



Welcome to the October 2021 Wine Taste Talk To Your Door pack!

The Short Story - An easy reference to the tasting notes

Wine	Page
2021 Bests Riesling Great Western Vic	2
2021 Spinifex Rosé Barossa Valley SA	4
Sicilian Seafood Stew Recipe	6
2018 Virago La Mistura Nebbiolo Beechworth Vic	9
2019 Domain de Pierres Seches Syrah, St Joseph Northern Rhone France	11
2019 Naked Run Shiraz Cabernet Clare Valley SA	13
2017 West Cape Howe Bookends Cabernet Sauvignon Great Southern WA	15

As a guide to choosing which wine to drink when, the wines in this booklet are listed from lighter to more intense, and white to red.



Wine Taste Talk...To Your Door

Tasting Note

Wine

2021 Bests Riesling.

I promised that some wines in the packs would be classics, and this is one that fits the bill perfectly.

Bests was established in 1860 when Henry Best first planted Riesling in the 'Nursery Block' at Great Western in western Victoria. They have continuously produced wine on site since 1866. The winery has only been owned by 2 families in its long history. The Thomson family bought the winery in 1920 and Ben Thomson is the 5th generation of his family to run the winery. The winemaker is Justin Purser.

The Cellar Door is fabulous, not one of those fangled modern buildings, it is rustic to its core and well worth a visit.

Region

Great Western, Grampians Vic

Viticulture and winemaking

Fruit for this Riesling are from vines planted in 1978 and 1998, bringing great intensity and flavour to the wine. The climate is continental, which means during the growing season they have warm days with cooler nights. This helps to retain the acidity in the fruit while producing a very balanced wine and the aromatics that Riesling is famous for.

The 2021 season was very friendly with spring rainfall and mostly dry warm conditions during Autumn to allow even ripening and flavour development.

Riesling needs little attention in the winery, and the less the better for retaining the delicate aromatics. Stainless steel is used for fermentation and the wine has little maturation prior to bottling. You can see that this is a 2021 vintage and was released around September.

The Numbers

11.7% Alcohol

So, What's it Like?

Appearance is pale straw colour with some green hints. The aroma is floral with plenty of citrus from lemon to mandarin.

The palate is citrus rich with lime, lemon sherbet to subtle Meyer lemon flavours. Acidity is lively and crisp but moderated by a hint of sweetness. The mouthfeel is generous with good complexity and a long finish, rather moorish.

Best Drinking

Its perfect for the coming summer while it is so young and vibrant, however like all Best's Riesling it will age beautifully for at least 15 years.

Food Match

I tried this with a slightly salty Chinese dish, and it was a great match. The classic Riesling match of white fish or oysters would be perfect as well. Perhaps oysters with a Vietnamese nuoc cham dressing.

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\$25 A bargain I am sure you will agree.



Wine Taste Talk... To Your Door

Tasting Note

Wine

2021 Spinifex Rosé. This wine is a blend of 4 varieties, Grenache (52%) Mataro (Mourvedre) (30%) Shiraz (16%) Cinsault (2%)

Region

Barossa Valley SA

Viticulture and winemaking

Pete Schell and Magali Gely are the new breed of Barossa wine producers where the emphasis is on lower alcohol and more elegant styles. Their experience in the South of France comes through in their wines made mainly of varieties from the Rhone in France.

The fruit for this wine was sourced from a wide range of vineyards aged between 20 to 90 years old (average 50 years), mostly bush vine and low or no irrigation, this leads to concentration of flavours.

The 2021 vintage saw a mild and longer growing season than in recent vintages, allowing gradual ripening and the delicate flavours found in this wine.

The grapes were handpicked especially from bush vines which being so low to the ground are not suitable for machine harvesting and which some winemakers just prefer for quality reasons.

The fruit was then chilled overnight, this helps to retain delicate flavours. The crushed bunches were left to macerate for 6 to 24 hours (to extract colour and tannin) before being pressed into stainless steel tanks. 5% went into old French oak demi-muids (600lt). Fermentation in older large format oak is more about adding texture than flavour.

Indigenous and cultured yeast were used for fermentation.

The individual parcels of each variety were kept separate and spent 2 months on lees (dead yeast cells that bring creaminess and complexity). They were then blended and bottled without filtration. Filtration helps to clarify the wine however it can also take out some of the flavours and complexity, so some winemakers choose to avoid it.

The Numbers

12.5% Alcohol

So, What's it Like?

Another Rosé that delighted, the colour is light salmon and the nose is red fruits and watermelon (I read that and thought someone had a good imagination, but my tasting backed it up) see if you can smell it.

It definitely finishes on the dry side, with good acidity that makes you want to go back for more.

Best Drinking

Now until 2025

Food Match

This wine is matched to our recipe this month - Sicilian Seafood Stew on the following page. It will pair well with lots of other Spring/Summer foods such as salads, salmon, prawns, anti-pasta, grilled chicken, and fish, to name a few.

\$\$\$

\$28 Great Value when you consider the quality fruit that goes into this wine.

Sicilian Seafood Stew - Match this recipe with the Spinifex Rose



I love this dish for its rich deep flavours, its versatility and ease. Perfect for a summer lunch outside under the sun, or for a warm night in with a fire blazing in the corner. It really suits a good old dinner party where you don't want to spend the night in the kitchen, the base can be made early, even the day before and the seafood just needs to be prepped and left in the fridge until required. It needs fingers and should be eaten with passion.

The Stock

The basis of this dish is a full flavoured seafood stock, which is easy to make. I always (read 'sometimes') freeze prawn shells and other seafood discards until I have enough to make a stock and then freeze it for later use. If not, use Campbell's fish stock with confidence – another great product from the Goulburn Valley!

As to the seafood, sourcing good quality fresh ingredients is the key

The Seafood

Please seek Australian wild caught prawns, there are good quality raw peeled prawns available, or if not, the alternative is Australian green prawns (banana, king or tiger) and peel them yourself – it's really very easy if a bit messy.

We also farm fabulous black mussels in Australia, they're cheap and generally available all year round at fish markets. If you can't find them fresh, there are some great packaged products such as the Kinkamooka product from SA.

Fish wise, this recipe needs a firm white flesh, any of the schnappers are good, as is ling or trevally. Cut it with the grain, or along the flake to help prevent it breaking up in the stew.

If you can source fresh squid, great, just clean them, chop up the body into strips, and add back the tentacles to use the whole beast. Otherwise, tubes will work well – just remember we don't necessarily want rings, although small calamari tubes make nice small tender rings. Like all the seafood, we cook the squid quickly to ensure it is tender. In all cases, ensure that the quills are removed.

Ingredients for 4 (or 2 if you're hungry...)

The seafood

250g firm white flesh fish, cut into fork size pieces

250g peeled green prawns

250g calamari cut into strips

250g black mussels

Any other nice seafood – clams, pipis, rock lobster(crayfish) will also work.

The sauce

1 bulb of fennel finely diced (cut it into julienne strips first, then dice). Don't worry, any fine dice will do!

1 brown onion, finely diced

3 cloves of garlic, smashed

1 can of crushed tomatoes

100ml tomato passata

250ml fish stock

100ml white wine

Tsp dried oregano

Tsp dried basil

Olive oil for cooking

Salt and pepper to season

Chopped fresh parsley to serve

Bread stick, bias sliced, buttered and toasted under the grill. A nice sour dough stick works well, if you really like garlic, use garlic butter for this.

Fresh white bread to soak up the sauce!

Method

First make the sauce

In a large heavy bottomed casserole dish heat the oil until shimmering and add the fennel and onion. Cook until clear, then add the garlic (never try to fry onion and garlic together – one always burns!) Sauté together until the garlic is cooked, then add the wine. Cook a little to reduce the raw wine flavour, then add the dried herbs, stock, tomatoes and passata. Cook this to a soup or stew type of consistency – don't hesitate to add more liquid ingredients as required. Season with S&P as desired, remembering that once the seafood is added it's not easy to stir the pot.

Bread

Slice some of the bread stick on the diagonal, allowing at least two slices per plate. Either rub the slices with fresh garlic or make garlic butter and spread this on the bread. Grill or barbecue these as a nice edible garnish.

Then add the seafood pieces to the stew

Push them under the surface of the simmering base to make sure that they cook evenly, and when cooked serve into large soup or salad bowls. The mussels always look best on top, if any don't open just separate the shells with a knife – they will be fine to eat, always are.

Garnish with chopped parsley and stand up the grilled bread slices around the edges of the bowl.

Serve with fresh white bread on the side and don't forget the finger bowls.



David Jacobs
Aka the Chief Firepit Officer



Wine Taste Talk...To Your Door

Tasting Note

Wine

2018 Virago La Mistura Nebbiolo

Nebbiolo is a red grape originating in the Piedmont region of Italy, it is known for big tannins with moderate colour intensity. Nebbiolo can be difficult to grow and like Pinot Noir can lean towards the expensive side. This is a moderately priced Nebbiolo and if it your first introduction to the variety - enjoy.

Region

Beechworth NE Vic

Viticulture and winemaking

Karen Coates and Prue Keith are the owners and tend the vines, while Rick Kinzbrunner makes the wines. Rick is the owner/winemaker at Giaconda Beechworth, an iconic label producing Chardonnay and Pinot Noir.

This Vintage had a little help with 3% of fruit from Ricks Red Hill vineyard in Beechworth, the rest being all from the Virago vineyard.

I spoke to Karen, and she mentioned that Nebbiolo tends to crop very heavily, which can reduce flavour and tannin, conversely less fruit more intensity. Despite lots of bunch thinning during the season, the cooler wetter spring had led to large bunch sizes with lower tannin than they require for the main Virago label. Thus, as with the 2013 vintage they used the La Mistura label.

In 2013 they added a little Cabernet from a nearby vineyard and for 2018 they added the 3% of Nebbiolo from Ricks vineyard, it is amazing what a difference even a small % can make. So, they got creative with what was good fruit but not as intense as they like.

Hence, the wine is a blend of 2 vintages (85% from '18 with 15% from '17). A winemaker under Australian law can add up to 15% of another variety or vintage without having to

declare it on the label. They would blend vintages like this to give a style that they are looking for if the current vintage did not provide what they required.

Fermentation took place in a large open concrete tank and an 800lt amphora. Yeast was indigenous to the fruit and the Giaconda winery, with no cultivated yeast added. The wine was basket pressed after 8 weeks giving it plenty of time on skins post ferment to extract colour and tannin.

It is matured in 3 different types of vessels: 64% large-format gamba, (large 1600lt barrels that sit upright on the end) 21% old French barrel (that give more texture than flavour influence) and 15% (amphora an ancient type of clay wine vessel). So, you can see that oak influence was kept low.

The Numbers

14% Alcohol

The Clones used were – 5,7,8,9 and 10. The characteristics of some of the clones are:

7 is known for tannin, 9 for floral aspect and 10 for savoury notes. Different clones are used in different settings/environments.

So, What's it Like?

The colour is brick red and a little like a Pinot in density of colour. The nose also hints at Pinot Noir. There are flowers, red berries and a certain herbal note but not in a savoury way.

The palate is at once floral and attractive luring you in, then the classic Nebbiolo tannins kick in. They are demanding food, which is what so much Italian wine is about.

Best Drinking

Now to 2025

Food Match

As mentioned, this Nebbiolo needs food, but not something so heavy that it overwhelms it.

A rich beef and mushroom ragu with pasta, or a risotto with a hint of truffle.

\$\$\$ \$30



Wine Taste Talk...To Your Door

Tasting Note

Wine

2019 Domaine de Pierres Seches Syrah

A wine from Sylvain Gauthier a young and keen winemaker from the Northern Rhone Valley. The translation of the name is Domaine of Dry Stones Syrah. Syrah is the French name for Shiraz, and it also differs stylistically.

Region

St Joseph Northern Rhone France

Viticulture and winemaking

Sylvain believes in organic viticulture and aims at making a pure full-bodied style of Syrah (at least by French standards).

The vineyard is 6Ha and 400m above sea level in Southern St Joseph, in the AOC (appellation) of Ardèche. The soil is schist, and the site is steep which Sylvain works by hand using a horse and plough and weeding with a hoe, now that's dedication. The vineyard is relatively low yielding which brings greater intensity to the fruit.

Fermentation is in stainless steel tanks and then matures in oak barrels for 6 months. It is sealed with a cork.

The Numbers

Alcohol 12.5 %, low compared to an Australian Shiraz.

So, What's it Like?

Expect it to be different to an Australian Shiraz, so judge it with that in mind. I found it to have good aromas of fruit and savoury elements yet with a fresh and very alive mouthfeel.

The colour was crimson with deep purple in the centre. The nose had a whiff of vanilla although I doubt much new oak was used, it also showed plum and dried meats as well as earth and spice.

The palate followed through with blue fruits, plum and I noticed mulberry and with a brightness that was surprising yet very enjoyable. Think fresh not light. The tannins were chalky and were a good counterpoint to the cool (less alcohol) finish.

Best Drinking

Now to 2025

Food Match

This wine could be enjoyed at any time of the year, however during our summer it would be a great match to BBQ cutlets or slow roasted lamb shoulder with fresh salads

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\$45, which while not cheap, it is a good example of Northern Rhone Syrah, which can get quite pricey.



Wine Taste Talk... To Your Door

Tasting Note

Wine

2019 Naked Run Shiraz Cabernet

Shiraz Cabernet blend is an Australian classic, not seen in other parts of the world. The fruit and spice of Shiraz and the darker fruits, structure and tannin of the Cabernet just work well together. The perfect logic behind blending different varieties. This wine is a modern version with a little less oak and more delicious juicy fruit.

Naked Run wines are three friends that started making wine together as a side project and it has literally grown from there. Steve Baraglia is the winemaker, Brad Currie looks after the vineyards and Jayme Wood is sales and marketing.

Region

Clare Valley SA

Viticulture and winemaking

The fruit was sourced from the winemaker's vineyard at Sevenhill, which is a higher cooler wetter part of Clare. Their aim is to have healthy vines to produce fruit driven medium bodied styles.

Steve provided the following extra information relating to the vineyards, which may be of interest.

Shiraz - Clone BVRC12, north south row orientation, cane pruned, VSP, eastern aspect

Cabernet -- Clone CL169, north south row orientation, spur pruned, VSP, western aspect

VSP stands for vertical shoot positioning, which is more common in cooler vineyards as the vines are trained upwards on the trellis to allow maximum sun penetration to enhance ripening, and good air flow through the vines to prevent disease.

Also, from Steve the winemaker

“Small parcels were fermented in open fermenters. Both parcels undertook natural ferment with wild yeast. At blending we try to achieve a medium bodied elegant red showing influence of both varieties. The wines were kept separate until blending only seeing old oak for around 5 months.”

The Numbers

Alcohol 14%

So, What's it Like?

In a word, delicious, it has the CFO's (Chief Firepit Officers) stamp of approval.

The colour is mid cherry. The nose for me was perfumed with lots of spice dark fruits such as blackcurrant (cassis) and just a hint of mint.

The palate medium to full bodied, was juicy fruit including plum and blackcurrant. The acidity was refreshing and well balanced with lovely dusty tannins. The Shiraz and the Cabernet together work their magic.

Best Drinking

Now To 2033. This is the producer's recommendation; it depends how you like your wine.

Food Match

A Mediterranean salad, think mixed leaves, olives, tomato, roasted capsicum and eggplant topped with freshly chargrilled lamb or beef and a Yoghurt and garlic dressing.

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\$24, in my humble, it's a bargain.



Wine Taste Talk... To Your Door

Tasting Note

Wine

2017 West Cape Howe Bookends Cabernet Sauvignon

You may have noticed that these notes are in order of intensity, and I thought it was time to share a wine with a little more power. Having said that as this is a medium bodied elegant wine that I think you will enjoy this Summer and into Autumn

Region

Mount Barker, Great Southern WA,

This is one of the 5 subregions of the Great Southern region and warm days, and cool nights grows fruit that produces elegant wines. The region is known for its Riesling Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon and developing a reputation for other varieties such as Tempranillo and Malbec.

Viticulture and winemaking

The fruit came from three vineyards, Karri Oak, Langton and Windy Hill, in what was a cooler season, where vintage was later than usual. The fruit from each vineyard were fermented separately to allow more choice during blending.

During fermentation the wines were pumped over, a process where the juice is pumped over the cap of skins and pips that rise to the top. This is common in red winemaking and allows maximum extraction of colour flavour and tannins. To enhance this a portion was left on skins post fermentation.

This wine has more oak influence than the others in this pack. In total it spent 18 months in oak barrels, of which 30% were new. This balance of oak would not overpower a cooler vintage Cabernet, although it is evident on the nose and palate. Possibly because of the cool year, a little Malbec was added prior to bottling. This gives depth and complexity to the wine.

The Numbers

Alcohol 14.5%, Acidity 6.5 g/l, pH 3.52.

So, What's it Like?

The colour was a rich regal crimson and fairly dense right to the margins (edges). The nose had a good dose of vanilla from the oak, cassis (blackcurrant), bay leaf, herbs, and tobacco/cigar box.

The palate was pure cooler climate Cabernet, ripe dark fruit, smooth tannins with a hint of mid palate grip (possibly helped by the Malbec). Hints of baking spices, blackberry, and dark chocolate. I enjoyed the finish with a hint of floral, perhaps rosewater or violets. Long lingering with just a hint of grippiness that says I need food.

Best Drinking

Now to 2026. This wine is already four years old so enjoy it now or wait a few years.

Food Match

Don't be too tame here, a good steak or roast leg of lamb over charcoal to match the smokey notes of the wine.

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\$30