

LIFESTYLE

Super time among shelves

A BLOKE I know told me that he found himself unexpectedly at a supermarket express checkout.

Sadly, he probably can't remember how he got there or what he was buying and, no, he hadn't been abducted by aliens. Worse still, alongside him was another bloke we both know.

"You've got to be kidding – together – what were the chances?"

A bit like water being found on Mars, neither of these men is easily discoverable and that's how they like it.

They are not rock stars. Just blokes who don't like supermarkets.

For some people, a visit to the supermarket means ducking and weaving to avoid having to make



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small talk – which is where my earlier two blokes probably fit.

I love that for more than 20 years I can still spot poet Tim Thorne sometimes on a Saturday morning at Jimmy's.

I also love that Jimmy's doesn't have those darn self-help checkouts that require reasonable co-ordination, vision and attention span – all three of which are regularly unavailable to me at the supermarket.

This winter, when we ran out of toilet paper and paracetamol during a festive bout of gastroenteritis, it was the kindness of a supermarket stranger who by her simple act, soothed my brow.

I was standing, dazed and confused, with four boxes of generic paracetamol balanced

atop an 18-pack of loo paper. Bugger doctors without borders – checkout chicks with hearts rule, OK? She tapped my shoulder, took the items and popped me through an empty checkout.

As a younger person, I also loved discovering the difference between Sainsbury's and Tesco's in the UK. Now, there's a class system.

Rich people shopped for their European butters, cheeses and yoghurts at Sainsbury's and the rest rummaged for Weetbix at Tesco. Odd.

I recently noted a cluster of good people complaining about the architectural statement or non-statement that is the construction of a new supermarket in Launceston.

But me, I can hardly wait. I know it's ugly, but hey, if all goes to my evil plan, I will be able to travel the globe as I glide in through my weekly supermarket meditation.

Yes, I also find supermarket shopping relaxing.

While I have been known to duck and weave to avoid supermarket small talk, I do love a good supermarket.

To avoid a "let's burn the witch" moment; for every dollar I spend in a good supermarket, I spend probably twice the amount at butchers, bakers, fishmongers and delis.

And let's face it, the only other place you can let go of up to \$400 in 20 minutes is the Marimekko store in Emporium Melbourne (Google it).

Small wineries need to be proactive to make key lists

SMALL wineries, including those from Tasmania, take particular pride in having their wines listed by renowned restaurants in Sydney and Melbourne and in being stocked by five-star hotels.

These listings are seen as a validation of a wine's worth in a competitive marketplace and as a showcase for their wines to a new audience.

So just how do small Tasmanian wineries like Sinapius and Domaine A end up having their wines listed at the chic five-star Shangri-La Hotel in Sydney and its prestigious Altitude restaurant and Blu Bar on level 36, where guests take in panoramic views of Sydney while sipping on their drinks.

Here you'll find Holm Oak Pinot Noir being served by the glass and wines from local labels including Jansz, Clover Hill, Domaine A, Dalrymple, Sinapius and Glaetzer-Dixon dotted throughout the list, along with Ampel, made by Jeremy Dineen from Tamar Valley fruit.

Given dynamic Canadian-born executive sommelier John MacKinnon has a choice of wines from around the world when he puts together his 400-bottle list it is an impressive array from Tasmania, considering the state still produces less than one percent of Australia's wines and these wines find themselves on the same list as labels like Chateau Haut Brion and Chateau d'Yquem.

"With a 400-wine list we can combine traditional strengths with interesting, innovative wines," MacKinnon says. Organic and biodynamic wines are all identified on the list.

I asked MacKinnon why Tasmania features so heavily, and what other Tasmanian producers can do to get their wines in front of himself and other leading sommeliers and influencers.

"Smaller producers are absolutely a focus for us and Tasmania has definite strengths," he says. "We cater to



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a mix of hotel guests and locals and a lot of them want to try something different, and with a lot of events on site, sparkling wines are also important."

Small wineries need to be proactive if they want to get on key lists.

"I'm happy to see samples from any producer who thinks they've got something special," MacKinnon said.

Cellar doors

Tasmanian pinot noir will get great exposure in the national capital next month when Michele Round from the Pinot Shop hosts "12 top Tasmanian Pinot Noirs" at brand new hotspot Provini Italian restaurant on October 28.

Meanwhile, with spring having sprung, local cellar doors are back in action with John T. Bailey's new eatery at Leaning Church at Lalla a major attraction. After last Sunday's sold out Long Table grazing lunch, the cellar door lunch menu is now available seven days a week.

Down south, at Winstead, outside Bagdad, today marks the start of their wine and wood-fired pizza Sundays in conjunction with TQ on Elizabeth. Visit between noon and 3pm.



**Richard Meyman Wines
2014 Colebrook Road
Pinot Noir \$28**

A really lovely, juicy and spicy young Tasmanian pinot noir. Soft and easy to drink with just 13.5 per cent alcohol, this offers a lot of drinking pleasure for those who like their reds younger and more accessible. It is made in a slurpable "drink now" style with plum and cassis notes alongside fresh cherry flavours. It is nicely balanced and underlines that you don't have to lay out a fortune for good Tasmanian pinot. It would be great matched with mushroom risotto and I've seen it on special at the Pinot Shop.



**St John's Road 2014
Motley Bunch \$22**

I love the retro labels used by St John's Road, the Barossa brand that now employs talented Phil Lehmann, son of the late, great Peter Lehmann, as winemaker. This is a wonderfully enjoyable blend of three grapes that thrive in the Barossa sunshine: grenache, mataro and shiraz. There is plenty of flavour to be found here, but also an understated elegance that shines throughout the St John's Road range. Far from being old-fashioned, like the label, this is young and vibrant, fruit-driven and charming.



**Berton Vineyards 2015
Metal Vermentino \$12-14**

This is a cracking new-release white from Berton Vineyard in the New South Wales Riverina that underlines exactly why there is so much excitement surrounding the Italian white grape variety vermentino, which retains vibrancy and acid in warmer climates. It is very refreshing, crisp and flavoursome and would be a great partner for Japanese dishes like sushi or sashimi, or perhaps with fish and chips. Brilliant value, too.



**Tamar Ridge 2014
Sauvignon Blanc \$28**

This wine has come together beautifully in time for summer enjoyment. While sauvignon blanc does not usually benefit from ageing, this Tamar Valley wine has lost its youthful rough edges and matured into a thoroughly adult wine, albeit still with freshness and charm. You'll find some zingy lemon and lime notes, herbaceous hints, some flinty minerality and a crisp acid finish. Everything is nicely in place here; a wine for sipping with dishes like deep-fried whitebait or herb-crusted John Dory.