



the bullionaire

BULLION 25C

Emerging in the Spring



Mosel wine region Germany



Markus Hüls

Where has the year gone, I am writing this newsletter at the beginning of August, and you will be reading it in September. Now it is bloody cold and wet but soon it will be spring, and the warmer weather will begin. Matt Dunne, our long-term Sommelier, has taken this in mind with some great medium bodied red wines and a sensational 8-year-old Riesling from Mosel in Germany. **Matt Dunne** has been with Bullion Cellars since the beginning, and he is now the Wine Ambassador for the Joval Wine group, one of the leading distributors in this country. He also teaches the Wine & Spirit Education Trust courses which I can highly recommend if you want to ramp up your wine education. He is also one of life's true gentlemen. It was great to spend a few hours with him, tasting these wines and finalising this selection. So now to the wines!

We must start with the Riesling. The **2017 Hüls Riesling Mosel**. Yes, that is right 2017. We originally tasted the 2022 version of this wine and loved it, but then there was a problem with the supply of that vintage, and Matt was able to convince the distributor to provide us with this older vintage, which is a real treat. It was a bit more money than the 2022 vintage, but well worth it. You really don't get to drink 8-year-old wines very often and certainly not white wines. It was also very cool that this German producer supplied the wine under Screw cap, as I still get nervous with older wines under cork, despite the marked improvement with corks over the last 10-15 years. So, what happens as a wine ages? Like with most things involving wine, it depends. But in most cases wines tend to soften with age, losing some of the primary fruit characteristics and developing what are called secondary and tertiary flavours.

Over time these may appear as nuttiness, smoke or honey in whites and leather, tobacco or forest floor in reds. These can be quite difficult to pin down and describe, but when you taste an older wine, from a great producer, you will know what I am talking about. The wine just tastes, finished, complete, complex and delicious. Now, not all wines can or will age gracefully. Most wines are produced to be consumed within days or weeks of being released and even the great wines taste well on release. But the better wines – Say above \$30, will all benefit with a bit of cellaring and time in the bottle to develop these secondary and tertiary flavours. Decanting a wine prior to drinking can accelerate this process, which is why I recommend most Bullion wines to be decanted; but this can never replace the actual time spent in the bottle.

This German Riesling is a primary example. When you first taste the wine, the freshness, acidity and fruit flavours are still there, but they are backed by these lovely toasty, nutty and honied characters that just complete the wine, adding complexity and structure to what was already a great experience. There is also just a hint of kerosene which is a prominent feature of aged Riesling, especially from the Mosel.

The Mosel wine region is based in Southwest Germany and is named after the river of the same name that twists and turns through the region. It is all about white wine, with 91% of the plantings, of which Riesling, makes up 61%. The wines range from dry to sweet, with a classification indicated on the label. From driest to sweetest these are Kabinett, Spätlese, Auslese, Beerenauslese, Trockenbeerenauslese, and Eiswein.

Continued back page

the wines



2023 NICK O'LEARY SEVEN GATES TEMPRANILLO *Hill Tops, Canberra, NSW*

Situated in the picturesque Hall Valley, in the Murrumbidgee River corridor, just outside the ACT, this estate incorporates a modern winemaking facility and a mature 5-hectare vineyard. They also support a number of key growers in the area and over the past 10 years have become widely acknowledged as one of the top wineries of the area. Their Shiraz and Riesling are top class, but we have looked at one of his other stars, a Tempranillo for Matt's selection.

Consisting of two parcels – one from their estate vineyard, the other from the Fischer vineyard in Murrumbateman. The Grapes were hand harvested with the whole berries, then fermented in 1.5 tonne stainless pots and matured in seasoned French barriques and Punchons for 10 months. The idea is for the fruit to dominate and to be only supported by the oak. The wine was bottled in March 2024.

Expect plenty of prominent red fruits, cherries and plums, with a hint of tobacco on the palate, complimented by engaging, persistent tannins. It is unmistakably Tempranillo, whilst also being a very typical cool climate Aussie wine. Engaging, structured and very enjoyable.

FOOD MATCHINGS

Tempranillo pairs well with many types of food. Tempranillo is a great match with tapas and cured meats. More broadly look at lamb and other grilled meats, plus lasagna and other rich hearty tomato-based pasta dishes.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Can be cellared for the next 7-8 years. Should be decanted for 20 minutes before serving.



2023 SHADOWFAX NEBBIOLO *Pyrenes, VIC*

Shadowfax is a boutique winery situated in Werribee, 30 minutes Southwest of Melbourne. They have a great Restaurant / Function centre and Cellar door, but it really is all about the wines. They have the typical Pinots, Chardonnays and Shiraz's you would expect from a Victorian winery, but it was their Nebbiolo that really stood out at our tasting. It is sourced from their vineyard at the foothill of the Pyrenees Mountain ranges at an altitude of around 500 m above sea level. This elevation, plus the proximity to the higher mountains, creates an ecosystem of cooler nights and warmer days, which are perfect conditions to grow Nebbiolo. This cooler climate produces a more elegant style of wine, less in your face than what you get from warmer climates in Australia.

On the nose and palate expect plenty of cherries and strawberries, framed by long lean lines of tannin and acid, which are a strong feature of the variety. What really stands out in this wine, is the elegance and sophistication. It has these floral notes with a hint of tar and tea leaf complexities that flow across the nose and palate. This makes a lot of sense when you consider a typical tasting note for the great Barolo's of Piedmonte in Italy are "Tar and roses." This is a sensual wine that is a joy to drink.

FOOD MATCHINGS

From the winemaker, they suggest braised hare with olives; Wild boar sausage; Sautéed beans with XO sauce. These are a little exotic, but if you don't want to make these, look for dishes that are rich and fatty – Slow cooked lamb and pork, or a roasted Chicken.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Can be safely cellared for the next 3-5 years. Decant for 20 minutes before drinking.



2017 HÜLS RIESLING MOSELLE *Germany*

Markus Hüls grew up on the family vineyard in Kröv in the Moselle Valley and was therefore infected with the local Riesling virus at an early age. In 2012, Markus Hüls produced his first wines under his own name and has been hailed as one of the rising stars in the Moselle. Over the past 5 years he has expanded the area of vineyards on the steep slopes of the Moselle from just 2 to 8 hectares. All these vineyards are being converted from organic to Biodynamic.

All grapes are handpicked with several passes through the rows so that they are harvested at optimal physiological ripeness. Only 100% natural yeast is used, and no enzymes or bacteria are added. The majority of the wines are vinified and matured in stainless steel, with added time left on lees to help develop extra flavours and complexity in the wines, especially the sweeter ones. This Dry Riesling is a great example of the Mosel style, but do look out for his sweeter wines, which are sensational.

This wine has plenty of the lime, green apple, white pepper and flinty stone like minerality which you would expect on the nose and palate. But you also get a hint of kerosene, which is a feature of older Riesling, especially from the Mosel. This is a great wine that just gets better as the wine opens.

FOOD MATCHINGS

Some very fancy suggestions from the wine maker below, but when in doubt stick to seafood and non-spicy Asian food Sashimi of Faroe Island salmon with puffed rice, tangerine and salty fingers Gray mullet tartare, cilantro, lime and wasabi.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

You could safely cellar this wine for another 2-3 years but why wait. It is in the perfect window now. I would still decant the wine for 10 minutes, just to help freshen and open the wine up, for it has spent a long time in the bottle.



2021 GÓMEZ CRUZADO RIOJA CRIANZA TEMPRANILLO *Spain*

Bodegas y Viñedos Gómez Cruzado is a smallish yet historically rich winery located in Haro's famed Barrio de la Estación in Rioja Alta. Founded in 1886 by Ángel Gómez de Arceche and then acquired by the Gómez Cruzado family in 1916 and later by the Baños family in the early 2000s. The winery has evolved under the fresh stewardship of winemaker David González (and Juan Bautista Sáenz), sourcing grapes from sustainably farmed old bush vines across elevated plots in Sierra Cantabria, Alto Nájera, and Bajo Nájera. This is a modern winery with a long history in Rioja.

This is a blend of 75% Tempranillo from the foothills of the Cantabrian range and 25% Garnacha from Badarán's ferrous-clay soils. As a Crianza it was released after 2 years of being in both tank and oak barrels. On the nose, expect inviting aromas of plum, bramble, and dark berries accentuated by subtle spicy and toasty savory nuances from barrel ageing. The palate is medium-bodied and approachable, with supple tannins, bright acidity, and a persistent, fruit-forward finish marked by a gentle spice lift, highlighted by vanilla oak tones.

FOOD MATCHINGS

This Crianza's warmth, gentle tannins, and juicy fruit profile make it a versatile and food friendly companion. It pairs particularly well with herby lamb chops or flavourful kebabs—classic, aromatic dishes that underscore its savory undertones and freshness. More broadly, it complements roasted or grilled meats, aged cheeses, and even hearty stews.

CELLARING POTENTIAL

Can be cellared for the next 5-8 years. Decant the wine for 20-30 minutes before serving.

Continued from front page

Kabinett wines are typically the driest, while Eiswein and Trockenbeerenauslese wines are the sweetest. If you see these classifications, then be prepared for a sweet style of wine. The Kabinett styles offer a great introduction, as whilst still dry, they have a nice little kick of residual sugar that really is engaging. Most Mosel winemakers also produce a dry style of wine, which is more aligned to the Australian expectation of a white wine and not what we classify as "Stickies" or dessert wines. The Huls even go so far as to put a ranking on their labels 1-9, with this wine ranking as a 1, the driest. I hope you enjoy it as much as I do, for aged Riesling is one of my favourite wine styles and offers insane value when compared to the other great white wine, Chardonnay.

Now to the red wines. All medium bodied, but all packing a punch in their own way. We will start with the two Tempranillo's, one from the ancestral home in Rioja Spain and the other from the cool climate Canberra region. The wines from Rioja seldom disappoint and have been a go to wine in a lot of selections over the years. The wine Matt has chosen is the **2021 Gomez Cruzado Crianza Rioja**. Most of the wines of Rioja are classified by how long they spend in oak and bottle before release. Joven, less than 12 months, Crianza, less than 2 years, Reserve less than 3 years, Gran Reserva 5 years. Tempranillo is dominant, but Grenache is also popular in some of the wines, for example this wine has 25% Grenache.

Gomez Cruzada are a small winery by Rioja's standards as they produce around 30,000 cases of wine, but they have a history dating back to 1886. It was around this time that most of the wineries in Rioja first started, as they were a major source of wine supply for western Europe, following the devastation of the Phylloxera infestation of the French wine industry. Between 1863 and 1890 it is estimated 40% of all the vineyards in France were destroyed. Most of the wineries in Rioja are based around the town of Haro, where the train line was an easy access point to supply the consumers of Western Europe who no longer had access to their favourite French wines. A lot of French technical and financial expertise were used in establishing the wineries around Rioja, but thankfully they developed their own unique regional wines and styles, with Tempranillo being a staple of the region. Expect plenty of red and dark fruits, a hint of oak and some nice length and complexity.

The next red is also a Tempranillo but this time from the cool climate region of the Hill Tops, around Canberra. This is a new region by Australian standards and an even newer winery. Nick O'Leary is one of the gun winemakers of the area, and is a favourite of Matt Dunne, who is also from the Canberra region. We thought it would be cool to have these two Tempranillo's side by side as a comparison. As whilst there are some similarities, they are certainly quite different wines.



Matt Dunne - Sommelier

The wine from Canberra is more about prominent red fruit, without the added emphasis of oak. It is also a little more forward on the palate. The Rioja with a few more years under its belt, offers a little more complexity and length on the palate, but both wines are great to drink right now. The Hilltops / Canberra region is cooler climate than what you get in Rioja, and this adds another element to the wine as well. A cooler climate typically means a more elegant, medium bodied wine than a warmer climate and you can certainly see this from Nick O'Leary. It is nice to look at the same varietal from different regions, but what it cements in our mind, is that the characters and features of a wine region really do come to the forefront in most wines. Sure, the varietal characters are there, but a Tempranillo from the Hill Tops is more like a Shiraz from this region, as it is to a Tempranillo from Rioja. It will be interesting to see what you think. This is what I love about wine, for in the end, it is what you believe and think that matters the most.

The last wine, **2023 Shadowfax Nebbiolo**, is from a relatively new winery, established in 2000 and a 30-minute drive Southwest of Melbourne. Typical of a lot of wineries close to Melbourne, it has a modern architect designed winery, with an award-winning restaurant and function centre. Sometimes these destination cellar doors / wineries can forget why they are there in the first place, concentrating a little bit too much on the restaurant / weddings etc and forgetting about the wines. Thankfully Shadowfax also make some sensational wines. We have looked outside of the traditional Pinot Noir and Shiraz of the region and chosen a Nebbiolo, which is the traditional red grape variety of Piedmonte in Italy. These are the famous and very expensive Barolo's and Barberesco's which are highly sought of all over the world. Nebbiolo is typically a light to medium bodied wine on the red fruit spectrum of flavours with prominent and piercing acidity. It is closer to Pinot Noir than it is to Shiraz or Cabernet, but it tends to have more structure and more tannins than Pinot. We love Barolo at Bullion, but the pricing means we cannot fit it into one of our Sommelier Selections, but when we tasted this wine with Matt Dunne, we were all really impressed. The quality is in truth, better than a lot of wines we have tasted and drunk from both Piedmonte and Barolo. It has such elegance and sophistication the minute it hits the glass and then your nose. It has all the cherries and strawberries you would expect, but also this soft almost sensual element to it, supported by the lovely and strong tannins you expect from this varietal. We really loved this wine and cannot wait to drink more of it over the coming months. Whilst it will cellar well, I will be drinking my allocation as soon as possible.

I hope you will enjoy these wines as much as we did tasting them and bring on the warmer weather.

Matt the Bullionaire



Stu Freeman

Matt Eagan