



### WINE ODYSSEY AUSTRALIA

A flash new concept for Sydney, Wine Odyssey uses an automated Enomatic wine tasting system to offer 44 wines by the 25ml taste, 75ml half-glass or 150ml full glass. Grange – currently the 1997 – is among the selections, clocking in at about the dollar-per-mil mark. “I’ve got a wine list with 120 wines on it and a retail store with 300 wines, so I can change the selection of wines by the glass we offer on the machine within minutes,” says sommelier Donna Freeman, late of The Boathouse on Blackwattle Bay. “We always have a flight of sparkling, one of dessert and one of red wine – three dishes and three 50ml pours to go with them.” The main Wine Journey Room tasting area is augmented by a tasting theatre and an ‘aroma room’ where you can sharpen your knowledge of Australian wine. The cellar is all-Australian, with an emphasis on small, independent and lesser-known producers alongside the nation’s most famous labels. Craigow riesling and gewürztraminer from Cambridge in Tasmania, Orange’s Printhie Wines, Optimiste petit verdot from Mudgee on the one hand and Leeuwin Estate Art Series chardonnay, Chambers muscat and Bass Phillip pinot on the other.”

#### How was the list put together?

“We looked at the key Australian winemaking regions first – riesling from the Clare, Barossa shiraz and so on,” says Freeman, “but after that I was interested in showing just how many different styles and grapes the Australian landscape supports – the Freeman rondinella corvina, for example. The response has been great and surprisingly enough, perhaps, it’s not just tourists. There are a lot of Sydney business people who just come in for a glass of wine before they get on their ferry and try a few things. We have a membership program now, and a lot of return customers.”

#### What are you loving to pour right now?

“I’ve got Ulithorne sparkling shiraz on there, from McLaren Vale, and I think it’s one of the best sparkling shirazes I’ve tried, but it’s quite polarising. The other thing I like about Wine Odyssey is that the wine comes first, so we’ve got our fantastic chef, Mark Beattie, and if I want a wine, I get it, and it’s up to him to make a dish to match it, which is a great turnaround after all these years.”

“There is a particularly good sparkling vouvray, which is produced by Château Moncontour in the Loire Valley (\$70). It’s dry with a good texture and fine bead. For an alternative to sauvignon blanc, try the 2007 Rusden Christian Chenin Blanc from the Barossa. It’s a dry-style white with some fruit and a crisp finish. In the reds, the 2004 Stonecroft Serine Syrah from Hawkes Bay in New Zealand reminds me of a nice Rhône Valley wine. Loire Valley red wines can also offer the buyer great value for money, although they can at times be misunderstood. I would recommend the 2005 Philippe Alliet Chinon Vieilles Vignes; it’s \$110.”

#### Your solid-gold marriage of menu and wine list is...

“For an afternoon break, it would have to be the cured meat selection with a glass of 2007 Descendientes de J Palacios Pétalos from Bierzo, Spain, but I think my favourite is the salt and chilli school prawns with aioli accompanied by a glass of 2007 Yves Cuilleron VdP des Collines Rhodanienne marsanne from the Rhône Valley.”

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#### Journey to remember

Wine-lovers are spoiled for choice at Wine Odyssey (above) with a by-the-glass wine-tasting system. What Bondi’s Shop and Wine Bar lacks in size and gadgetry it makes up for in charm (opposite).