

Wine Talk: June 2012

The newsletter of Living Wines: Edition 29

There have been two deliveries since the last newsletter so there is lots of interesting new wine in our warehouse. A more detailed description of the wines that have arrived is provided on the next page.

We recently ran a food and wine matching Masterclass at the Red Wine Weekend in Hobart where we matched a series of small dishes to a range of mostly natural wines from Tasmania, France and Italy. At the end of this newsletter we have included some of our musings at the Masterclass about pairing wine to food.

We also include a brief description of two very successful natural wine fairs held in London recently. The turn out to these fairs was extraordinary and there were almost five hundred producers showing their wines, including many of our suppliers.

You may have noticed that we have not taken on any new producers lately. The main reason is that we are buying more from each of the existing suppliers so that we can keep up the supply to the increasing number of restaurants, bottle shops and private customers who are coming back for more.

This month we have mainly concentrated on recent arrivals when designing the special packs. We have an unusual pack this month, namely three magnums – two of our best white wines and one Champagne, great for a celebration! We have a special pack consisting entirely of wines with 12% alcohol to show that you don't have to get a headache to enjoy good wines. We also have a winter pack of reds, a Domaine de la Garrelière pack, which includes three bottles of the Gamay Sans Tra La La 2011 and three bottles of Le Rouge 2010, which is 100% cabernet franc, and another pack consisting only of wines made from Gamay.

Remember that the special packs attract a 15% discount instead of a 10% discount, so if you order a special pack you really are getting a special deal (not that a 10% discount for most wines and free freight on your own selection isn't a good arrangement too)!

There is a link to our order form for these packs and any other wines at the end of this newsletter. But there's no need to use the order form. Just send us an email listing the wines and/or packs you would like to order if that suits you better. We'll confirm the price by return email before processing your order.

News from Living Wines

A new shipment arrives



Our latest shipment sees the return of the very popular wines from Axel Prifer who tends his vineyards in the Languedoc in the mountains behind Beziers. His wines are very pure, very natural, light in body but characterised by great depth of flavour. His Fou du Roi (the Jester) is a blend of equal parts of Grenache, Carignan and Cinsault and 10% of Cabernet Sauvignon. The Avanti Popolo (forward people!) is lighter in style than the Fou du Roi and is made from 100% Carignan. We have had the privilege of walking through Axel's beautiful vineyards that are surrounded by the forests to ensure that no spray can ever reach them. We have been delighted by the biodiversity present in his vineyards and we believe this helps produce fruit of exceptional quality. We were able to buy reasonable quantities of each of these wines as we got in early. These wines have no added sulphur so it's a great time of year to order them if they need to be shipped. (We love winter!)

This shipment also saw a large supply of the wines of the remarkable Jean-Paul Brun from Beaujolais. We have the rare and interesting Beaujolais Blanc 2010 back in stock, although we won't have it for much longer. This is a 100% Chardonnay from the Beaujolais which is drinking very nicely and is very good value. The lovely, pale Rosé 2010 made from Gamay also returns. We have restocked the Morgon 2010 and the Moulin a Vent 2010 and have received a special Fleurie called *Fleurie Grille Midi* where the vines are very old and grow in granitic soil. This is a fascinating cru which is worth trying now and also putting a few aside to try over the next ten years.

And the really good news is that the very popular and beautifully-structured l'Ancien Beaujolais is back along with small quantities of a slightly more intense cousin called l'Ancien Le Buissy 2009 where the vines are around 70 years old.

We have also received a shipment of the very fine wines from Savoie producer Domaine Belluard. We have re-stocked the enormously popular Vin de Savoie Ayse sparkling wine made from the rare Gringet grape. We have also received our first supplies of Mont Blanc Brut Zero 2008 sparkling wine and more Le Feu 2010 and Les Alpes 2010, which are also all made with Gringet.

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And the fox returns! Three pallets of Jura goodies from Philippe Bornard including lots of Le Blanc de la Rouge chardonnay, a refresh of the stocks of La Chamade 2009 and Le Ginglet 2009, the sparkling Savagnin called Ça Va Bien, the gorgeously gulpable Tant Mieux and a small consignment of the precious Vin Jaune.

And speaking of popular, plenty of the new vintage of the gulpable favourite Gamay Sans Tra La La 2011 from Domaine de la Garrelière are also being unpacked as well as the lovely Le Rouge (the 2010 is the best vintage we've had yet) which is 100% Cabernet Franc at a very good price.

A new shipment of Causse Marines wines from Gaillac in south-west France has also arrived with the white Les Greilles 2011 (this vintage is particularly good) and more of the red Peyrouzelles 2010 as well as lots of the lovely dessert wine Grain de Folie Doux 2011. We also have a small allocation of their sparkling Mauzac called Preambulles. And for those who seek out the strange and the completely different we also have a small allocation of the mysterious Mystere (made from Mauzac) which has been maturing under a veil for some years and is made solera-style with four different vintages included (1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000).

Melbourne Tasting at Blackhearts & Sparrows:

Living Wines and Andrew Guard Wine Imports

Come and meet us at a special wine tasting at Blackhearts & Sparrows (113 - 115 Scotchmer Street North Fitzroy) on the 14th July. We will be sharing the tasting with Andrew Guard Wine Imports from Sydney. Their Victorian representative Jeremy Shiell will be with us for the event. We will be showing some of our recent arrivals, from throughout France

Check on the Living Wines web site closer to the day for the exact times of the tasting.

London Natural Wine Fairs a Huge Success!



Two wine fairs highlighting organic, biodynamic and natural wines were held recently in London on the same weekend and saw thousands of eager consumers and members of the trade flocking to sample wines from hundreds of producers

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from countries around the world. Many of our suppliers were there and we were envious of our friends who were able to attend. Next year perhaps!!

The fairs demonstrated the strength of the natural wine movement where two organisations were able to both mount highly successful shows at the same time.

It was interesting to see the press reaction to the wines of Domaine Belluard which we import. We think this is the first time Dominique has shown his wines outside France and the reaction was very, very positive.

Interestingly too, many of the journalists who wrote about the fairs also commented on how good the food was at both venues, and how different it was from what's available at most wine shows. We're not in the least bit surprised. It's the same at all the wine tastings we've been to in France where small producers like ours are present. It's a generalisation but our producers and their friends like drinking and eating. They seem to be able to turn any wine event into a party. The food has to be good too and is always supplied by similarly-minded small, artisan producers!

So it's no surprise to turn up at a wine tasting, like this one in Avallon last year, and find suppliers such as Thierry from Troyes, a renowned maker of andouillettes as well. (Some people might recognise the renowned winemaker in this photograph too from his silhouette!)



It's all part of the culture that helps define this generous, inspiring community of small producers who grow their own grapes and make their wine with as little intervention as possible.

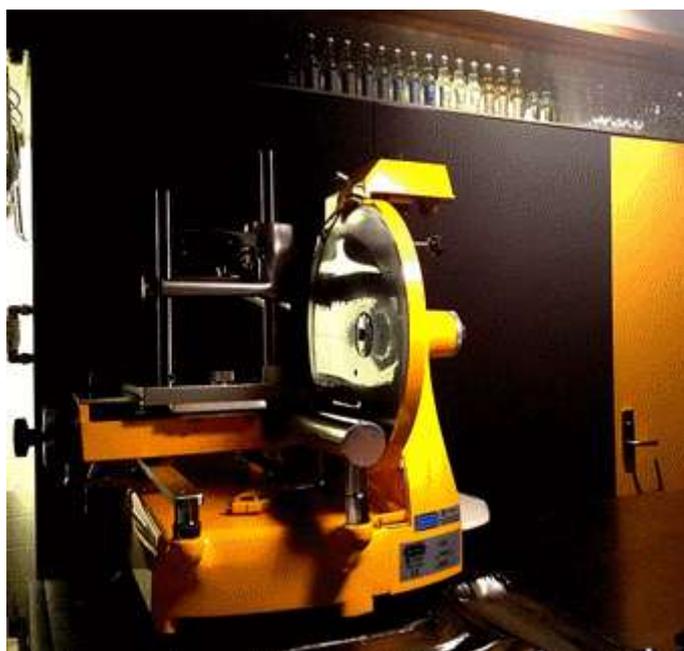
Sidecar in Hobart – a natural wine bar

Tiny Sidecar opened as the 'waiting room' for the immensely popular Garagistes which is just around the corner. However, it has taken on a life of its own and is now a popular meeting place for people who enjoy drinking (rather more than judging) wine. The wine list is shorter and perhaps edgier than that of its sister venue. Living Wines supplies some of the wines on the list such as the ever-popular sparkling

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Gringet from the Savoie, the Domaine Belluard Ayse. There's also Axel Pruffer's edgy Avanti Popolo as well as a number of our other wines.

There is a short, but satisfying, food menu, including addictive grilled wagyu tongue and wagyu hotdogs, and Luke Burgess's fabulous charcuterie is also available. The charcuterie is even better since the arrival of the hand-cranked slicer, which slices the meat more gently and at a lower temperature. Check out its bespoke bright yellow paint job, which defined the bar's colour scheme. (Notice how well it matches the door of the 5 star toilet.)



Pack 1: Magnum 3 pack



This selection of three beautiful white wines in magnums (1.5 litres) provides a rare opportunity to snare some great wines in a format that is perfect for a celebration (or as one of our winemakers often says – a magnum is the perfect size for two people, if one of them is not drinking!).

Hervé Villemade Cour-Cheverny Les Acacias 2010 – Les Acacias is made from Romorantin – in fact the Cour-Cheverny appellation in the Loire Valley is now the only appellation where this grape is permitted because the soil and the climate here ensures that the vines thrive and the grapes ripen in time for picking. This wine is very lightly oxidative making it a perfect match to a range of foods, especially cheese.

Domaine Mosse Anjou Blanc 2010 – The Anjou Blanc from René Mosse is one of our most popular wines. It is made from 100% Chenin Blanc. The Anjou Blanc is made from grapes picked from younger vines in the Mosse vineyard. The vineyards lie of south-west facing slopes and the soils are composed of sand and gravel lying on a bed of schist. The grapes are picked and sorted manually. The average yield is very low for a dry white wine at 25 hectolitres per hectare. The grapes are left to ferment naturally in wooden fûts and undergo both alcoholic fermentation and malolactic fermentation. There is a tiny amount of residual sugar in this fresh-tasting wine with a lovely mouthfeel.

Piillot Père et Fils Champagne Cuvée de Reserve Brut Magnum – Roland Piillot makes beautiful champagnes in the Cotes des Bar region in the southern part of Champagne where both Pinot Noir and Chardonnay thrive along with Pinot Meunier. When we first tasted this elegant Champagne we remarked on its beautiful light golden colour, the citrus aromas and the silky freshness on the palate and very good length. The base wine is made from 50% Pinot Noir, 40% Chardonnay and 10% of Pinot Meunier providing additional richness. Further complexity is gained from using base wine from three different vintages to make the champagne. This is an ideal aperitif!

The RRP for this selection is \$229 but the pack price is only \$194.65 which includes freight.

Pack 2: The 12% 6 Pack



This six pack comprises six wines that tip the scales at just 12% alcohol, a level being sought by more and more drinkers these days as they turn away from the big, bold, alcoholic monsters. They may be lower in alcohol but each one has good depth of flavour and good length on the palate. There are three white wines and three reds.

Terres Dorées (Jean-Paul Brun) Beaujolais Blanc 2010 – This great-value Chardonnay gets its freshness from natural vinification and no use of oak barrels. The famous Chambers Street Wines in New York say that it is one of the best values in the store. The vines thrive on the limestone soils in Beaujolais. It is a lively, fresh wine that is drinking beautifully right now.

Domaine du Moulin Cheverny Blanc Domaine 2011 – This is an elegant, refined wine that is perfect with a range of foods including seafood, cheese and white meats. A blend of 70% Sauvignon Blanc and 30% Chardonnay this wine is only produced in small quantities from vines that are between 18 and 24 years old. It is a fresh, lively wine with lovely fruit and a nice balancing acidity.

Domaine Belluard Vin de Savoie Gringet Les Alpes 2010 – This beautiful white wine is made from 100% Gringet, a traditional, indigenous grape of the Savoie region. This is a classic wine and a real treat.

Terres Dorées (Jean-Paul Brun) Morgon 2010 – Morgon is considered to be one of the very best areas for Beaujolais. This cru is one of the freshest and liveliest wines from this area that we have tasted. This wine has cherry fruits along with a trademark spicy minerality and plenty of structure.

Domaine du Moulin Cheverny Rouge Domaine 2010 – This wine is a classic from Herve Villemade's winery in Cellettes in the Loire Valley! An assemblage of 50% Pinot Noir and 50% Gamay. It is a lively, fresh, flavoursome wine that shows off the two grapes perfectly.

Nicolas Carmarans Vin de Pays de l'Aveyron l'Altre Rouge 2010 – The Nicolas Carmarans l'Altre is a wine that uniquely represents the wines of the Aveyron in Central France. It is a single variety 100% Fer Servadou (known locally as Mansois). The grapes undergo semi-carbonic maceration in 15 hectolitre conical tanks for 20 days and are then transferred to old barriques for 12 months.

The RRP for this selection is \$193 but the pack price is only \$164.05 which includes freight.

Pack 3: Red winter wines 6 Pack



This selection comprises 6 red wines that represent excellent value for money and exceptionally good drinking at this time of year.

Domaine de la Garrelière Vin de France Gamay Sans Tra La La 2011 – This was one of the wines that first made us sit up and take notice of the natural wine movement that was sweeping through the Loire and Beaujolais and on into the rest of France. It is made from 100% Gamay and is fermented naturally without the 'help' of commercial yeasts. It is fresh, lively, full of flavour and, above all, delicious.

Domaine de la Garrelière Touraine Le Rouge 2010 – This may be Domaine de la Garrelière's entry level red but it is a beautiful, mouth-filling, smooth red wine from the Touraine appellation made from 100% Cabernet Franc. The wine is smooth and elegant, has a beautiful perfume and is low in sulphur.

Domaine du Moulin Cheverny Les Ardilles Rouge 2010 – A beautiful wine made by Herve Villemade in the Loire Valley! An assemblage of 80% Pinot Noir and 20% Gamay, the grapes are sourced from a special part of the vineyard. It is a lively, fresh, flavoursome wine that shows elegance, length and grace.

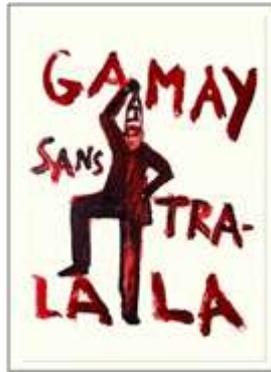
Domaine Mosse Vin de France Bois Rouge – This wine is produced from younger vines from the same parcels as the Mosse Anjou Rouge. It comprises 25% Cabernet Sauvignon and 75% Cabernet Franc. It is ready to drink now, in fact at a recent tasting this wine performed in a stellar manner, showing beautiful, soft, well-integrated tannins and a long finish. Alcohol level is 12.5%.

Saint Jean du Barroux Ventoux La Source Rouge 2008 – This wine comprises 70% Grenache, 25% Carignan and 5% Cinsault. The yields for this wine are around 30 hectolitres per hectare and the grapes are all hand picked and then 100% destemmed. Maceration extends over 7 days. This vintage was aged for two and a half years before bottling and is 15% alcohol.

Michel Gahier Arbois Trousseau Le Clousot 2010 – a lovely Trousseau from the village of Montigny-les-Arsures in the Jura. This wine is light in style but with good structure, a vibrant freshness and hints of smokiness. It has very good length and is quite juicy - hence is very drinkable.

The RRP for this selection of 6 wines is \$180 but the pack price is a very reasonable \$153 including freight.

Pack 4: Domaine de la Garrelière red 6 pack



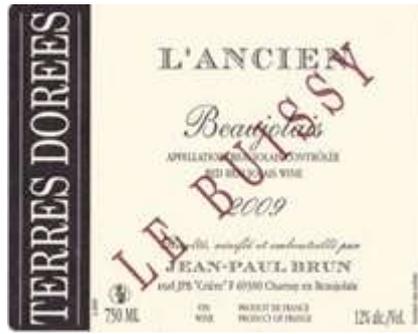
Domaine de la Garrelière sits on some beautiful rolling hills just near the pretty village of Richelieu south of Tours. François Plouzeau makes beautiful wines that have real personality. The Gamay Sans Tra La La is a lively, drinkable wine that seems to be enjoyed by everyone who tries it. The Le Rouge is a soft, rounded Cabernet Franc that would sell for much more if it came from Chinon or Bourgueil.

Domaine de la Garreliere Vin de Table Gamay Sans Tra La La 2011 (3 bottles) – This wine is made from 100% Gamay and is fermented naturally without the 'help' of commercial yeasts. It is fresh, lively, full of flavour and, above all, delicious. Good for drinking anytime, anywhere. The joyous label captures the essence of this wine. The French would call this a 'gouleyant' wine, meaning that it is gluggable or smashable

Domaine de la Garreliere Touraine Le Rouge 2010 (3 bottles) – The Touraine Le Rouge from Pascale and Francois Plouzeau is a biodynamic wine that shows why people in the Loire drink Cabernet Franc. The wine is smooth and elegant, has a beautiful perfume and is very low in sulphur. We are very happy with this vintage. It represents exceptional value for money.

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$174 but the pack price is a very reasonable \$147.90 including freight.

Pack 5: Gamay 6 pack



Gamay is one of the great grapes of the world! When you squeeze into the tiny l'Avant wine bar next to Le Comptoir in Paris and see people smashing back magnums of Lapierre Morgon you know it is special. Gamay gets a bad press from some bad winemaking practices in Beaujolais, but when you taste wines that haven't been processed with artificial yeasts and made from grapes that haven't been sprayed you can see what a great grape this is. All of these wines fit that description.

Domaine St Nicolas Fiefs Vendéens Gammes en May 2010 – The Domaine Saint Nicolas Gammes en May is a light, refreshing and delicious pure Gamay red wine. This wine represents excellent value for money at this price. Because this wine is very natural you might find quite a bit of sediment in the bottle - but it doesn't matter, this wine is really, really fresh and delicious.

Domaine de la Garreliere Vin de Table Gamay Sans Tra La La 2011 – Made from 100% Gamay and fermented naturally. It is fresh, lively, full of flavour and, above all, delicious. The joyous label captures the essence of this wine. The French would call this a 'gouleyant' wine, meaning that it is gluggable or smashable

Terres Dorées Beaujolais l'Ancien 2010 – This is the quintessential Jean-Paul Brun wine! It is a noble Beaujolais with great structure (from the old vines used to make this wine), elegance and enormous appeal, but at a price that is very accessible.

Terres Dorées Beaujolais l'Ancien Le Buissey 2009 – The Le Buissey differs from the l'Ancien. First, the grapes are sourced from seventy year old vines. Second the élevage takes place in 5 year old barriques rather than in tank. The fruits here remind us of raspberry and cherry and there is a beautiful umami-like savouriness and a chalkiness that surprises given that it comes from a granite terroir.

Terres Dorées Morgon 2010 – Morgon is considered to be the very best area for Beaujolais. This cru is one of the freshest and liveliest wines from this area that we have tasted. You will love the cherry fruits in this wine along with the trademark spicy minerality as well as the strong structure that this wine displays.

Terres Dorées Moulin á Vent 2010 – The Moulin a Vent is an elegant beauty that belies its price. There are berry flavours on the palate and a very pleasant savoury finish. The first time we tried this wine we were blown away by both the structure of the wine on the palate and the beautiful, elegant, lively finish.

The RRP for this selection of 6 bottles is \$188 but the pack price is a very reasonable \$159.80 including freight.

Grenache grape variety

This late-ripening grape variety thrives best in warmer climates such as Australia, California, Spain (where it is called Garnacha and forms the backbone of the famous Rioja wines), Sardinia (where it is called Cannonau and the The Oxford Companion to Wine says it is undoubtedly the same grape) and the south of France including the Languedoc and the Rhone Valley. It is a key grape in many of the great Chateauneuf-du-Pape wines and, on the other side of the river, the wonderful Tavel rosé.

Some people think it originated in Spain and gradually moved across the Pyrenees to Rousillon in southern France and then to the Rhone Valley and afterwards on to Italy. The Italians, of course, believe that it was originally from Sardinia and when the Spanish ruled that island from the 13th to the 18th century it was taken to Spain and then began its journey to France. The Vitis International Variety Catalogue gives the origin of this grape as Spain, however.

Here is a photo of the vine leaf:



Photo courtesy of Vitis International Variety Catalogue

We love Grenache because some of our favourite winemakers do great things with this grape variety.

One of the best is Axel Pruffer from the Languedoc who makes the amazing Fou du Roi which is a blend of Grenache, Carignan and Cinsault with a little Cabernet Sauvignon. This is a beautifully textured wine which as chef James Henry once said to us when he tasted a similar wine 'it dances lightly on the palate'.

We also love the light touch of the Saint Jean du Barroux Ventoux Le Rosé 2010 made by our friend Philippe Gimel in the Ventoux region of France. He makes red wines of great power and elegance but also can turn his hand to a light, elegant rosé made from this lovely grape.

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Of course Philippe also produces some deep red wines such as the Saint Jean du Barroux Ventoux La Pierre Noire Rouge 2006 which is made from 85% Grenache grown in his mystical vineyard on the lower slopes of Mont Ventoux.

The Swedish wine writer Magnus Ericsson had this to say about the 2006:

Dark red colour. Full-bodied super concentrated taste of dark berries, herbs de Provence, tobacco, chocolate and leather. Quite firm but well integrated acids/tannins that are carried by luscious fruit and a well balanced minerality. Long complex aftertaste!

And if you unsure and want to dip your toes in the water try a half case of the Saint Jean du Barroux Ventoux La Source Rouge 2008 which is Philippe's entry level wine. It comprises 70% Grenache, 25% Carignan and 5% Cinsault and retails for only \$32 a bottle (and we will give you a 15% discount for the six bottles and ship it free of charge to eastern destinations).

Unfortunately we can't offer a six pack of his two more upmarket wines as they are always snapped up by Denmark and Swedish importers. However this year we were allocated a very small quantity of his two premium wines Saint Jean du Barroux Ventoux La Pierre Noire Rouge 2007 and Saint Jean du Barroux Ventoux L'Argile Rouge 2007 both of which comprise a minimum of 75% Grenache. If you would like to order one of each and then make up a six pack with some other wines we will also give you a 15% discount.

Appellation: Gevrey-Chambertin



Gevrey-Chambertin is a wine appellation in the Burgundy region of France covering the communes of Brochon and Gevrey-Chambertin which lie quite close to the southern suburbs of the city of Dijon at the northern end of the famous Cote d'Or. It was first proclaimed in September 1936.

The name of the appellation can appear on the label followed by the words Premier Cru if the grapes were grown in any of 26 nominated 'climats'. Only red wines made from Pinot Noir supplemented by small quantities of Chardonnay, Pinot Gris and Pinot Blanc are permitted. The wines from this appellation are of a very high quality.

Dominique Derain produces a great wine from this appellation from the En Vosne climat. This is a small plot of land within Gevrey-Chambertin. The grapes are fermented naturally and the wine is raised in old oak barrels to ensure that the flavour of the terroir is not diminished.

'-age' words in French winemaking

Pigeage

In the last newsletter we introduced you to two French winemaking terms ending with 'age'. This month we will talk about 'pigeage' which, roughly translated means punching down.



Drawing courtesy arnodietrich.free.fr

When red wine is fermenting, the grape skins and other solids form a 'cap' on the surface of the grape juice. This removes the skins from contact with the juice and results in a paler coloured liquid than may be desirable. The solution is to engage in 'pigeage' or the punching down of the cap so that more of the colour and phenolic compounds can be extracted from the solids. The cap can form very quickly so it may require punching down more than once a day.

The traditional way of conducting pigeage in France is to jump into the open vat and punch it down with your feet, although in the new world it is often pushed down with a special implement saving the clothes of the person required to do the pigeage!

Food and wine matching

This article contains many of the ideas explored at a recent master class we gave on food and wine pairing at the Red Wine Weekend in Hobart

The art and science of food and wine matching is evolving. This is partly due to a new understanding of the interplay between certain wines and certain foods and an explosion in the variety of wines made from grapes never before seen outside the obscure regions of Europe. The past few years has also seen a broadening in the range of wine styles with orange wines, green wines, yellow wines, black wines and others being added to the traditional styles.

This explosion is matched with a paucity of good writing about the interplay of food and wine in the popular press. Food writers often describe dishes in a great deal of detail and then have a single throw-away line referring to a 'cheeky savvy b' that they drank with the meal.

It is common to read a detailed restaurant review where no space at all is devoted to the interplay of food and wine. And a similar problem exists with some wine writers who sometimes give a nod to the food that should be eaten with a particular wine but usually drawing from a list of traditional pairings.

Thirty years ago the dominant paradigm was to match white wines with white meats and red wines with red meats, and curiously, red wines with cheese.

This was a useful broad brush approach for people dipping their toes into the world of wine for the first time. It was also at a time when many dishes based of red meat were similarly constructed whether the meat was beef or lamb or pigeon or pheasant. There was a slab of protein, there was a heavily reduced jus based on red wine or port or Madeira or similar and there were some vegetables on the side. A big red wine was probably required for such a dish.

However in the nineties people started to experiment more and also started to think more about flavour profiles. Tastes were divided into sweet, sour, salty, bitter and umami and wines were chosen to match the taste characteristics of the dish. Wines were chosen to counter-balance the sweetness or the saltiness or to even further enhance the umami. So a salty dish may be paired to a Vézelay Chardonnay which had derived its saltiness from the terroir in that area or a sweet and sour dish might be served with a Riesling because the flavour compounds in both are similar.

And matches have become even more interesting with restaurants such as NOMA, Mugaritz, the Fat Duck, Per Se, Commonwealth, the Tasting Kitchen, Michel Bras and Osteria Franciscana all moving to lighter, less protein dominated options paired to interesting wine matches most often based on natural wines. At a recent meal at NOMA, for example, every wine served through the meal was from Champagne, including two still wines.

These matches are not something new, in fact taste receptors were mapped by German Dieter Hanig in an article published in Philosophische Studien in 1901 and

which were subsequently dumbed down by a Harvard University psychologist Edwin Boring with his 'bitterness at the back, sweetness on the tip of the tongue' mantra. It is all much more complex than that because while there are 10,000 taste receptors in the tongue there are also thousands of taste receptors in the roof of the mouth, the epiglottis, the throat and even the lining of the intestine!

François Chartier is a sommelier from Canada and has published a book called *Taste Buds and Molecules: The Art and Science of Food with Wine* in which he talks about the harmony between certain foods and certain wines that transcends simplistic approaches such as 'red wine with red meat' theories.

He questions classic pairings such as Roquefort with Sauternes as he believes that the Sauternes is completely overpowered by the cheese. But he believes that there is a synergy between black olives and Shiraz due to the presence in both of the bicyclic terpene Rotundone which is a hydrocarbon molecule. This leads him to suggest a sushi dish of pepper, black olives, wild rice and nori to pair with Shiraz.

Terpene molecules are also responsible for the conifer aromas in rosemary and Riesling leading Chartier to suggest this as a pairing even though rosemary is not common in Alsace – one of the spiritual homes of Riesling.

Saffron, octopus, lavender, raisins and black tea, tomato and watermelon all share the same compounds with Riesling so a tomato and watermelon salad with Riesling or a carpaccio of beef with sweet and sour dressing based on raisins that we had in Pigna in Corsica teamed beautifully with a local white wine made from Vermentinu which shares similar compounds to Riesling.

Cinnamon is another fascinating spice to pair with wine. Francois Chartier says in this book:

"The fragrance of a given spice or herb is not attributable to a single molecule; rather it is composed of a cocktail of volatile molecules, in variable proportions, which confer an ultimate aromatic signature. It is also important to note that, as in the case of a wine, the terroir, climate, and growing methods significantly influence the relative proportions of aromatic compounds in spices and herbs.

Occasionally, certain aromatic compounds dominate the others in quantity and power, and so define the ingredient's major tone: this is the case, for example, with cinnamic aldehyde (also called cinnamaldehyde) for cinnamon.

Cinnamon also contains ethyl cinnamate, an ester whose fruity balsamic fragrance helps give cinnamon its signature aroma. Ethyl cinnamate also occurs in strawberries."

Ethyl cinnamate also develops in red wines that undergo carbonic maceration, such as Beaujolais and is one of four primary esters detected in the Pinot Noirs of Burgundy¹. We all know about enhancing the flavour of a strawberry by dipping it in

¹ Andrew John Taylor & Donald S. Mottram (eds), *Flavour Science: Recent Developments*. The Royal Society of Chemistry, Proceedings of the Eighth Weurman Flavour Research Symposium, 1996.

balsamic vinegar, but try dipping it in aged balsamic vinegar and freshly pounded cinnamon and then sipping a Saint Aubin or a Santenay!

Let's take a look at another flavour compound - sotolon. It is a fairly simple compound with a molecular formula of $C_6H_8O_2$. Sotolon is found in natural products such as lovage and fenugreek seed and some mushrooms, but it is also developed in the famous yellow wine of the Jura called Vin Jaune and in flor sherry, although it is present to some extent in all red and white wines. It is also present in dry white wines that have experienced some oxidation during aging².

We have found that curries based on fenugreek go very well with oxidative Jura white wines such as the Les Marnes from Philippe Bornard and the Les Crêts and the La Fauquette from Michel Gahier. The common feature is the sotolon. We also find that they go very well with a red wine from the Aveyron made by Nicolas Carmarans called Mauvais Temps. This is a favourite wine of a friend of ours who is originally from Sri Lanka. The first time she tried this wine she called it a 'curry leaf' wine because she could smell curry leaves in the glass. This wine probably has more than usual sotolon because Nicolas puts his wines out in the sun before bottling to 'make them stronger' and this exposure to the sun increases the percentage of sotolon in the wine.

And, of course, the other magic pairing is the hard cheese of the Jura called Comté matched to an oxidative white wine from the same region such as a Vin Jaune or a Chardonnay that has spent some time 'under the veil'.

Recently we ran a masterclass in food and wine matching in Hobart where we found the following pairings worked very well:

- An oyster paired with a sparkling Gringet from Domaine Belluard in the Savoie. Some in the group preferred a more traditional pairing of the oyster with the delightful Domaine de la Cadette Melon de Bourgogne.
- A slice of Garagistes' smoked eel sitting on a mound of braised kale matched to a 2010 d'Meure Chardonnay and a La Stoppa Emilia IGT Ageno 2007, an orange wine made from white grapes that had extended skin contact. Interestingly, some of the participants did not like the unfamiliar orange wine when they first tried it, but changed their mind when they drank it with the eel and kale.
- Wursthaus smoked wagyu brisket with the Agrarian Kitchen's mustardy tarragon pickles that matched nicely with Joe Holyman's Project X Pinot Noir and also with a Derain Pommard Les Petits Noizons 2009.
- Possibly the most perfect match was a Bruny Island C2 unpasteurised cheese and an Elgaar Ruby cheddar with two oxidative Jura wines, the Michel Gahier Les Crêts Chardonnay and the Michel Gahier Vin Jaune 2004.

² Imre Blank & Peter Schieberle Analysis of the seasoning-like flavour substances of a commercial lovage extract. *Flavour and Fragrance Journal*, Volume 8, Issue 4, pages 191–195, July/August 1993.

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- The final food and wine pairing was a complex, layered dessert based on quince made by Alistair Wise from Sweet Envy with a sweet rosé from the Loire by René Mosse called Achillée. The rosé is made from Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Grolleau Gris, Grolleau Noir and Gamay and is delicate, perfumed and just slightly sweet.

After sampling twelve wines with the food we allowed the participants to try a wine that could stand alone without food. They finished by sipping on a very light sparkling Ploussard, the Philippe Bornard Vin de France Tant-Mieux Pétillant Naturel. This light and ethereal beauty is a perfect aperitif or to drink late at night as a 'full stop' to an evening of indulgence.

This is very much an introduction to some of our thinking about food and wine. It is a work in progress which we will add to as we discover more about good food and wine pairings.

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