

Cellar Conversation *with* Mo Rosa

“Like wine, some of us are best when full of youthful vigour - brimming with vitality, bursting with flavour, and eager to be consumed; while some of us need a little time to settle - bypassing those awkward teenage years and blossoming into smooth, complex maturity.”

There is nothing more luxurious than poking through your cellar looking for the perfect wine to serve to a great mate, or pair with a meal you have just prepared. Salivating with anticipation as you pull out a long forgotten purchase; or making a mental note as you return it to the rack that it will be perfect with spring lamb, shared with so and so... in a couple of years. It is a luxury you deserve, and the great news is – you can afford it.

Most wine in Australia is consumed within 45 minutes of purchase.

Winemakers know this and create wines to be consumed within a couple of years. So before you start ripping up floorboards, make sure you actually like aged wine. You can find aged wines at good retailers or on the secondary market. Try a few and when you've fallen in love with those earthy, cigar or honeyed marmalade flavours, you are ready to start your cellar.

Of course **not all wines are suitable for cellaring**. Many fruit-driven whites, such as Sauvignon Blanc, Verdelho and Pinot Gris are at their absolute best within months of being bottled. On the other hand, Riesling and Semillon age beautifully, so be sure to include some in your collection. These, along with Cabernet Sauvignon and Shiraz (and blends), are often crafted to last, and will change and develop with age. A cellaring wine must have structure and balance right off the bat: acid, tannins, fruit and oak. No component should overwhelm the other.

A wine that is out of whack when young will be an even whackier older wine.

One of the simplest ways to find out if a wine will age is to read the label. Winemakers want you to enjoy the fruits of their labour when the wine is perfect and therefore, put their cellaring recommendations on the bottle. Trust them. Only buy wines you like, and buy the best quality you can afford. And always buy at least six: try one every couple of years, and then when you think they are perfect drink the rest!