

BY GREG BONDAR

Wine of the month

John Duval is one of the true gentlemen of the wine industry. After some 29 years as a winemaker with Penfolds, he started his own eponymous wine label in 2003 in South Australia.

Duval loves the fruit that comes from the old vines of the Barossa region, so he started with "Plexus", a Rhone-style blend of Shiraz, Grenache and Mourvedre and in 2006 released his first Shiraz, "Entity".

The 2008 Entity is a true Barossa wine. The variety is made from 100 per cent shiraz sourced from old vineyards in the Krondorf, Light Pass, Marananga, Tanunda and Eden Valley regions of the Barossa. Maturation was 100 per cent barrel maturation for 17 months with 35 per cent new fine grain French oak, and the balance in old French and American oak hogsheads (300 litres).

The Entity has a pleasant 14.5 per

cent alcohol, and shows a dense ruby purple colour with a youthful nose of dark fruits of blackberry and plum combined with a hint of mocha and savoury French oak. The palate shows an excellent concentration of pure Barossa dark fruit with balanced attractive ripe tannins and bright acidity. The pure, dark fruits are supported by high quality French oak that adds structure and polish to the wine.

• www.johnduvalwines.com



Pairing fish with wine



Diners often ask which wines can be drunk with fish. Whilst pairing wine with fish or seafood can be daunting there is a general code amongst wine aficionados that says that white wines are generally the right choice but proceed cautiously.

That said, salmon and Pinot Noir is a classic pairing, and a Bandol Rosé can also compliment full-

flavoured Bouillabaisse.

Different fish may work best with different varietals. If you have tuna on the menu, recommend a good Chardonnay, Pinot Gris or a Pinot Noir; grilled salmon pairs well with Chardonnay, Pinot Noir or perhaps Rosé, and trout marries well with a good South Australian Riesling or a New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc or, if you stock it,

a Gewürztraminer.

For a safe bet, sparkling wine or champagne is a perfect match for fried seafood as the bubbles cut through the weight of fried food, although be careful as most wines lose character when paired with tempura or beer batter.

Champagne is also the one true match for caviar.

Sommelier profile

Jeannette Clarke, ezard, Melbourne.

Q: How do you work with the chef to match food and wine?

A: At ezard all new dishes and wine matches are discussed before going on the menu. The chef provides me with a sample of the new dish and I talk my way through the different ingredients and components. I taste the dish with as many different wines as possible. If nothing jumps out at me as being a particularly good match, we repeat the exercise until we find a winner.

Q: How do you choose wines for the restaurant?

A: I take a number of factors into account. Firstly, the food; fortunately ezard has a great range of dishes (from very light

and delicate to rich and strongly flavoured) that accommodate many different styles of wine so I have wonderful scope to work with. Secondly, the list needs to have balance – the aim is for a good mix of the eclectic and obscure with more recognizable and "safe" options. Thirdly, I like to support smaller and more boutique wineries and producers – many of whom follow organic and minimal-intervention grape growing and winemaking principals. Ultimately, wine quality is the deciding factor of whether a wine makes it onto the list or not.

Q: Do you agree that the customer is always right with their wine choices?

A: Dining out is many things

to many people. Some like to experiment and try new wines and the matches that best compliment their meal. Others prefer to enjoy their meal with a favourite bottle of wine that they already know and love, whether it suits the food or not. In these cases the sommelier should realise that steering them in a direction of a different wine will probably not enhance their dining experience.

Q: What styles and from which regions are some of your favourite wines?

A: I'm a big lover of Italian wines such as the whites from Campania and Friuli, reds from Piedmont, Mt Etna and Tuscany. If I had to choose only one country to drink from ever



again it would be Italy. France would be next, especially Chenin Blanc from the Loire Valley and Burgundian whites and reds. Oh, and I could easily drink German Riesling every day for the rest of my life as well. As for Aussie wines, cooler climate Shiraz, some Yarra Valley Chardonnays and aged Hunter Valley Semillon are my favourites. ☐