

WINE NOT!

Orange might be one of Australia's less talked about wine regions, but it's definitely not to be missed on a trip through inland NSW!

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I've always been a big fan of wine. Some people will say I am a bit too much of a fan, while others will gladly share endless banter with me about the industry, things they've tried on their travels and their favourite drop. I am a romantic at heart and for me there's something special about gazing into the rolling hills of neatly presented grapevine rows, listening to the sounds of nature's surroundings and feeling the light fresh breeze on my face – this is wine country and it's my comfort zone.

I become an even bigger fan of wine when I am travelling for a couple of reasons. First, I am a visual junkie and therefore a sucker for a good view and I don't think I've ever seen an ugly wine region. Even when the weather doesn't put on its best show, there's always that comforting image of walking into a cosy cellar door, sitting by a fireplace and sipping on your favourite red, while watching the

storm pass. Secondly, I love shopping local – the experience of trying and purchasing local produce is embedded in the core of what travel means to me. So, when I plan a road trip, if there's a wine region close by, I'll detour.

As we explore parts of inland New South Wales in this issue, I'd like to bring your attention to a wine region which could get more love and recognition – Orange.

Well known for apple and pear orchards surrounding the area, it is perhaps why this region's grape growing and wine production is diluted in the eyes of an average consumer.

This is undeservingly so, as its distinct terroir provides great advantages to present Orange as a premium wine region. Named after the main town in the area, this is one of the cool climate regions in NSW, much attributed to its high altitudes from 600-1150m above sea level.

Spanning 1500ha, Orange is less than half



the size of the most recognised NSW wine region, the Hunter Valley. Cool temperatures during grape growing season ensure even fruit ripening and best varietal expression, while dry autumns almost guarantee a good finish to the vintage with little disease stress and dry picking conditions.

It is this combination of benefitting weather factors and passion and determination of small wine producers that dominate the region's production and contribute to the creation of high-quality premium products. It is no surprise Wine Australia refers to Orange as the 'growing gourmet hotspot'.

UP TO TASTE!

CUMULUS 2018 ALTE CHARDONNAY, \$24

Derived from 25-year-old vines growing at 600m above sea level with arguably perfect chardonnay conditions, one might say that this vineyard makes it easy for resident winemaker Debbie Lauritz. The aromas start with a lovely display of primary fruit such as fig and peach followed by a brief note of almonds finishing with a gentle hit of oak; the palate is medium-bodied, creamy stone fruit and fresh finish. This wine is a perfect match for Anji's Eye of Newt devilled eggs and Jalapeno popper mummies (Recipes on the Road).

PHILIP SHAW 2018 NO 17 MERLOT CABERNET FRANC, \$28

Known as one of the key original contributors to Orange's success as a wine region, Philip Shaw's reputation is hard to beat. Producing 120,000 bottles from the 47ha vineyard, which Philip has owned since 1988, consistency in quality of this producer is second to none. Low-yield harvests mean that only the best of fruit make it into the vineyard's top-class wines.



The 2018 Merlot Cabernet Franc is no different. The aromas clearly display primary fruit like mulberry, plum, blackberry followed by hints of vanilla. On the palate, plum flavours are coated by grippy tannins, which show the wine's youthfulness and suggest a little cellaring may be desirable.

ROSNAV ORGANIC 2015 GRAND-PERE RESERVE SHIRAZ MOURVEDRE, \$35

A visit to the family owned and operated farm with French ancestry and organics is a must! The 2015 Grand-Pere Reserve Shiraz Mourvedre is their 'boldest red'. Red berries come flying out of the glass when you first smell the wine, followed by savoury herbs. The palate is intense and captivating, it has everything: fruit at the start, natural acidity

throughout and soft, silky tannins to finish, it just keeps on giving.

TALLWOOD QUEEN & CRISIS 2018 RIESLING, \$28

If hand-picked grapes from a single 880m above sea level vineyard in Mt Canobolas isn't enough to make this wine super special, I'll tell you what is – with only 590 bottles produced this is an absolute gem of a find! The lime and fresh green herb aromas are synonymous with a good riesling and this particular wine from the 2018 vintage has those in abundance. The palate has a crisp lime backbone with a savoury texture which was picked up from some contact with the skin of the grape. It has not experienced any filtration or fining, so enjoy the raw and honest varietal characteristics of this special drop. [U](#)