

Corkscrew: wine reviews

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It's been a busy few months travelling and tasting and this month I offer a range of wines from around the country starting in Mudgee.

2017 Huntington Estate "Special Reserve" Mudgee Semillon. A special parcel of fruit, selected vines within the vineyard, selected clones of vines or low yielding vines, these are just some of the criteria that qualify as "Special Reserve" on a label. This wine comes from winemaker Tim Stevens, who has been growing Semillon for the past 40 years and is only the third release of the Special Reserve Semillon. The wine displays a vibrant, young green straw colour and the nose offers complexity with fruits such as citrus, apricots and gooseberry all coming into play. The palate is youthful and lean with the fruit not quite making its presence felt. Having said this, the wine will further

develop into a lovely rich and complex style giving you glass after glass of pleasure. The finish is dry with firm acidity and lots to watch out for when ready to drink. Drink now, if you like young Semillon. I much prefer mine aged with seven years or more when it develops secondary fruit characters and comes to life. An excellent wine with versatility for food and wine matches and not just with oysters! (rrp \$32)



2016 Huntington Estate "Special Reserve" Mudgee Merlot. Merlot is one of those grape varieties that you either drink or don't drink and I do! Deep purple in colour with fading pink hues around the rim, the nose is loud, showing pristine varietal fruit such as black cherries, blackberries and black olive spice. The palate offers fruit in abundance but the tannins strike a chord. The wine has backbone and over delivers in the fruit department with such fruits as plum, rhubarb and spicy cherries. The French oak adds to the complexity and enjoyment of this wine but also adds other dimensions to the quality. This wine, if cellared well, will compensate over time. The finish is full-bodied and dry with fruit aplenty. Two exceptional wines with pedigree and class. (rrp \$38)

Staying in Mudgee, we have the 2018 Robert Stein Half Dry Riesling. Ask yourself, when was the last time you had a half dry Riesling? In the late '70s early '80s this style of wine was all the rage, especially from the Hunter and Barossa. There was a general decline and perhaps a re-emergence of sorts in making this style. This particular wine shows a vibrant straw green colour. The nose is very perfumed with orange blossom and lemon and lime flavours. On the palate it's showing ripe varietal fruit such as grapefruit, peach and apricots with fine minerality. The acidity is mouth-watering and judicious with lemon and limes dominating. The finish is neither dry nor sweet, simply a little residual sugar and ripe fruit expressing itself to the core. (rrp \$35)

2018 Hahndorf Hill Gru Gruner Veltliner. Gruner Veltliner or "Gru" (as it's referred to in the trade) is a white grape variety that has its origins in Austria and although planted (not extensively) in other parts of the world, Austria and in particular the Wachau region is where it is firmly entrenched. A vibrant green straw colour grabs your attention while the nose shows citrus and lemon spicy notes. The palate displays a firm chalky-like texture with lots going on in terms of fruit character - yellow stone fruit, citrus and spice with balanced acidity. The finish is dry, full bodied and with spicy acidity. This wine is a "sit up and take note" style and one

worthy of buying if you want something different from the norm. (rrp \$29)

2018 Pig in the House Shiraz (Organic) from Canowindra, NSW. This wine displays a deep purple colour with a vibrant pink rim around the edge of the glass. The fruit on the palate offers red and black fruits with spicy vanilla spice coming to the fore on the nose. The palate is medium bodied and exhibits such flavours as blackcurrant, black cherries and blueberry flavours together with hints of aniseed and licorice. The oak is nicely balanced and together with the tannins is in harmony with the wine. The finish is dry and fruit driven with balanced acidity. This wine took its name from a farm pig that once took over the house and ran amok! (rrp \$25)

2018 Pig in the House Cabernet Sauvignon (Organic). This wine also displays a deep purple colour with a vibrant bright pink rim indicating its youth. Perfumed wild berries take hold on the nose which is nicely perfumed. On the palate you have plum, rhubarb and black currant fruit which takes centre stage. The wine is nicely balanced with French oak and tannins that are in check; a rounded soft, medium-bodied finish and leftover ripe fruit which lingers. (rrp \$25)

2018 Robert Stein "Farm Series" Riesling. This style of wine has found a home in Mudgee with the 2018 described as an excellent vintage. It's green straw in colour which typifies its age. The floral orange blossom and citrus notes draw you in. Citrus again comes through more evidently on the palate with grapefruit, lemon and limes together with orange peel. This is matched with mouth-watering acidity and fruit intensity. While drinking well now, it's assured longevity over the next seven to 10 years; under the right cellaring conditions it will further reward. (rrp \$18)

Two wines here from Riverina based Berton Vineyards starting with their 2018 Cabernet Sauvignon. Ruby and violet in colour, the vibrant pink hues indicate its youth. The fragrant fruit on the nose arouses the senses with black cherries and other wild berries in abundance. These same fruit flavours found on the nose come cascading down onto the palate which is soft and fruity. The oak/tannin/acid structure is nicely balanced with all its components in harmony with each other. The finish is soft and medium bodied with lovely ripe fruit lingering on the palate. (rrp \$30)

The 2016 Berton Vineyards Bonsai Shiraz/Cabernet is part of the top tier of this wine portfolio and is really something to write home about. Inky black/purple in colour with a lovely pink rim, the nose offers fruit intensity and complexity with French oak sitting nicely but noticeably in the background. The palate displays texture, body and flavours with great depth. The dark and red berry fruits are like eating a bowl of dark berry fruit salad. The finish is dry and full bodied with firm tannins, balanced oak and acids marrying beautifully with this duo of grape varieties. Stunningly fruity and complex. (rrp \$40)

Jim McMahon teaches hospitality at Sutherland TAFE