

Local wine appreciation is becoming more sophisticated, says Craig MacPhee, director of MacPhee's, for the wine enthusiast, as consumers become more educated about wine, go to tastings and events and talk to retailers about what they're buying.



CRAIG MACPHEE SAYS his great appreciation of wine started like many enthusiasts—through interested and knowledgeable family members—and grew through shared experiences with people with passion. “Many people’s interest in wine is activated by a family member or may be encouraged by a great wine experience in a wine bar or restaurant or a trip visiting a cellar door.

“In my case, I was aware of my uncle’s and mother’s interests when I was young. Most of us can identify these moments and as one develops an interest, other experiences or people play roles in enhancing and developing this.”

MacPhee says a trip to the Mosel in Germany and walking the vineyards with the legendary Johannes Selbach was seminal in that it generated a respect for riesling. The ancestors of the Selbach family have been cultivating riesling since

1600 and today, Johannes Selbach and his wife Barbara run the Selbach-Oster riesling vineyards on a 7 km stretch along the Mosel River.

Interviewed by the Wine Industry Journal in 2009, MacPhee mused that more Australians are sharing this passion and understand that some wines benefit from some time cellared.

“People are certainly buying wine and cellaring it, whether it be in their home cellar, wine cabinets or off-site wine storage,” he said.

“They are becoming more educated about wine, going to tastings, events and talking to retailers about what they’re buying, so I think overall the market is growing.

“And there are plenty of people in their 20s interested in good wines. Granted not all want to buy wines and cellar them, but parts of that generation are willing to try new things, and they’re going to restaurants with vibrant and interesting wine lists and taking the advice of sommeliers. We have clients in that age group who store wine on site as well, so while they’re probably not building cellars, they’re certainly interested in things like wine cabinets.”

When it comes to long-term cellaring, MacPhee says that the backbone of most cellars is still the classic Australian shiraz and cabernet sauvignon styles, with the addition of imported wines for the real enthusiasts.

OPPOSITE CRAIG AND TANIA MACPHEE, DIRECTOR AND CO-FOUNDER, MACPHEE'S

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Craig MacPhee shares his tips for a good cellar

Buy wines that can age, particularly those that relate to how and who you share wine with. A cellar full of “trophy wines” isn’t much use if you aren’t OK sharing them at less formal occasions.

Cellar more “good value” wines that suit occasions that may be more casual and more frequent. Often this means buying two to three of the best wines from a producer and then perhaps four to nine of the mid-priced wine.

Buy more Pinot Noir than you think you will need. Those reading this will understand.

Buy some imported wine and at least experiment if you are new to this area.

Care for producer/regional bias—a focus on a few “regular producer” buys or one to two regions can be a dangerous approach.

Keep good records of what you drink/liked and importantly what’s in the cellar and when to try/check its progress.

If you have children, talk to someone who seriously knows about cellaring wine and get them to help you select wines from their birth year to age over a long period of time. Make sure you store them properly.

Craig’s personal top tips at the moment: Imports—Rhone Valley France—shiraz/grenache blends, nebbiolo from Piedmonte. Mid- to upper- quality wines: pinot—By Farr, Kooyong, Curly Flat, Bindi and many more locals and, of course, Burgundy 2009/2010; chardonnay—some cracking values locally at \$20-\$30 and above for the long term cellar; shiraz 2008/2010 Barossa and some great Heathcote values \$20-\$40. And of course one of my favourites; riesling. I simply love it and could go on about it for ages.