

Good Living Magazine - WINE

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By Huon Hooke



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HUON HOOKE

CELLAR TALK

Champion sommelier toasts our terroir

Europe's champion sommelier, Isa Bal, has encouraging words. "Australians have an ease in communication, which is a very good asset in our trade," he says. Do our wines lack terroir? "No. Brokenwood Graveyard and Peter Lehmann Eight Songs are very different regional expressions of shiraz," Bal says. "They have terroir."

Bal (pictured) works at Michelin 3-star restaurant The Fat Duck in Berkshire and believes he's the only Turkish sommelier working in Britain. He won the Peter Lehmann Shiraz Prize and toured the Barossa as part of his award.

He mentions Jasper Hill Shiraz and Mount Langi Ghiran Shiraz as two of his favourite wines. Of the 900 on The Fat



Duck wine list, about 120 are Australian. Only 10 are white "because white wines age more quickly and I have to be careful they don't get too old." That said, Bal prizes Hunter Valley semillon and has a couple on his list. "It's one of the most interesting wines in the world," he says. "At 10 to 11 per cent alcohol it has ripeness and complexity and ages so well. There are no other wines like that in the world."

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