning sun. As you would imagine the other side of the valley was known as Eveningside. Peter and Brenda Bosworth established the vineyard in 1980 and is planted to 2.8 hectares of vines, mostly to a selection of nine different clones of Pinot Noir. It was purchased by the family of Pressing Matters in 2019.

The 2019 Morningside Pinot Noir receives 10-20% whole bunch maceration, and the fruit is given a four-day cold soak, followed by wild-yeast fermentation over 7-10 days. The wine is matured for 12 months in seasoned French oak barriques. Delicious dark fruit like blackberries and black currants complemented by a gentle mocha finish. Elegant, refined, and delicious.

FOOD MATCHINGS

Pinot Noir is a very food-friendly wine. It will pair nicely with grilled steak, roast chicken, and most cheeses. Some classic pairings for Pinot Noir are salmon, mushrooms, and duck.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Decant this wine for 20 minutes before Drinking but can be cellared for the next 2-5 years.



2021 CHRISTOPHE PATRICE CHARDONNAY *Vin de France*

A native of Beine in the Chablis region, Christophe Patrice began working in the family business with his father and uncles in 1996. In 2006 he started his own venture with five hectares of vines. In 2011 he acquired a neighbouring estate, increasing his holdings to twenty-two hectares with an average vine age of 50-70 years. Today the domain has parcels in the top communes of Chablis and produces a full range of wines, Petit Chablis, Chablis and Chablis Premier Cru. But it is this wine that he sources from slightly outside the accepted region of Chablis that caught our fancy. This 100 % Chardonnay is still made to his exacting standards. The fruit is whole bunch pressed to stainless steel tanks for a cool fermentation with indigenous yeast. Once fermentation is complete the wine is racked off lees and matured in tank for 4 months, without malolactic conversion. He does not use any oak in making his wines as he does not believe the fruit, or the region requires it. Expect plenty of minerals with ripe tropical fruit overtones, a touch of melon with a green apple zip to it. The wine has a great palate weight and is quite full bodied, with very crisp acidity and a cracking finish as you would expect from Chablis.

FOOD MATCHINGS

This wine is quite fresh and vibrant. It can be enjoyed by itself, or with seafoods, salads or non-spicy Asian dishes. A great match with Sushi.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Can be enjoyed now or safely cellared for the next 2-4 years.



CRFT 2024 GRÜNER VELTLINER *The K1 Vineyard, Adelaide Hills*

CRFT has become something of a Gruner Veltliner expert in Australia. They currently release four different Gruner's from four 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 13th release of their K1 Grüner, 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 Grüner. 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 tone 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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Think Tolpuddle, Pooley and Pressing Matters. It is this last winery that has produced the first wine for 2025. The **2019 Morningside Pinot Noir, Coal River Tasmania**. Pressing Matters was formed in 2002 and quickly gained a reputation for their “Off Dry Moselle” inspired Riesling. They offer a range of Rieslings at different sweetness levels. All are sensational. However, there was always a fascination and a desire to make great Pinot Noir and so it seemed natural to join with the neighbouring Morningside Vineyard in 2019 and add a new range of wines to the Pressing Matters brand. This wine really impressed when we tasted it on the bench. It had the complexity and elegance you expect, but it also had this great palate weight and flavour, sometimes lacking in Pinot Noir. It has an intense nose and bouquet featuring blackberries, ripe raspberries, vanilla, and sandalwood. This flows onto a medium bodied palate that is very fruit driven, with chocolatey notes creating a very fleshy wine, with persistent acidity. Yum!

In France they have a lot of rules around winemaking and the appellations or regions where you can grow grapes, moving increasingly into smaller and smaller areas or villages. In the Cote Du Rhone, you have the larger generic region, moving into the more regulated Cote Du Rhone Villages, then moving into the smaller regions centred around villages with well-known names like Carriane, Lirac, Gigondas and of course Chateau-neuf du Pape. As you move to the smaller village level, the fruit needs to be sourced from that specific area as well as satisfying vineyard yield and production requirements. Whilst these village level wines can be excellent, sometimes the sum of the parts are better than the individual parts and I often find the Cote Du Rhone Village level wine can be better than wine from the smaller Villages. This is what I find in our second wine. The **2021 Dauvergne et Ranvier Cotes Du Rhone Villages, France**.

The wines of the Cote Du Rhone always deliver at most price points. Their top wines are world class at a fraction of the price of Bordeaux or Burgundy and they offer generous and complex wines that can be drunk on a regular basis. Based around the grape varieties of Grenache, Syrah and Mourvèdre, they create very impressive wines. On a side note, I struggle to work out why the winemakers in the Barossa and Mc Laren Vale do not try to make wines centred around these three varieties. Sure, there are plenty of single variety wines from Shiraz and Grenache but not a lot of blends. Plus, the single variety Grenaches being made in these areas are trending too close to Pinot Noir for my liking, without the finer, elegance and sophistication.

Upon investigation Daubergen et Ranvier is a winemaking venture that is more “new world” than French. The two winemakers behind the label have used their experience and contacts in the Rhone Valley of France to source parcels of wines from a number of famous areas and villages to then market under their own label. They produce a wide variety of wines including this quite special Village Wine. There is lots of freshness and deliciousness in this wine that exudes blackberry and raspberry, a bouquet of violets and a hint of liquorice. On the palate you will find a fleshiness and fruitiness that makes it very drinkable, whilst accompanied by the unique flavours of spices and “garrigue.” Garrigue is a French term for the wild hillside vegetation of the Cote Du Rhone. Instead of describing a single aroma in a wine, “garrigue” refers to a mix of lavender, juniper, thyme, rosemary, and sage.

The third European wine is from a well known winemaker in Chablis and a wine that we sent out a few years back. We loved the wine then and love it even more now. It is a Chardonnay sourced from a vineyard just outside the Chablis region. Chablis is in the Northern most part of the Burgundy region and has been in the shadow, of sorts, of the famous and extremely expensive white and red wines of southern Burgundy. Chardonnay is the major grape variety in Chablis, just like the white wines of Burgundy, but resulting from the cooler climate and unique soil structure, they make less fruity wines that are often described as being quite flinty with strong mineral overtones. This soil type is known as Kimmeridgian soil, which is comprised of limestone, clay, and fossilised oyster shells. So, this minerality makes sense. The top wines of Chablis rival any top wine, but as you would expect these come at a cost. The wine we have chosen comes from outside the Chablis region at a fraction of the price yet still offering excellent quality. The **2021 Christophe Patrice Chardonnay** is a beautifully balanced wine from a top Chablis producer of the same name. He created his own winery in 2006 and after acquiring a neighbouring estate in 2011, he now has control of over twenty-two hectares with a vine age over 50 years. Expect plenty of minerals with ripe tropical fruit overtones, a touch of melon with a green apple zip to it. The wine has a great palate weight and quite full bodied, with very crisp acidity and a cracking finish as you would expect from Chablis.

The last white wine is the **2024 CRFT K1 Gruner Veltliner Adelaide Hills**. CRFT, pronounced Craft is a 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 four different wines from four different vineyards, something no other winery in Australia is offering.

To be honest there is not a lot of difference between the four wines, but don't tell the winemakers. It was fun to taste the different wines however and we came out selecting their K1 Vineyard, which we also selected a number of years ago with the 2021 vintage. CRFT are looking for a textural style of wine, which offers fullness across the plate, and I believe they have nailed this brief. 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.

There are the first four wines for 2025 I hope you will enjoy them as much as we have.

Matt, The Bullionaire