

Holidays savoured in a glass

Take your palate on an overseas sojourn with these fine imports

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I always find it strange that Australia celebrates the Queen's birthday, and stranger still that it is celebrated on different dates in different states. Still, I have just enjoyed a long weekend in the Queen's honour so I am all for maintaining the tradition.

If only every weekend could be three days long: two days to entertain and one day to gather one's thoughts. The opportunity to bring some old favourites out of the cellar while still having time to find something new. An easy glass at lunch with friends, a few crowd-pleasers around the barbecue, a chef's ration while pulling together something ambitious from the cookbook... bliss.

The reality of a five-day week need not be all doom and gloom. Let a glass of wine take you to a foreign shore, in spirit if not in body. There are so many good imports in Australia and you don't need to be on holiday to enjoy these four.

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1. Pieropan Soave Classico 2016 (\$35)

Soave, the dry white wine from Italy's Veneto region, is one of the country's success stories. It is exported to far-flung corners of the world, and it would be rare to go to an Italian restaurant anywhere that does not have at least one on its wine list.

Unfortunately this success also brought a huge rise in production without, initially at least, a guarantee of quality, so careful selection is vital. Many are lightweight and generic, whereas this soave classico from Pieropan is light to medium-bodied with subtle flavours that maintain good presence and length. There is a lovely floral nose, followed by mild melon, apple and lemon on the palate. It is a little bit nutty, too. A perfect sipper for lunch or early evening.

trembandhandtaylor.com.au

2. Mauricio Lorca Fantasia Malbec 2016 (\$28)

The Lorca Fantasia malbec is a beautifully versatile wine: bring it out in a casual barbecue setting and watch friends come back for more, or take it to dinner and it can be quite the conversation piece.

Wherever you pull its cork you'll find a wine that is pretty dark in the glass, with a nose that includes dark fruit as well as red berries. There are floral notes, too.

On the palate there are more serious dark fruits that manage to be deep yet fresh at the same time. There is spice and relatively mild tannin, and some fresh acid on the finish.

Drink it on its own or with any number of foods, from hard cheeses all the way through to a big steak. As I said, it's versatile.

untappedwines.com.au

3. Passopisciaro Etna Passorosso 2014 (\$65)

The importer has already sold out of this fantastic wine from the fertile slopes of Sicily's Mount Etna. However, you can still find it (in rapidly decreasing quantities) at selected retailers around the country, and when you do I recommend you buy the lot.

It is a mid-weight wine that somehow conveys a sense of rocky energy. It has an exciting nose where strawberry and raspberry fruit are lifted by violet aromatics, and there are herbs, spices and the stony, rocky element that is hard to identify but undeniably present. I should probably recommend drinking it with food but I enjoyed it so much it had gone before I had even given a thought to the menu.

A definite wine of the year contender.

mondoimports.com.au



4. Cognac Tesseron Lot No 53 XO Perfection (\$499)

It is often said that life is too short to drink bad wine. This is the case with cognac, too; a good glass can be savoured for hours. Given the choice I would select one from the Tesseron family. Historically, it supplied the famous houses including Hennessy, Remy Martin, Martell, Hine and Courvoisier, but since 2003 it has been releasing cognacs under its own label.

Pour a glass of the Lot No 53 XO Perfection and savour the aromas before enjoying a spiritous mixture of dried fruit, candied citrus peel, dark chocolate, burned honey and caramel, and charred oak. It is powerful yet smooth and beautifully mellow. Let the finish linger and the warmth course through your veins. Perfection indeed.

bibendum.com.au