

# Pairing food and wine

## First World Pursuit

As if this matters? It used to and may still prove a little useful. Finding the perfect recipe for the way the wine is tasting at this stage in its development is no longer a vital pursuit of mine, given the pandemic. In our isolation I've felt compelled to abandon my insecurities and write about what now seems so indulgent but what I miss already

Wine and food together is about a number of things but mostly about pleasure and enjoyment. A shared experience with friends and family, around the egalitarian table, a time out opportunity to bond, experience joy and conviviality and get to know each other better. Sharing the love. And then the opportunity to afford the excitement and novel creativity of the restaurant experience. You could thoroughly relax without all the responsibilities of having to cook and host. How good we had it. Precious time to focus on your companions and the small theatre of the food and wine.

## Why Match Food And Wine?

My first light bulb moment came when we went to dinner at friend's place who were in love with all things Italian. Offering a bottle of one of our early Cabernet Sauvignons, ours was first opened with the light pasta dish. Their Italian wine was served with the beautiful Osso Bucco with Risotto alla Milanese. As we drove away into the black cold night, I kept wondering why ours (a cool climate medium bodied, supposedly lighter than your average Coonawarra Cabernet) tasted massive and tannic whilst the Italian red tasted weak and nondescript.

I knew our wines were made naturally with their tannins intact (i.e. not excessively fined) but they seemed exaggerated somehow. Everyone was a bit quiet about giving feedback then but we all managed to voice our disappointment about the Italian number. In my mind, both wines weren't good. Of course! We are all familiar with the taste of food more so than wine. Eventually I twigged that it was the combinations that affected the wines. Like the saying that "a weed is simply a plant in the wrong place." If we had reversed the wine order, it would have been a very different experience for us all that night. (It can be useful to start light and progress to richer throughout the savoury courses. And some time after this, Stephen and I took the pain of no income and waited an extra couple of years to release our reds once their tannins softened. Bloodwood wines ended up being Slow Wine before Slow Food was invented.)

## Tasting Good Together

So to get the best out of food and wine pairings with Bloodwood wines, you can take a couple of paths, given compatible or contrasting elements. And in the end, it is all about balance.

## Same Same Elements .... Or Not

The easiest way is to seek out comparable elements in both the food and the wine, similar flavours, textures and mouth feel, each reinforcing and complementing the other.

Contrasting elements is a risky strategy but when it works, it can be sublime. (e.g. dessert wine and blue vein cheese creates a whole new flavour like butterscotch.)

OR there is third option... don't bother. Eat and drink what you like.

## Rules?

Remember the old adage- white wine with fish and red wine with meat. In my lifetime, this rule has been largely discarded because we have increasingly found exceptions. Again compare the body of both the food and the wine and the dominant flavours, which in the food could be the sauce, not the main ingredient. Some fish can be accompanied by a red (swordfish and Shiraz) and some whites are rich enough to handle meat (pork, duck and Chardonnay.)

## Sensible Tip From Culinary Legend Tony Bilson

Dear Tony (sadly recently deceased) helped me out a long time ago in his Fine Bouche days, by saying that the easiest way to get your food matching a wine is to use the same wine in the recipe. He even managed to combine fish with austere Cabernet Sauvignon, his famous slow cooked salmon (that Tetsuya developed into one of his signature dishes) with a Cabernet sauce.

## 5 Tastes

It is generally accepted the five main tastes in foods are:

*sweet* - cf - wine's fruitiness or residual sugar (off dry)

*sour* - cf - wine's acidity

*bitter* - cf - wines tannins, (think of drinking cold tea or eating the peel of a red grape)

*salty* - cf - wine's salinity (may be related to minerality- or proximity to the sea - doesn't really relate to our wines even though our soils were an ancient sea bed)

*umami* - savouriness and feel good deliciousness, like soy, miso, broth, vegemite/marmite, dried tomato, mushrooms etc (google it-like I've just done to detail this)

cf wine developing savoury characters in our Pinot and aged reds.

The heat and pungency of chilli and the feel of fat in the mouth, crunchy and smooth textures, richness and astringency with tannins are more sensations rather than tastes but they all add to the enjoyable mix.

### **Be Wary Of Some Ingredients With Wine**

A few combinations that jar can be

#### *Fresh Fruit*

Think fresh fruit (including fresh tomatoes and citrus) with dry whites, a case of the clashing acidities.

#### *Tinned tomatoes*

Tinned tomatoes can be very acidic with a red. Add a pinch of sugar to round out that palate more and counterbalance the acidity. Use a more mature red with softer tannins.

#### *Artichokes and Eggs*

Also imagine artichokes or boiled eggs mixing with red wine in your mouth. Yuck, is all I can say.

#### *Eggplant*

Eggplant too can prove tricky with many wines (Schubert somehow manages and to a lesser extent our Rose.) In order to get reds to be less skewed by the smoky baba ganoush, I mix in plenty of ground walnuts. But by then it's become a different dip.

#### *Brussels Sprouts and Cabbage*

It's the way you cook these vegetables that can release the sulphurous off odours. Best fast and only just cooked or cooked very long and slow but in between is problematic. Add some extra ingredients like bacon, nuts and butter, then they are fabulous.

#### *On Adding Grated Lemon Rind*

Consider adding grated lemon rind into a terrine mix. Pretty usual procedure, you would think? Before Jancis Robinson visited us for lunch years ago, I ditched serving Jancis a venison and bacon terrine. It didn't showcase any of our reds as I expected but our Chardonnay was the star just because of those couple of teaspoons of lemon rind.

Do I apologise for name dropping? Well.. a little. But it was another learning experience for me even though I confessed to her that I couldn't contribute to any new laws for food and wine matching when such a small addition could skew the results. (If you're interested, we ended up having yabbies (gently flavoured with cumin and tamarind) on mini poppadams with our bubbles, idiosyncratically named Chirac. Why? Because the rules changed and you couldn't call it Champagne anywhere else in the world other than Champagne en France, even though it is made in the same traditional method. Warm chicken with garden salad and black olive mayonnaise followed. It was summer and the chicken handled the Riesling, Chardonnay, Schubert (Chardonnay) as well as the Shiraz. (And now the Pinot Noir would suit as well.)

#### *On Adding Chillies*

The strong heat of chillies can overpower your palate while drinking wine, particularly a red. A fruitier white and with some residual sugar copes much better. I think the temperature difference between whites and reds helps as well.

#### *Acid and Sweetness*

Always make sure your accompanying wine is either more acidic than the food or sweeter than the food you are serving, so there are no duelling acidities where the food wins and no wine tasting like battery acid with your too sweet dessert.

## Taming The Tannins

Tannins perform a very useful service by cleansing and refreshing your palate and getting you ready for the next bite.

### *Tannins and Salt*

Salt emphasises tannins' bitterness. You will need to down play additions of anchovy, olives and salty cheeses by using them as a minor component of a dish, not the dominant flavour, if you want to drink a big red. Check out whether green olives are better with white wines and black olives better with reds.

### *Tannins and Fats*

Dousing your food in lots of olive oil can help, so slow roast those raw tomatoes and serve them in olive oil. The oil in nuts can tame a young tannic red. Fats coat the mouth and reduce tannin's effect. That's why big tannic reds and fatty meats are simpatico.

And red wine with tannins goes with taramasalata; would you believe that a salty, oily spread can tame tannins?

### *Tannins and Spice*

Youthful reds with high tannins are bold enough to handle the use of more spice in a dish whereas an older red shouldn't be put in that situation. Best to employ the KISS principle with that mature red - Keep It Simple Stupid! Be sensitive to age appropriate combinations. Anyhow you might want the wine to shine regardless of the food? To achieve this, less is more.

## The Art Of The Cheese Board

Here I intend the cheese to form one part of an overall meal. Scraping semi hard to hard cheeses with a vegetable peeler or cheese scraper so I can melt the thin sheet of cheese over my tongue, is my favourite way to eat those cheeses (except for Parmesan.) That way you get all of the flavour but not the overwhelming fatty texture of the cheese to chomp through.

Discard these ideas if you are catering by having many snacks from the deli including a variety of cheeses as the main meal in itself. You can offer a range of wines then people can satisfy their own preferences.

Biscuits can throw cheese and wine combinations out of whack- I've found bread to be a more neutral accompaniment. You could bypass the carbs all together and just eat the cheese and drink the wine.

Our Chirac and some soft cheeses work well, acid and bubbles lighten the palate and . cut through the fat. Our Chardonnays can work with Camembert and Brie but keep our Chardonnays away from Goat's Cheeses (try more acidic combinations like our Riesling or Rose even with Feta- or go elsewhere and find a Sav Blanc instead.)

Overall, whites are easier with cheeses as they have less tannin.

All our reds are dry and have natural tannins which generally don't cope with soft young cheeses well unless you have a flavourful bread to provide extra interest. However, soft creamy Bouche D'Affinoise is a bit of an exception. Safer territory is to match reds with Gorgonzolaan or an aged cheddar. Definitely keep red wine away from salty and strong Blue cheeses to avoid the shock of a metallic taste.

Following the main course, you can switch from red to an older white to have with cheese. Older whites develop richer palates, becoming more honeyed and toasted, whereas tannins in reds reduce and soften with age. Older reds become finer/lighter and more savoury as they age so combine an aged red with a fine mature cheese.

Your best match with a range of cheeses may not be that special red but could be a dessert wine.

Pare it back to make it simpler and more focused. Choose just one harder cheese (or possibly two similar cheeses) to showcase that red you want to linger over after the main. Nuts are more compatible with that red than the decorativeness of sweet grapes or quince paste.

When I think back to our starting out on those red wine and cheese events in the 70s, I shudder. Most of the reds were pretty dodgy and the cheap cheddar was used to try and smooth out the tannins. It took me years to realise that red wine and cheese matching was problematic.

## Know Your Palate

Do you have a sweet or savoury palate? Not sweet is Maggie Beer's who always prefers a sweet /sour balance in her food. So where there's some sugar even in a dessert recipe, Maggie will always add some verjuice or lemon juice, lemon rind, vinegar to stop the dish from being overly sweet. Just check any reruns of the Cook and the Chef. Even adding salt to caramel and chocolate to provide some counter to the sweetness has been a thing for decades now.

Bring out the sweetness in your not so ripe strawberries by adding a touch of balsamic vinegar. If you've added too much vinegar then adjust again with some sugar.

An old trick of serving a fruit salad that I learned from my grandmother was to add a little bit of sugar and lemon juice to perk up the mix. Same too for bubbly. The dosage mostly adds a bit of sugar, perceptible or not, so you experience greater fruitiness and greater excitement of highs and lows on your palate.

Even the French like to add some redcurrant jelly to a sauce which builds the roundness of the palate and counters the acidity of adding red wine or red wine vinegar.

And sugar is used in Asian cooking (palm sugar, rock sugar etc) and fruit in Middle Eastern cooking. Pomegranate molasses in itself is both sweet and tart. Even Japanese sushi uses sugar, vinegar and salt mix in the rice. You might have to be cautious and underplay the ingredients in the recipe to make sure the wine can handle the flavours. Except for our Silk Purse dessert wine, all our table wines are dry so finding the right amount can be a delicate balancing act. Also tone down the spice to gentle for young nervy Rieslings and Chardonnays and definitely the more delicate well matured reds.

If your palate is savoury, (you probably prefer to finish on a plate of cheese instead of a sweet dessert,) then you also need to consider umami flavours of mushrooms, Parmesan, roasted flavours and dashi stock. Drink older reds where the oxidation has changed the youthful sweet fruited ness to more earthy, leathery, savoury, soy like, cedar and cigar box, brown spices like cloves and cinnamon, cumin, with meaty overtones. Our Pinot has secondary and is developing tertiary flavours and so too our Merlot Noir where the fruitcake flavours are in transition.

### **Towards Achieving Balance**

Mastering Thai food has been a wonderful example of achieving balance with strong ingredients of palm sugar, lime juice, fish sauce and chilli, (sweet, sour, salt and heat) with full on fresh herbs like coriander, mint, lemongrass and ginger- all thrilling. Add mouth coating fats like coconut milk/cream and what wine do you serve with this? Get one axis right first i.e. balance sweet and acid. Then follow with smaller doses of salt until you reach the desired results, then chilli.

So good luck with the fine tuning of sauces towards that magical spot of balance that enhances the wine of your choice.

### **Comfortable Match**

It seems silly for me to be writing about mouthfeel and tastes more than just "yuck or yum." I'm not Italian, French or Chinese coming from a food obsessed culture. Is it a bit of an English left over not to dwell on such things? I come from a simple but relatively fortunate North Queensland family (Stephen and I did leave) where Dad loved his food and Mum loved gardening and grew a few fruits, vegetables and herbs. She was a fussy eater who cooked most days, except for Fridays when we had fish and chips on Townsville's Strand. Many a young person around our tasting table at our Cellar Door have been embarrassed when asked (in front of their peers,) to describe the mouth feel on the wine they are tasting.

How to get to a well balanced meal with a well balanced wine? A slightly faulty wine can be ameliorated by tweaking a dish to minimise its faults and emphasize its positives or a beautiful wine can be downgraded to ordinary given it accompanies jarring flavours in its accompanying meal. (IMHO)

My wine palate doesn't identify flavours first but goes straight to mouth feel which sometimes leads me to question the Sommelier's matching of a wine with a dish in a few Australian restaurants rated with 2 to 3 hats. The flavours technically work with the food but the body of the wine struggles to assert itself. To my way of thinking, the wine needs to comfort the food like a glove warming a hand or a snuggly cardigan or a soft blanket- though not as much as a doona. It needs to strike more of a chord rather than just register a couple of high notes of harmony with the food. It is an art. I could be wrong, or there's a difference of emphasis from a winemaker's viewpoint as opposed to the chef's interests. One wine writer said to me earlier in his career when I was full of angst about considering this new discipline, "most wines go with most foods." And you can be fortunate but I wonder if he'd say the same today?

### **Opposites Match, Yin And Yang**

Consider disparate or opposite elements where the strength of one balances the different strength of the other. This very much applies to Stephen and I. Thank goodness for his gentle winemaking skills (all self initiated and developed,) his memory for wine tastes and recall, superb research/communication/ editorial skills and sense of humour. He has been patient and provided practical support to my effusiveness and enthusiasm for wine and food together.

The most written about combination is the contrast between a dessert wine and a blue vein cheese or port and stilton. Essentially they are sweet covering salt with some umami and textures thrown in. You can also use the overarching acidity in a wine to cut through fat like bubbles and creamy cheeses. Try our Bubby with the local Freida washed rind cheese or our Riesling.

The French love Sauternes with foie gras, now that's sweet and savoury and unctuousness together. Rich on rich is a bit too rich at the start of a meal methinks. Best if the Sauterne is not so sweet and has wonderful acidity. I can see some reason for the match but it's not for me. Save that mouth filling combination for the end of the meal (sweet wine with a sublime cheese or dreamy dessert) when you need to make sure your guests are sated.

## This Goes With That...Is Not Prescriptive

This is my guide to our lifetime of eating and drinking @ Bloodwood Wines with family and dear friends and customers who have become friends.

A self taught cook starting with a scrap book of Women's Weekly recipes progressing to my first cookbook by Margaret Fulton (followed by Charmaine Solomon's,) I have since 1990, championed the use of our local Orange produce. Up to date as far as popular Yotam Ottolenghi and Australian "Ground Breaker" Matthew Evans (The Gourmet Farmer,) I do apologise for the lack of vegan food suggestions despite many of our wines actually being vegan. Seafood options are scant as the coast is far away.

All recommendations following are combinations that Stephen and I've rated as reliable - between 3.5 to 5 out of 5. How is this done? By comparison mostly (e.g. eat one cheese with many wines or reverse that by checking out many cheeses with the one wine.) Then deduce what goes best and why.

If your tastes differ, and you think the food could be making the wine taste a bit odd, (given lack of familiarity with the wine,) it's always useful to taste the wine first. My tip is to eat something neutral in between (like the bread, rice, pasta or potato) then reassess the wine.

Like any marriage, there is a variety of permutations and combinations, conditions and interpretations. Now you have many of the building blocks, it is over to you. Have fun.

## Contact Bloodwood

For more detailed information, you can always follow up when you have purchased your Bloodwood wines. No recipes are given - google makes it easy. I would be delighted to receive your enjoyable Bloodwood accomplices. Email me at [rhonda.bloodwood@gmail.com](mailto:rhonda.bloodwood@gmail.com)

## Bloodwood Tasting Dozen

We hope you'll find these suggestions useful and you enjoy our dozen of carefully produced and suitably aged wines at home by yourselves or with friends.

Thanks and cheers

Rhonda and Stephen Doyle

Bloodwood Wines

Ph 02 6362 5631

## 2009 Chirac

A majority Chardonnay with Pinot Noir mix from our Cellar, our special aged bubbly (almost 10 years on yeast lees,) is complex without being broad (brioche in a bakery,) yet still has some lively acidity within a fine structure. Zero sugar.

### Homely:

Parmesan cheese (NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! NOT CUT with a KNIFE but BROKEN along salt lines with a FORK - thank you Armando Percuoco;) local Orange cheese- Frieda ("funky" washed rind from 2nd Mouse Cheese;) French fries; (Stephen and Irene are both Irish - Doyle and Finneran, and adore our "ch" nights-Chirac and "hot" chips, chicken, cheeses and chocolates;) liver pate (duck/chicken liver etc) on toast; smoked salmon, sour cream and caviar; cheese biscuits; oysters.

### A bit fancy:

Try Truffle salt on those French fries; Parmesan & rosemary cheese biscuits; crisp savoury pastries (warm with icy cold bubbles- great contrast;) duck/pork rillettes on crisp toast; a variety of pates including creamy mushroom pate; bite sized whiting fillets covered in almond flakes and fried; Gruyere gougeres; flaked smoked trout /crab, just moist with an Asian dressing, served on a crisp prawn chip topped with caviar.

### Restaurants:

Park Hyatt (Sydney Rocks)

Lolli Redini and Charred (both @ Orange)

## 2017 Riesling

Honeysuckle with citrus, more lime with mid palate complexity and thrilling acidity.

Our Riesling works with many different cheeses and is very versatile with Asian and European dishes. Its powerful palate needs more mid to richer in texture and flavours of seafood, fishes etc

#### **Homely:**

Fish and chips; vegetable frittatas; ham and mustard; tuna and rice; salmon rissoles; asparagus and lemon risotto; cauliflower couscous with mint and Feta; roasted corn with basil and Parmesan butter; carrot fritters (even Thai & Indian;) cucumber (tzatziki); prawns, crusty bread and lime mayonnaise.

#### **A Bit Fancy:**

Great with dressed crab and scallops as finger food or salads, - with fennel and native finger lime; steamed Snapper Asian style; little anchovy rice balls; Thai fish cakes; all manner of salads e.g. prawns, avocado and greens; smoked trout, mange tout, asparagus, salad greens with Dijon mustard mayonnaise; smoked trout and rice vine leaves; salad Nicoise; leek and Prosciutto quiche; ham hock terrine and salad; corn and Parmesan custard; Scotch eggs using Vietnamese flavours of pork sausage; and can handle a Thai green chicken/fish curry. Ask Stephen for his method of micro waving a Queensland mud crab.

#### **Restaurants:**

Quay (Circular Quay)

Sixpenny (Petersham)

Cafe Sydney & Mr Wong (City)

Schoolhouse (Orange)

#### **2017 Chardonnay**

Fruit dominant style, minimal oak, hint of cream/butter (50% Malo-Lactic Fermentation-MLF,) lovely acidity.

Good with seafood (similar to the Riesling- FYI actually both these wines are grown on the same soil type.) And all manner of chicken dishes. "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single Chardonnay in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a suitable match" (and that is chicken- apologies to Ms Bronte.)

#### **Homely:**

Chicken pie; schnitzel; sautéed mushrooms, grated lemon rind, garlic and parsley on toast; prawns, crusty bread and lemon mayonnaise; my last meal -good old roast chook stuffed with a lemon.

#### **A Bit Fancy:**

Roast chicken more adorned with herbed/spiced butter worked under the skin; rolled de-boned chicken stuffed with spinach and Feta; smoked trout and corn fritters; potted pork or prawns; chicken breast wrapped in Prosciutto stuffed with granny smith apple with Dijon mustard or lemon cream sauce; steamed fish (barramundi or snapper e.g.) with ginger, soy sauce and spring onions; pumpkin and yabbie bisque; Korean fried chicken-(thanks to Sammy Jeon of Mr Lim's.)

#### **Restaurants**

The Malaya (King St Wharf). Glebe Point Diner,

Sammy Jeon Mr Lim, Avido And Mr Sushi King (Orange)

#### **2017 Schubert Chardonnay**

Richer fruit and palate weight on this Chardonnay with more oak yet lively acidity (would you believe no MLF?)

Consequently our Schubert is best with richer examples of fishes and chicken dishes than the previous Chardonnay. Easy match with pork dishes too both Asian and European styles.

#### **Homely:**

Chicken and mushroom cream pasta; mushroom and leek risotto; miso eggplant; Asian spag bol (ie pork mince, hoi sin and soy sauce with noodles;) san choy bau (using turkey or pork mince;) (not too hot) Malaysian curry laksa; Thai green curry.

#### **A Bit Fancy:**

Pork belly either Asian (master stock-soy, ginger, garlic, star anise, cinnamon/cassia bark, rock sugar, pepper some Sichuan, mandarin rind etc) or European style (baked apple, prunes and caramelised onions etc.) Great with duck with citrus, ginger sauce; salmon confit; rich enough to accompany a rack of lamb; and tea smoked ocean trout.

#### **Restaurants:**

Merivale's- Mr Wong (Sydney) Queen Chow (Enmore) Mimi's (Coogee) Charred (Orange)

#### **2019 Big Men In Tights**

Not quite French, definitely dry finish, has some gentle blush, fruitiness and strawberry aroma.

Needs a more temperate summer (not one like 2019/20,) warm autumn or warm spring day with snack platters, salads ....or nothing else at all.

#### **Homely:**

Starter foods like charcuterie platter; spring rolls fresh, steamed or fried; felafel and tabbouli; salads like roast pumpkin and creamy Feta (iso. realisation- can't live without a jar or two of Meredith's Feta in reserve in the fridge;) sushi; warm savoury pastries like samosas, pastizzis and pasties; vegetarian pasta and noodles.

#### **A Bit Fancy**

Duck sausages with pink peppercorns (home made); gentle Asian flavoured bites like pork dumplings; terrines (rabbit, pork, duck or veg;); zucchini and Haloumi fritters.

#### **Restaurants:**

The Greenhouse Of Orange, Canobolas Hotel

#### ***Bloodwood Reds .....General Comment***

*These reds all have good medium bodied structure and build in intensity and richness.*

#### **2015 Pinot Noir**

Elegant, gentle plummy cherry fruitiness with developing savoury overtones and lingering finish.

Best with umami flavours- particularly mushrooms, miso, game birds etc and the regular pairing with duck.

#### **Homely:**

Pate (duck or chicken liver;); bacon/lentils and mushrooms on toast miso mushroom soup; BBQ duck from Chinatown; good old Jarlsberg cheese (Stephen's favourite.)

#### **A bit fancy:**

Coq au vin; three cheese home made pasta (thanks to Kim Currie of Zin House Mudgee;); mushroom chawenmushi, duck confit, quail with cinnamon and pumpkin; lighter lamb dishes like herbed rack of lamb; tournedos Rossini; barley, chestnuts and mushrooms; veal saltimbocca and mushroom custard with Autumnal salad (thanks to Simonn Hawke at Lolli Redini, Orange.)

#### **Restaurants:**

Four Seasons Hotel (Sydney) Four In Hand (Paddington)

Tonic (Millthorpe)

#### **2014 Merlot Noir**

Proper name for Merlot (not mixed with Pinot) as there is a Merlot Blanc grape.

More fruit cake and spice than the rounded soft plummy styles of warmer climate Merlots, our Merlot Noir also has definition with bloody meat overtones and savoury tannins. It is currently in transition to a more mature red.

#### **Homely:**

French onion soup; Greek taramasalata made in Orange by Fresh Fodder- just their regular version distributed through quite a number of shops these days; roast vegetables with quinoa; lamb kebabs, spaghetti with meatballs, chicken and chorizo paella, sausage rolls (lamb/pork and fennel; ) beef stroganoff; Pate.

#### **A Bit Fancy:**

Lamb and pine nut cigar pastries; venison with redcurrant sauce; home made moussaka; vegetarian lasagne (spinach eggplant, zucchini, tomato sauce etc. ) French cassoulet; lamb, barley and cassia bark/ cinnamon casserole; slow cooked diced pork shoulder with dried apricots, yellow mustard seeds, more coriander than cumin, tamarind and turmeric.

#### **2015 Cabernet Franc**

Usually lighter tannins than its offspring Cabernet Sauvignon, CF has lifted aromatics, some spice and brightness. Slightly richer mouth feel than Pinot and Merlot Noir, but still medium bodied.

Can cope with Middle Eastern flavours, toasted cumin, coriander, pomegranate molasses, cinnamon and herbs, parsley, coriander etc.

#### **Homely:**

Hazelnut dukka, olive oil and bread; lightly spiced roast beetroot, mix of goat's curd and Feta on toast; Sopressa salami mild; olives/tapenade; Turkish lamb shawarma; Iranian pomegranate soup; Pate (duck/chicken liver;) Swiss Gruyere cheese; Sopressa salami.

#### **A Bit Fancy:**

Lamb backstrap with black olive caponata; Moroccan flavoured lamb neck and unsweetened quince; duck breast with pomegranate molasses / fresh pomegranates and walnuts; Greek stifado (braised beef and onions.)

#### **Restaurants**

Bibo (Wine Bar + Food Double Bay)

Silks (Leura)

Schoolhouse (Orange)

#### **2014 Cabernet Sauvignon**

Ripe blackcurrant fruit, tannins settled, medium bodied and nicely balanced wine.

Cabernets are less versatile with food and wine matching than Shiraz and need more roast meats and cooler weather to enjoy.

#### **Homely:**

Roast vegetables including roast beetroot e.g. warm salad of beetroot, butternut pumpkin, hazelnuts and rocket; roast leg of lamb leg with rosemary; pumpkin and spiced lentils; Warrnambool cheddar; taramasalata; salami.

#### **A Bit Fancy**

Most lamb dishes (can handle some spice too like the Cabernet Franc;) lamb and black olive ragu with home made pasta; juicy steak with red wine sauce; lamb shanks with salsa verde; long slow cooked ox tail; North African tagine (minimise lemon juice and its rind-preserved lemon is softer.) Swiss Gruyere, Comte; Beaufort.

#### **Restaurants**

O Bar And Dining (Sydney)

Jugemu & Shimbashi (Neutral Bay)

Flour Eggs Water (Tramsheds & Surry Hills)

Canobolas Hotel (Orange)

#### **2015 Shiraz**

Lifted perfumed nose, spices -cinnamon, star anise, pepper, rich ripe plum, medium bodied and long finish.

As Cabernet is made for lamb, Shiraz and steak are partners (given their compatible sauces.) Shiraz is very versatile in food and wine matching whether Asian flavours or European.



**Homely:**

Iso spag bol; beef pie; meatloaf; macaroni and cheese; (note the sweeter flavours of butternut pumpkin suit rather than the more savoury Blue or Jap pumpkin.) Peppered steak and pepper buttered corn works well; Asian beef stir fry; breaded pork chop; Warrnambool cheddar and taramasalata; a bowl of lightly salted peanuts even.

**A Bit Fancy:**

Slow braised style brisket in a good Asian master stock including those spicy elements above- like with like (refer also to Schubert pork belly with Master stock.) Can even go with duck and plum sauce (a la Kylie) or a roast pork dish; Vietnamese beef stew; Slow roasted beef fillet; braised beef cheeks with red wine and some herbs (rosemary, parsley) and brown spices. Even successfully matched our Shiraz together with local venison and chocolate red wine sauce; Swiss Gruyere, Flinders Washed Rind and Manchego cheeses.

**Restaurants**

Bloodwood (Newtown)  
Sweet Sour Salt (Orange)  
Ferment Orange Wine Bar

**2016 Maurice**

Our Bordeaux blend (pre-dominantly Cabernet Sauvignon, then Cabernet Franc, and smidgin of both Merlot and Malbec) can last up to 20 years depending at what age you enjoy your wines. Being more fruity blackcurrants, some spice and having a more rounded mouth feel than our varietal Cab Sav, Maurice is also richer.

Most lamb dishes suit and because it is more youthful, Maurice can handle spice.

**Homely:**

Beaufort cheese roast vegetables and nuts (like toasted walnuts or hazelnuts are good) as well as a yummy cheddar such as Maffra can work with a lovely sourdough bread. Green beans and walnut parsley pesto; beef stifado; a hamburger "gourmet pehleeze!" with beetroot, roasted tomato not fresh and -no Qld pineapple, fresh or tinned; Jarlsberg, Warrnambool cheddar and salami.

**A Bit Fancy**

Middle Eastern flavoured roast lamb rump with all the fresh herbs, spices and pomegranate jewels, can be a perfect accompaniment. Sirloin with mushroom red wine sauce; venison and beetroot; beef and prunes; braised chestnuts, onions, prunes, bacon and red wine sauce; Parmesan and Flinders Washed Rind.

**Restaurants**

Rockpool, Mr Wong's (Both Sydney)  
Lolli Redini, Charred (Both Orange)

**2016 Silk Purse (Dessert Riesling)**

Beautiful fruit, hint of lime cordial and contrasting fresh citrus finish-not cloying.

Being a lighter and fresher style of sticky, our dessert Riesling needs more fresh fruit based desserts and lighter cheeses.

**Homely:**

Fresh figs, goat's curd/ricotta and a drizzle of light honey; mangos; a bowl of strawberries or raspberries and cream; a lighter creamy blue - Gorgonzola dolce (rather than St Agur or Gorgonzola piquante,) goat's curd pashka or cheesecake, buttermilk panna cotta / cake with strawberries; pavlova and cream would be too sweet on its own for this dessert wine but smother the pav with fresh passion fruit pulp or masses of strawberries and raspberries and it'd cope. After all, it is all about balance.

**A Bit Fancy**

Apple tart; pear and almond tart; passion fruit soufflé; Ros' apple cake; raspberries with quark vanilla ice cream (local quark @ 2nd Mouse Cheese Co.) Our Silk Purse accompanied the famous Snow Egg for years @ Quay and even got a showing with their newest dessert (the Coral) before the virus.

**Restaurants**

Quay (Circular Quay)

Sister's Rock and Tonic (Via Orange)

## Museum Releases .....Special Occasion Wine From The Cellar

### 2009 Chirac

A majority Chardonnay with Pinot Noir mix from our Cellar, our special aged bubbly (almost 10 years on yeast lees,) is complex without being broad, yet still has some lively acidity within a fine structure. Zero sugar.

(Can be sent as a single bottle gift for \$80 within Australia.)

#### Homely:

Parmesan cheese (NO! NO! NO! NO! NO! NOT CUT with a KNIFE but BROKEN along salt lines with a FORK - thank you Armando Percuoco;) local Orange cheese- Frieda ("funky" washed rind from 2nd Mouse Cheese;) French fries; (Stephen and Irene are both Irish - Doyle and Finneran, and adore our "ch" nights-**Chirac** and "hot" **chips, chicken, cheeses** and **chocolates**;) liver pate (duck/chicken liver etc) on toast; smoked salmon, sour cream and caviar; cheese biscuits; oysters.

#### A Bit Fancy:

Try Truffle salt on those French fries; Parmesan & rosemary cheese biscuits; crisp savoury pastries (warm with icy cold bubbles- great contrast;) duck/pork rillettes on crisp toast; a variety of pates including creamy mushroom pate; bite sized whiting fillets covered in almond flakes and fried; Gruyere gougeres; flaked smoked trout /crab, just moist with an Asian dressing, served on a crisp prawn chip topped with caviar.

#### Restaurants:

Park Hyatt (Sydney Rocks)

Lolli Redini and Charred (Both @ Orange)

### 2013 Pinot Noir Magnum

This magnum serves 10-12 people and also can be sent as a single bottle gift for \$130 within Australia. (So invite 5 people and have 2 glasses each.)

More beetroot, cherry and plum on the nose, this 2013 Pinot Noir is richer in body than the current 2015 and has well defined tannins. "A totally impressive Pinot" (James Halliday)

#### Homely:

Mushroom and hazelnut pate; plate of Prosciutto and salamis ; duck breast cooked rare; rich pate.

#### A Bit Fancy:

Duck pithivier; Duck and mushroom pie; duck confit, chorizo and beans (thanks to Liam O'Brien of Charred.) Savoury Persian duck with walnut and pomegranate sauce/ salad; duck with cherry sauce (but make sure you add a little cherry jam in the sauce to give it a fuller fruity mouth feel and sauté some spec to assist with introducing a savoury element.)

#### Restaurant:

Charred (Orange)

*Waiting in the wings... only for those in the know*

### 2017 Malbec

Youthful ripe plummy fruit, fleshy, juicy mouth feel and ripe tannins, Bloodwood Malbec is more medium bodied and restrained than its Mendoza counterpart.

Vegetarians and vegans avert your eyes- just think grilled mature field mushrooms. Malbec goes well with meat, meat and more meat, similar to Cabernet.

#### Homely:

Accompanies a juicy steak or a not too hot chilli con carne. Similar to Maurice options, being more youthful can handle spice too and is an easy Sunday night dinner of spiced lentils or chickpeas with whatever vegetables you have in the fridge; takeaway empanada; Warrnambool cheddar; Sopressa salami.

**A Bit Fancy:**

Home made empanada; roast squab with spicy plum glaze; BBQ meat like sticky B.B.Q. beef ribs; oxtail stew; red wine beef cheeks; grilled steak. Grilled Swiss cheese on toast also give room temperature Tallegio a whirl. Manchego and Parmesan cheese

**Restaurants:**

Charred (Orange)