

Ep 99: Being a Master of Wine Stage 1 Student, and the wine regions of South Australia with Melissa Worrall (Part 1)



Janina Doyle 00:00:07 Welcome to Eat Sleep Wine Repeat, a podcast for all you wine lovers, who, if you're like me, just can not get enough of the good stuff. I'm Janina Doyle, your host, Brand Ambassador, Wine Educator, and Sommelier. So, stick with me as we dive deeper into this ever evolving, wonderful world of wine and wherever you are listening to this, cheers to you!

Hello and welcome back to another episode. So today I have an amazing friend of mine, Melissa Worrall, who gosh, if you go back to many years ago, when this podcast was in fact called Unfiltered, perhaps don't, it was a little bit messier. It was an interesting style of podcast. Mel was in fact, one of our first guests and we were talking about Rieslings. Well, we have stayed friends during our WSET diploma and beyond. I have calmly stated that I'm okay now just studying for myself. She, on the other hand is one of those crazy people who is doing her master of wine. So she is a stage one student, in the first year. So she's gonna be talking through her experiences, what she's doing, how she's studying. Hopefully there'll be a bit of advice in there for you, and you will certainly also see the struggles. Then, of course, because Mel is from Barossa valley in South Australia, we are gonna be talking about the wine regions of South Australia. So she's gonna take us on a bit of a tour so you can understand where they all are in comparison to Adelaide. And then we're also gonna be discussing how different grape varieties change depending on where they're grown and maybe wine making techniques and how the climate and the soils affect things. And in fact, of course, talking of soils, if you listened to last week's episode, you will know that I was getting quite geeky about soil.

Janina Doyle 00:02:08 So to enhance that and take you to the next level, I wanna quickly just talk about Coonawarra and their Terra Rossa soils, because these are basically the most famous soils of Australia. So these are basically red soils. They're really quite vibrant, and they sit over the top of white limestone soils underneath. So Terra Rossa means red earth in Latin, and it's basically a red loamy soil. It's very fertile, the red part of the soil. And it's full of lots of iron oxides, which is why you have that rusty bright red color. And then the chalky limestone underneath has amazing drainage. The soil's PH is neutral to slightly alkaline, which we like. And in terms of flavors, that fertile top soil, the red soil gives really concentrated Berry fruits and Cassis notes to the Cabernet Sauvignon that grows there. And there is this hallmark mintiness. And a good minerality, which is in theory may be coming from the limestone. Right, Terra Ross soils tick, let's go over to the chat with Mel now.

Janina Doyle 00:03:35 Thanks for joining me. I'm feeling quite sad now because you just told me before we pressed record that you're drinking wine and I feel a bit stupid, cause I brought tea with me to the podcast. Do you think that now people listening have no respect for me anymore?

Melissa Worrall 00:03:49 I I don't have any respect for you anymore and I've you've lost it that I'm yeah. I'm pleased that I'm bringing some credibility to this podcast with my wine. So, at least at least I'm here.

Janina Doyle 00:04:00 Mheh. Yeah, but you say credibility, but you told me that your wine was from Luxembourg and you are Australian and part of this podcast is supposed to be on Australian wine. So where's the authenticity?

Melissa Worrall 00:04:11 I'm all about the diversity. I've actually, I've actually got a cracking bottle of Riesling to take to an event tomorrow night, which is also in the fridge. So I've saved that to have external credibility at the event.

Janina Doyle 00:04:22 Um, now Mel, why do we love wine? Why do you love wine?

Melissa Worrall 00:04:27 Oh, heck. I actually wrote like a, I actually wrote a practice on this. Yeah, I did.

Janina Doyle 00:04:33 Oh my God. For me?

Melissa Worrall 00:04:34 I know, I know. You know, and do you know what it was like? It was, it was like, what is wine mean to you? I wrote good question.

Janina Doyle 00:04:42 Okay. But now you need to actually give me an answer.

Melissa Worrall 00:04:46 Yeah. Yeah. So what I love about wine is what it does for me and what it does for others. So I think it's like it's the friendship, its experiences that you have with it. Um, what I love about wine is actually with what we've already touched on in this conversation so far, like it reminds me of home. But it also reminds me of traveling. So one of the things that I love most about opening a bottle of wine for the Barossa is the last time that that wine was out of the bottle, it was at home and then it's getting poured into my glass over here. Yeah. And it's memories, you know what I mean? It's memories of the people you're sharing it with, like, you know, we still pull out a bottle of wine and you know, you'll think about a particular vintage or you'll think about, you know, who you were with last time that you, you know, you had a bottle and that's what I love about wine. I think that's not, that's not quite repeated across any other, any other, I guess, beverage, like you just don't get that excited about an orange juice, or beer. Perhaps whiskey perhaps, but not to the same, you know, it's still limited in where it's from and that sort of thing. But yeah, I think that's what makes wine special.

Janina Doyle 00:05:47 And to be honest. Yeah. Well your story where, coming from Barossa you've done so many different jobs in Barossa and growing up and I think I've heard you say stories about when you are a teenager. So many people were connected to their friends or their uncles or their dads were winemakers. And so, you know, everyone was kind of submerged in the wine world even without knowing it. Right?

Melissa Worrall 00:06:09 It's an incestuous incestuous Spider web Janina.

Janina Doyle 00:06:14 Oh, I didn't notice that when I went to visit Barossa but thanks for letting me know.

Melissa Worrall 00:06:19 Scratch below the surface.

Janina Doyle 00:06:21 Mm-hmm. To be honest, you did write in your article for Jancis Robinson when I was reading it, like everyone in Barossa knows everyone. So it's just, that is the rules. Right. Actually, let's talk about the, let's talk about the article. That was cool. Why were you writing? This was, so Jancis Robinson does a competition. Is this every year?

Melissa Worrall 00:06:37 Yeah. Yeah. So every year Jancis Robinson does a wine writing competition. They choose a topic. So I I'm currently presume she specifically chooses the, the topic. Um, and invites people within the industry to, um, yeah, to submit articles. Um, and then winners are chosen that sort of thing. Um, so last year, so 2021 was, uh, about old vines cause there was just, there'd been an old vine conference. Um, I think it was done online, um, because we couldn't travel. But yeah. So they're inviting people to share stories about old vines, so it could be vineyards or the people. And the idea is sort of to, I guess, you know, sort of, um, show appreciation and stir up the interest for, for what old vines do around the world. So I chose to write an article on old vines in the Barossa. We are very, very lucky in the Barossa to have some of the oldest existing, continuously producing vines in the world. Um, we've been touching wood...

Janina Doyle 00:07:37 Wood! Sorry.

Melissa Worrall 00:07:39 Untouched, untouched by Phylloxera. Obviously we're still original roots stocks. So I wrote about, um, old vines from yeah, the, the, um, sort of mid 18 hundreds at a beautiful little vineyard in a Hamlet north of the Barossa. Um, vineyard's called Rojomoma now. Um, but the, the, the Hamlet's Ebenezer and as I was writing about Rojomoma's vineyards, as I was writing about Rojomoma's vineyards, I worked out that I knew the family that they'd brought the, the, the vineyard from and I actually remember going to parties there.

Janina Doyle 00:08:12 So you didn't realize at the time it was like literally a realization when writing the article?

Melissa Worrall 00:08:18 That's, right? Yeah. So when, when she, when, when Bernie started describing to me sort of where they were, like, I had a very good understanding of where they were, but I never actually visited. Um, since I, I got to know Rojomoma as producers. Um, but yeah, when she was explaining it to me, I'm like, who were the family that you purchased those vines from? Oh! Did they have a daughter called... oh I know them. Yeah, I went to school with, I went to school with them.

Janina Doyle 00:08:45 Uh, so teenage shenanigans, you were all having a party in the vines. Huh?

Melissa Worrall 00:08:50 We were all having a party in the vines.

Janina Doyle 00:08:53 To be honest, that sounds so much fun.

Melissa Worrall 00:08:56 A lot of no good can happen in a vineyard and it's quite fabulous. Do you know, I shudder to think now about a bunch of punk teenagers tramping through some 150 year old vines looking for somewhere to go and yeah. Have a, have a pash. It's just, it's just awful. It's just awful

as a grown up, I'm upset the thought of us tramping through these vines. I hope we didn't hurt them. I really hope we didn't.

Janina Doyle 00:09:22 No, it was funny. Isn't it? You know, you talk to vineyard owners and you're like, you know, what pests do you have? What are the problems like? Oh, we're worried, worried about birds and oh, we have problems with badgers and rabbits and bears. And in Barossa it's like, Oh...

Melissa Worrall 00:09:33 Barossa punk fucking teenagers.

Janina Doyle 00:09:38 And you're like, are there special nets? Are there special things to stop teenagers going in? Oh dear, you were one of them. Oh my God.

Melissa Worrall 00:09:47 One of them.

Janina Doyle 00:09:47 So tell me what was the life affirming moment in a vineyard, presumably in Barossa. Am I being creative here?

Melissa Worrall 00:09:55 My life affirming moment in vineyard, I've had a couple, but some of them aren't safe for....

Janina Doyle 00:09:59 Ah, are they a little bit PG 13? Actually probably higher.

Melissa Worrall 00:10:04 In vineyards. Yeah. Par the course, par the course, but not specifically about the Barossa one. I was gonna talk about a non Barossa one

Janina Doyle 00:10:12 Okay. Okay. Tell me, tell me.

Melissa Worrall 00:10:14 Um, so life affirming moment in the vineyard, in a vineyard actually happened earlier this year when I was in Austria. Um, I was very, very lucky to spend a day with a fantastic producer called Birgit Braunstein. And um, I remember after a really fantastic day with her standing in her vineyard. Here, I've got, I've gotta stand facing the direction. Now this is me moving around.

Janina Doyle 00:10:41 Oh my God. How funny? Everyone visualize.

Melissa Worrall 00:10:46 Yeah, I know, my eyes are shut whilst I'm... Everyone, guys, My eyes are shut. I'm telling this story. Overlooking, overlooking. Um, now this is my, my Austrian pronunciation, but it's um, Neusiedler See, like overlooking this giant lake as a sun setting. It's absolute golden hour. Um, oh, it's absolutely stunning. She had a bottle of her wine, um, that we were sipping on as we were talking through. We'd just spent, literally spent the day like through the vineyards and she has a, a stone circle that her friend made that we'd been walking in and it was like this most mindful meditative afternoon. Um, and she's the most at peace person. She's just like sunshine to be around. Um, and that I think with the glass of wine and I was about to embark on a week of learning and studying, and I was quite nervous and excited about that, but there was just this time of absolute peace in this gold now with the glass of wine sun setting, um, over this beautiful, beautiful place that I've never been to before. And I was just like, fuck, this is all right. Yeah, this is good.

Janina Doyle 00:11:50 Yes. This is why I'm doing it. So, I mean, actually that's not just life-affirming but probably affirming to you that you choosing to go down the program to be a master of wine is probably worth it. Right? Because why have...

Melissa Worrall 00:12:04 Well I cried the next day.

Janina Doyle 00:12:06 Why did you, oh, bless you. I mean, why, why did you decide to study master of wine? Insanity?

Melissa Worrall 00:12:17 Yeah. Well, so, um, I've got three answers for this. I've got...

Janina Doyle 00:12:22 Oh, I love that.

Melissa Worrall 00:12:23 A raw answer. I've got a business answer and I've got a fun answer.

Janina Doyle 00:12:30 I want raw and fun. Screw business, no?

Melissa Worrall 00:12:32 Okay. Okay. So raw answer is I have the most ridiculous and imposter syndrome and I needed to feel like I was taken as a professional in the industry and I never feel like I know enough. Yeah. I still feel shy, rocking up to tastings. Like people are gonna kick me out because I don't expect to be there. So yeah. So I'm like, well maybe if I'm a master, people will think that I'm proper.

Janina Doyle 00:12:58 They'd better. Oh, well that's quite sad. I don't agree. I'm not happy about that, but ok.

Melissa Worrall 00:13:02 That's a really sad answer, Mel.

Janina Doyle 00:13:03 It was. How depressing. Okay. Can we go to the fun one?

Melissa Worrall 00:13:06 I told you it was raw.

Janina Doyle 00:13:07 It was raw. Thank you for, you know, bleeding your heart out a little bit. Oh, I'm sorry about that genuinely. I dunno if that's actually coming across. I dunno if I sound genuine. Oh, sorry about that!

Melissa Worrall 00:13:21 Sucks to be you. Bloody hell.

Janina Doyle 00:13:22 Oh, no. I'm sorry about that. Go to the fun one.

Melissa Worrall 00:13:26 Uh, well my name is Melissa Worrall, so my initials.

Janina Doyle 00:13:30 Oh MW. Yeah.

Melissa Worrall 00:13:30 And I really think being MW squared would be absolutely fantastic.

Janina Doyle 00:13:33 Oh, that is brilliant. Yeah, no. I'm on that.

Melissa Worrall 00:13:35 So my long term, my long term future professional goal, um, is to be MW squared and I'm gonna get a tattoo and um, and it's gonna be somehow it's gonna be my business card and logo.

Janina Doyle 00:13:46 Love it. Love it. Love it. Can you actually go on, give me the business answer as well now, just come on. What's the, what was the business answer? Just cause I'm intrigued.

Melissa Worrall 00:13:52 Well it crosses over a little bit, I think it's it's to it's to grow and develop within the industry into I guess a five year plan.

Janina Doyle 00:14:03 So everybody who is aware of the master of wine program knows that my God, it is tough as hell. It takes years and years and years. It's not easy. So, but for you personally being in the first year, so you're a first year student what has been the biggest surprise or even shocked whilst doing it?

Melissa Worrall 00:14:25 Um, so probably probably the biggest surprise about being, um, on the program, although I am only in the first year, so it is still very much sort of baby steps with it, um, is, is the community, like, I just can't believe how freaking amazing and supportive everyone is. It's just the most incredible group of people. And what I've found is it's not a hunger game situation, you know what I mean? Like there's not a finite amount of people that can go through. What it is is, is stronger together sort of thing, like building each other up, sharing resources, sharing ideas, sharing your expertise and knowledge. Um, and that's just been wonderful with this group of people that are just amazing. I was standing in, in, um, in Rust with people that have got master's degrees and speak three or four languages, and they've traveled from here and they've done this and they've done that. And then yeah. Then there's that Dick head punk from the Barossa that trumps around in her friends dads vineyards breaking the old vines.

Janina Doyle 00:15:28 Yeah. You know, those old vines that you wrote about, maybe they'd be older if it wasn't for you.

Melissa Worrall 00:15:33 No, I didn't jump on. I didn't jump on me.

Janina Doyle 00:15:36 Please. Please. Anyway.

Melissa Worrall 00:15:37 Um, yeah, so no, I think, um, I think the community, um, like the support and encourage, um, knowledge sharing has been yeah, absolutely incredible. Absolutely incredible. It's also terrifying.

Janina Doyle 00:15:48 Yeah, I can imagine. And actually, how does it work? Cause I think a lot of people have asked, they've asked me this and I don't fully know. Financial costs. Like have you created a plan for, obviously there is the set pricing for the exams. Okay, cool. But then the likelihood is there's not many human beings that can pass all the exams first time. So you gotta pay for every exam the second or third time or fourth time you take it. Plus probably what costs more money is actually the samples and the trips abroad. Right? So have you worked out a plan of one, how much money you think it's going to cost you and two where you can maybe get help or sponsors to help financially? Or are you just gonna sell your body? I mean, I'm just wondering, you know, what, what's your thoughts?

Melissa Worrall 00:16:36 Well, that is an option I was thinking, does anyone actually need a spleen? Like honestly, like I don't, I dunno what they go for on the secondary market. A gallbladder? I'm pretty sure that might fund, um, it is expensive. It is, it's prohibitively expensive for a lot of people, um, which is challenging. Um, and I can touch on a creative way to get, um, that, that one of my study colleagues has, um, come up with for that in a minute, which is quite interesting. But yeah, it's a, it was a huge, like financial was a huge part of the factoring in with it. Um, and yeah, a serious conversation that you want to have with your family and life partner. It's definitely not a solo decision cause it is so much time, it's so much money and it is so much stress. And when they were talking about marriages, like they were saying in the program, marriages don't survive it sometimes. They weren't even joking. Like I'm starting to find examples of marriages, not, um, making it through the other side of, um, of people doing the

MW. So it's, it is just such to big commitment. Um, so yeah, so, but there are different ways that you can go around it, um, and work with it. So the Institute of masters of wine has a few, um, they have a few scholarship programs so people can apply for those. So it might either be like a year's worth or the whole program's worth, different sort of things. Um, sometimes you are lucky enough to have, um, your, um, employer, um, cover all or part or some of, of what you do as well. So that's, um, that's quite often what people have, a part sponsor, part funding. Uh, they might have someone sponsor their, their wines and their studies, but they have to do their trips themselves, that sort of thing. Um, but the other, like the, the wine is actually a really big cost of it as well. Cause the expectation and the amount of tasting you need to do so again, that's where that wonderful community comes back into it. And um, I'm yeah, I'm in a tasting group. Um, there's sort of eight of us that get together fortnightly it's about to go to weekly. Um, and so rather than you trying to do everything yourself, you're splitting the cost, um, and that makes such a difference. It turns something completely unachievable into yeah, something a lot more achievable. So that that's been a big way of doing it is, um, sharing where we can. Um, and it sounds super gland, but sort of travel like travel like a punk, sleep in the back of a car and um, stay, stay at hostels or so, you know. Stay on someone's floor cause you can. Like it's, but I think that's part of that community as well is it's hard. And if there's options to, um, you know, if there's options to split a room or yeah. Or stay at a friend's a friend's family's house or, or, you know, like a, um, a friend, you know, friends mates place in a different country, that's sort of what you do to, to get through and learn. It's just that passion that gets you going.

Janina Doyle 00:19:28 Well, you are a student again, aren't you, right? Student without the dorms. Basically. So now tell me, you have, you are in year one. So what, what do you have to do in year one compared to year two?

Melissa Worrall 00:19:47 So we've got in year one, we've got essentially five subjects. That we are gonna be assessed on at the end of the year. Um, so it's viticulture, vinification um, prepackaging basically from the vineyard to the bottle. Sorry, not from the vineyard to the bottle, from the winery to the bottle from when you, when it goes into the bottle to when it goes out. Um, and then finance and then, um, that's four. And then in the, in the second year there is a fixed subject, which is, which sounds quite interesting, actually it's a theory. Um, what is it, philosophy of wine, something like that. I don't have to, I don't have to think about that until future. Future Mel needs to worry about that one. So, but it's sort of when you go into these, you know, like is, you know, why does wine exist or, you know, is there a future in wine? You kind of get really quite, really quite existentialist on things. Yeah. So it is literally. And I mean, this is the whole master's thing. It's become a, a master across the whole, um, the whole spectrum of trade, a whole spectrum. So it's not just about it started as wine business. Um, and that was the idea of, of how it began 60, 65 years ago. Um, but yeah, it is to have that viticulture, vitification, um, bottling, you know, quality assurance, quality control, understanding as well as, you know, roots to market, market share, market positioning. Um, you know, how much does it cost to export wine? How much does it cost to bottle wine?

Janina Doyle 00:21:14 Oh, I've got a headache.

Melissa Worrall 00:21:15 Yeah. It's quite, it's quite, I mean, it is, it is endlessly fascinating, but you do get, uh, it does, the absurdity, it catches you sometimes. I was in a really valuable call today, um, with a, um, with a wine system and I've had to, I've had to learn how spectrometry, spec, I can't even say it, spectrometry, spectro color refraction works again. You know, like it was getting quite, you know, um,

and the, you know, malolactic fermentation deep dive and that kind of thing. So learning, you know, sequential versus pro fermentation, you know, benefits, that sort of thing. You're like, right. I've gotta remember all of this and yeah, it's slightly, it's slightly absurd. I was yeah, driving down the M1 desperately trying to listen to a Malolactic fermentation, um, webinar last week, wondering what the hell I'm doing with my life.

Janina Doyle 00:22:10 Um, so listen for anyone listening, don't worry what, about Mel having a whole webinar. Malolactic fermentation is the malic acid turning into lactic acid. It's the more spritzzy apple acid turning into a lovely creamy dairy acid. Done full stop. There's nothing else we need to know. That's it. I'm happy. That's it.

Melissa Worrall 00:22:31 That's a normal person response. That is the normal person response.

Janina Doyle 00:22:35 Exactly. And quite clearly, if there was a webinar, how long did this webinar last?

Melissa Worrall 00:22:39 Hour and a half. Hour and a half. And there was almost amazing lecturer from South Africa who yeah, it was brilliant.

Janina Doyle 00:22:45 Okay. Amazing. Okay. So they didn't bore you, so everybody listening, if you're interested in what I just said in one minute, there is another one hour and 29 minutes worth of content that you could possibly learn about malolactic fermentation. Great.

Melissa Worrall 00:22:59 I can show you the graphs if you like?

Janina Doyle 00:23:02 Actually, to be honest, now I actually am feeling quite, uh, geeky. I kind of want to see it.

Melissa Worrall 00:23:04 Yeah. You want the link? You want the link. We'll put it in the show notes.

Janina Doyle 00:23:06 Maybe. Okay. Alright. Alright. Exactly. Actually that's a good point. Oh my God. Okay. So there's no tasting at the end of year one, just the theory?

Melissa Worrall 00:23:15 Oh, sorry. No, I haven't even spoken about the tasting side of it. Um, and then there's, and then there's three tasting exams as well. So P1, P2 and P3 in the tasting exams. Um, so P1's maybe that one's white wines of the world. Um, P2's red wines of the world and P3 is everything else. So rosé, sparklings, um, sweets, fortified, that sort of thing. So there's yeah, there's those as well. And so that's a 12 wine blind, um, and you've got something like nine minutes per wine to assess the wine, write about the wine and they're quite detailed responses. Some of them are 25-50 markers. It's quite boggling. At the moment, um, you know, compare and contrast the wines, all this sort of thing. So yeah, it's, it's, it's full on, like, you're looking at a glass of wine and you think it's likely to be, you know, based on color, you know, let's go, that's likely to be Nebbiolo based on the color. And then, you know, you smell it and it's, it's, you know, confirms Nebbiolo because of, you know, like aromas of XYZ tasting it.

Janina Doyle 00:24:25 Tar and roses everyone. Tar and roses.

Melissa Worrall 00:24:28 Yeah and then you're finding, you know, you're finding the, the high tannins and you're finding the, the high acid you're like, okay. But then you can't just say in that order, it has to be your most compelling argument first in your structure of your response. It's quite hard as well.

Like what makes this most like whatever I think it might be, which of course it may not be because turns out, I can't tell the difference between a Spanish Tempranillo and a Barossa Shiraz at the moment because they're presenting exactly the same to me.

Janina Doyle 00:24:55 Oh, listen, I, uh, blind tasting is possibly the worst thing for me. So do you think that's gonna be your biggest challenge actually, the blind tasting?

Melissa Worrall 00:25:03 Well, I always thought tasting was my strength, but, um, now I think it is. Yeah. Um, tasting is hard. Tasting is hard now.

Janina Doyle 00:25:12 How have you been studying for your exams? Like right now, how do you even structure learning about everything there is to learn about wine?

Melissa Worrall 00:25:19 Yeah. I spent a lot of time spinning around in a circle flapping like that's...

Janina Doyle 00:25:22 Oh no. That sounds fun

Melissa Worrall 00:25:22 That's quite, that's a thing. Yeah. That's what I do.

Janina Doyle 00:25:24 That sounds like my style. And then, and then what? Anything, Mel, anything useful for anyone else thinking about studying?

Melissa Worrall 00:25:33 Oh sorry. You, you didn't want what I actually do. You want what I should be doing?

Janina Doyle 00:25:37 Yeah. Yeah. That would be useful. Any advice that someone's given you then if you've got no advice for anyone else?

Melissa Worrall 00:25:41 Oh yes, please don't, please don't come to me for advice. Um, so what I, what I've been doing, so I've got, I need to be accountable because I procrastinate. Um, so I've got study groups. Um, so I've got a theory group, I've got a practical group and then I've got like a midweek group that meets on the theory side of practical, if that makes sense. So, um, so essentially I'm meeting at least, um, another group of people once a week and I have to have shit ready for that meeting. So if I don't have it, then that's not good enough and I'm letting the team down. So we sort of like, again, it's that knowledge pooling and resource sharing of, okay, well, I've done a practice on this and you've done a practice on that. And so we are gonna go through ideas, go, go through our structure, go through our responses. Why did you write that, that sort of thing. So that's making me do something every week, whether I want to or not. Um, and I find that I find that most useful and I know everyone studies slightly differently, but I find group work and being accountable to others, the most useful thing for me, because, or if it was just up to me, I'd be quite okay letting myself down. I'm less good at letting other people down.. And that, and that's a really good checkpoint. Yeah. Um, for me, so that's what I found, um, really, really useful. And again, it's amazing group of people. Some like some of them are in the other some crossover, but the really great thing that's happened with the practical groups, sorry, with the theory groups as well, is we don't all have to be in the same country. We're not all trying to sit in the same room together, which I think up until a couple of years ago, you know, you had to really study with whoever was near you. Um, I've got, you know, I've got someone who's in France at the moment. I've got someone who's in Denmark at the moment, so there's no limit on, um, yeah, limit on who you can study with, which is, which is really, really, really useful from that perspective. Um, and then from the, you know, from the, from the wine flight exam perspective, obviously sitting in the same room and

pouring wine makes the costs a lot, um, a lot more achievable. But in terms of structure, so I know, I know the subjects, I've got the P1, P2, P3 before, um, breaking everything down. So it was reading over past exam papers, going through all the past exam paper questions, breaking them down into subjects within the syllabus. Um, and just making sure that I have done them, looked at them, researched something, got examples where I can. Worked out how I'm going to answer them in structure, that sort of thing. So it's not, it's not that simple. I'm please don't ever think that this is like, I'm making it sound simple, cause it's the scariest thing I've ever done, but it is just trying to breaking it down into bite size chunks, um, based on the syllabus and then working through them.

Janina Doyle 00:28:23 Now your homework here, the P6 exam with me, was I wanted you to educate me on South Australia as a region because this is your region. This is, you know, your home country. Where do you wanna start? Educate me.

Melissa Worrall 00:28:40 So I think, I think the really lovely thing about Adelaide is that, um, there are so many gorgeous wine regions so close to it. Um, obviously the Barossa is the best and that's where everyone should be going. Yeah. In conjunction with others. But please all do visit the Barossa. Cause it is, it is it's is the best. Um, so Adelaide, um, so Adelaide is in South Australia, um, capital city right down south. So the Barossa is about, I'm gonna talk in kilometers cause I'm home in my mind now. Um, the Barossa is about 60 kilometers north of Adelaide. Um, and the Barossa encapsulates the Barossa valley and the Eden valley. Um, so if you go another 60 kilometers north of that, so about 120 k's north of Adelaide, you've got the Claire valley. Um, the Claire valley is again very beautiful, um, and known for exceptional Rieslings as well. Uh, Cabernet Sauvignon as well. Um, Shiraz. There's some Grenache their too. Back to Adelaide is our starting point again. Um, if you go about 25 minutes east, you go into the Adelaide Hills. Um, so Adelaide Hills is known for Chardonnay, Pinot Noir. So it's a lot cooler there, bit higher elevation. Um, and when they make their Shiraz, they're calling it Syrah because of that stylistic difference.

Janina Doyle 00:30:01 Uh, do you know what I've been to Adelaide Hills in fact many, many years ago and I loved it and it was beautiful, which like most wine regions. Um, but I was really into the Chardonnays there so much. So I had, I didn't even notice that they were calling their Shiraz's, Syrah. That is very interesting. I mean...

Melissa Worrall 00:30:19 So not always, but it is certainly, there's certainly a sway towards that and to yeah, to differentiate, um, what, I guess you are expecting in style prepared to say the Barossa, um, or to McLaren Vale, which is our next wine region we're gonna talk about. So McLaren Vale is about 45 minutes south of Adelaide. Um, so kind of near the beach, um...

Janina Doyle 00:30:42 How close to the beach by the way? Cause I haven't been to, I've been to every region you've mentioned so far, but now, now it all goes Pete Tong, it all goes south I've I never went south south. No, I didn't go south. So McLaren Vale, how close to the beach, you know, if you wanted to...

Melissa Worrall 00:30:57 Now you're testing me. No, no, no, no. That's okay. So like not, you can see, you can see the beach from vineyard, but it goes back a bit. So I would say like 15 minutes drive to the beach from some of the closest vineyards.

Janina Doyle 00:31:13 I'm liking the idea of that.

Melissa Worrall 00:31:14 So you definitely, definitely have like coastal influences in some of it, but then I guess as it goes down, um, like as you go further down into McLaren Vale and in, um, that coastal influence would become less and it would be more sort of Mediterranean, um, in its influence. Um, and so they grow some really lovely Grenache down there, Shiraz. Um, and there's quite an emergence of, um, Mediterranean for the second time. They call Mediterranean variety sort of what we would call in Europe sort of, I guess, more traditional Italian and, and Spanish varietals, um, are growing quite well down in McLaren Vale. Um, and then, so that's 45 minutes south of Adelaide. We're not done yet because there's even more wine regions in south Australia.

Janina Doyle 00:32:00 Exactly. Well, this is the point. I think a lot of people, it's like Barossa tick done. It's like, no there's loads. Okay. Carry on.

Melissa Worrall 00:32:06 Um, so back to Adelaide again. So if we go south for four hours, we go the Coonawarra. So the Coonawarra is about four hours from Adelaide and five hours from Melbourne. Um, so just in the south Australian border. Premium Cab Sav, like I'm sure the Coonawarra is quite famous for its lovely Terra Rossa soil. Um, and that cigar shape strip that, that soil's on. Um, and again, you get a lot of ocean influence there as well. Cause it's quite flat. So when the, the ocean, Southern ocean, um, breeze comes in that yeah, that impacts that. So Coonawarra's one of our favorite areas. We, um, we used to go down there on honeymoons and, and wedding anniversaries.

Janina Doyle 00:32:44 Oh, really. Okay.

Melissa Worrall 00:32:45 Was lovely. Yeah. We went for, uh, well, it was when we went for honeymoons, we used to go back every year for our wedding anniversary. Um, yeah. Which is lovely.

Janina Doyle 00:32:54 Where would you go? Where would you actually stay? I dunno, like a winery?

Melissa Worrall 00:32:57 We would stay. Shout out. Yeah, of course. Yeah. So Yalumba have a beautiful vineyard down there called Menzies vineyard. And they have a gorgeous rammed earth cottage called the Menzies retreat. And so we'd stay at the Menzies retreat. It was in, so vineyards on one side and a bit of scrub land on the other. So you could go and yeah. Just not be disturbed for, yeah, it's absolutely gorgeous. Um, open fire. Lovely. Take me back.

Janina Doyle 00:33:25 Oh no, absolutely. I'm anything with a vineyard. I'm gonna be happy, but that sounds beautiful.

Melissa Worrall 00:33:30 Yeah. It's just super simple and super gorgeous.

Janina Doyle 00:33:33 Have you tasted any wines from Kangaroo Island?

Melissa Worrall 00:33:37 Oh my God. I'm not. Hang on. Hang on. I'm not done yet.

Janina Doyle 00:33:40 Oh sorry. Sorry. Pause. Keep, keep going. Keep going. I was just, I wanna, keep going.

Melissa Worrall 00:33:44 Yes. The answer is, the answer is yes. The answer is we are getting there. Um, so we, so what I've done with Barossa, Claire, Adelaide Hills, McLaren Vale, Coonawarra, is I've, that to me, and I'm sure that people from the other regions will take, um, take issue, but that, to me the most, um...

Janina Doyle 00:34:01 Well known yeah.

Melissa Worrall 00:34:02 Well known.

Janina Doyle 00:34:03 Iconic. Quality... Quality driven aswell.

Melissa Worrall 00:34:07 Yeah. So then, so, so after that, so what I guess the biggest volume, which I haven't touched on yet, but I'm going to, um, talk about now is the Riverland. The Riverland is, um, about two hours, where are we gonna go, like east of Adelaide, north east. It's broad. It goes across the river. The river goes around the top. Um, but that is our, I guess our workhorse of fruit. Um, that's where it's something like the Riverland's responsible for like 33% of all of Australia's crush. It's like a, like it's a huge workhorse and it has been quite cropped heavily. Do you know, the yields have been really, really big and it is definitely, and it is like those, those high yielding, you know, Sauvignon Blancs, we in, in Australia do a lot of bag in box. So we get the, the five liters and the, um, three liter, you know, Berries spatlese fruity lexia and stuff like that. So that's where that fruit's coming from. Um, so that has been the Riverland. So very, very, very important from a commercial piece. Um, but also, and we'll probably go back to this, but some really interesting stuff coming out now, cause Riverland vines are all quite old. A lot of them that have gone past their peak production, um, have been pulled, but a lot of pockets of interesting older stuff is still kicking around. So there's some really interesting sort of slightly alternative producers or, um, yeah, making some really great stuff outta Riverland fruit now as well. So I think that's a region to watch because it's kind of the underdog. Um, and people weren't expecting much from it, but Tim Wildman actually has just been at the Raw festival with his Pét-nats and stuff. And a lot of his fruits from Riverland.

Janina Doyle 00:35:55 Oh, interesting. And funny enough. Okay. I, well, when, when this podcast is released everyone. No, no, no, no. You can go back to my Instagram because I haven't actually done it yet, but it will be posted. That I was tasting his Pét-nat, that is English and oh my God, it is fun. It is fruit driven. It is so soft. It is so beautiful in the bottle. The label is amazing. And Tim was explaining to me that basically he designed this label with, uh, a Brighton artist. Anyone who doesn't live in England, Brighton is down on the coast and they basically designed something that needed to look, needed to inspire people. So it wasn't about the, what is in the juice. It's about creating an emotion and that that emotion should be positive. And therefore that they want to pick up the bottle and then all he needs to do is make sure that the juice, it gives them what they expect, which is this positive emotion. I just loved the story. I he's like literally my new love interest. I swear to God. So everyone go check out that bottle that I've already posted, which I haven't done yet, but it will be in the past by the time you listen. Right. Oh my God. That's so interesting that you've mentioned him. Okay.

Melissa Worrall 00:37:03 I love that. And we've also kinda done this back to the future time space continuum thing where it's like currently present day it's gonna be in the past, but it's not yet in the past. It's amazing.

Janina Doyle 00:37:14 I'm so confused. Moving on. Sorry. Sorry everyone.

Melissa Worrall 00:37:16 Um, yes, Riverland. Um, there's still more to go. Langhorne Creek so that's, so that's kind near the Coonawarra. It's about an hour Southeast of Adelaide. It's quite small region. Um, that's got a lot of Cabernet Sauvignon, um, a lot of emerging Mediterranean varietals and we've got a big lake that's like, um, like an Estuary, called Lake Alexandrina and that's kind of moderated a bit by

being around the lake. Um, Adelaide planes, which is like Virginia, Too Wells, um, kind of way. That's a lot more again, workhorse sort of stuff. Um, a lot of Italian, um, immigrants to that area. So a lot of like small plantings, of varieties there. Oh my gosh. And then Kangaroo Island. So kangaroo island is only tiny. Like there's like 144 hectares of vineyard. Um, completely maritime climate because it's a, you know, a little island, um, only, only just yeah, only just starting there. There was a fledgling, um, industry on there a few years ago. Kangaroo island was quite devastated by, um, Bush fires in 20... Oh my years get lost with the pandemic. 2019. I wanna say 2019, might've been 2020. There was ridiculously devastating fires on Kangaroo island, but building back up. But yes, there is some really interesting stuff coming out of, outta Kangaroo island. Good, good stuff. And there's a really a really excellent Adelaide Hills producer. Charlotte Dalton is her name of her wine label. Charlotte Dalton wines, Charlotte Hardy is her name. Um, and she is doing a collaboration with some producers on Kangaroo island, making some, making some wine with, um, their fruit, which I don't think we are gonna see in the UK. I think it's only gonna be quite small production, but it looks so interesting. So when I get home, I very much want to get some of that in my glass.

Janina Doyle 00:39:14 Well, I just wanna point out to everybody, first of all, going to Kangaroo island in a plane, super fun, super quick. And I have been, but don't expect kangaroos. There was like hardly any kangaroos on Kangaroo island. I was like so upset, but there are loads of hang on. Were they, were they seals or sea lions? I think there were seals. Oh my God. There's like seals galore. So I mean, it's actually just, I don't remember them stinking. I think I was probably just...

Melissa Worrall 00:39:40 You must have, you must have stood upwind!

Janina Doyle 00:39:43 I dunno. I dunno. I, I think I was just like in awe because they were all just so beautiful, but I, it did, I did make me laugh that on Kangaroo island, there is so little kangaroos, which is just a little bit ironic anyway. So...

Melissa Worrall 00:39:57 Were you disappointed? A disappointed English tourist. Where's my kangaroos?

Janina Doyle 00:40:01 I was a little bit, I was actually, I didn't see hardly any kangaroos when I was in Australia. I think you guys are lying.

Melissa Worrall 00:40:08 Okay. Yeah. Next I come to the Barossa with me. I'll show you some kangaroos.

Janina Doyle 00:40:11 Yeah. Right. I did see a few in the vineyard, so it wasn't, it wasn't so bad. Now tell me, okay. Let's, let's look at the, the main grape varieties, like Riesling, probably Cab Sav and well Shiraz and Grenache. I can't believe I missed Shiraz. Um, Riesling Claire valley versus Eden valley, what do you prefer? Yeah. What do you prefer?

Melissa Worrall 00:40:30 Yeah. Um, Eden valley. Obvz. Yeah. So Eden valley is higher than Claire. Um, and it is cooler. Um, so you're getting a little bit more acid. I get a lot more liminess and citrus from Claire. What I get from Eden is musk. So this is a very different...

Janina Doyle 00:40:48 Ah the Perfume. The florals. Yes, the florals.

Melissa Worrall 00:40:49 Yeah. This is a very different indicator. Yeah. So Musk sticks is something I used to buy at that Tanunda pool in summer, down at the canteen. Um, and that's what it reminds me

of so much though, that I brought Musk sticks back to my team when I was, um, when I last went home. So they could have it as a reference point. Nobody got quite as excited as me, but yeah, that Musk, um, so turkish delight, rose petal, floral kind of element to it as well as almost like lemon sherbet as opposed to, um, as opposed to the lime and, and me more fresh citrus I get from Claire.. But yeah, so, and I mean, obviously Eden, Eden's part of the Barossa GI, so it's, it's my home. Um, yes. Stomping ground advantage. I think it's absolutely beautiful. Don't get me wrong. If anyone offered me a glass of Claire valley Riesling, I would happily and heartily accept it. Happily, and heartily.

Janina Doyle 00:41:39 It's not gonna be, it's not gonna be painful. Um, Shiraz I've touched on actually going back in podcasts many, I dunno, I can't even remember which number, I'll have to try and search for it, but generally Barossa valley versus Eden valley. Eden valley always is more that blue fruit, isn't it? Where you get the darker fruit with the Barossa valley. Would you agree?

Melissa Worrall 00:41:57 So yeah, Barossa valley is lower altitude. Um, and a couple of degrees cooler during the day and during the night. So you're getting um, you're getting a lot more like earlier fruit rightness. Um, and you're also getting a bit more extraction from the, from the skins, that sort of thing as well. Eden valley tends to have slightly more peppery, spicy characters to it. Um, and that's just yet like the, the altitude temperature difference will make a, um, an impact on that. And then there is a, like, there is becoming a bit of a stylistic separation between the Barossa and Eden in how they're like each the wine makers are interpreting the fruit as well in that the Eden tends to have slightly less, and this is generalization cause every winemaker's gonna have their own fingerprint on how they do it. Um, but they'll have generally slightly less extraction generally, it'll be, um, general oak usage, that sort of thing because they're wanting to really encourage the, the fragrance and the elegance of the, um, of the, of the Shiraz. Whereas the Barossa has that more robust, almost like meaty, olivey kind of element and all of a sudden you can see why I'm mistaking it for Tempranillo in a blind.

Janina Doyle 00:43:04 There you go. There you go. Don't don't feel bad. It happens. Okay. What about Cabernet Sauvignon from Coonawarra or Langhorne Creek?

Melissa Worrall 00:43:14 Now. So that's, that's not hugely different. Um, my argument, my argument for going, like if I was gonna look at two of them, blind would be the Coonawarra obviously has that Terra Rossa soil, so that limestone over clay, whereas Langhorne Creek's got more like alluvial soils. Um, my, my pick for Coonawarra would be it it's just a bit more premium, like a bit more finesse. Probably a little bit more structure to it. Probably a little bit more complexity to it. Again, generalization cause a good Langhorne Creek and a bad Coonawarra are probably gonna be quite, do you know what I mean? Like there's gonna be a crossover.

Janina Doyle 00:43:50 I know, I know

Melissa Worrall 00:43:51 But stylistically that's what I'd be looking for, is that elegance and finesse in the Coonawarra, but they're both gonna have, you know, quite rich black fruit, um, red fruit spice, but I think, yeah, there'd just be that structural elegance. Um, you'd more likely to see in Coonawarra.

Janina Doyle 00:44:06 Okay. Okay. And finally Grenache, Garnacha in McLaren Vale versus in Barossa valley.

Melissa Worrall 00:44:16 Ooh. So grenache is delicious and it's...

Janina Doyle 00:44:20 Full stop.

Melissa Worrall 00:44:21 It's just, just get it in ya.. Um, it's um, probably my favorite red, um, I both are doing a collection of styles. I would say that typically the Barossa used to be a bit bigger and heavier and a bit more oak than what McLaren Vale used to do. Um, but I disagree with that now. Like I think both of them are doing lighter, more fragrance, spicy characters rather than, uh, rather the extracted and oak. I think there's just a huge amount of, so...

Janina Doyle 00:44:58 What is that little giggle?

Melissa Worrall 00:44:58 I mean I'm gesturing to you and you can't of course see me. Everyone's parents are retiring from wine making, so everyone that's coming into the wine making wants to do it differently to how their mom and dad did it. So like typically we've been looking at the last 25 years, like grenache that's probably spent a little bit too much time macerated, probably have a little bit more, much time new oak and all the people that are taking over have been traveling. They've been going around Europe, they've been going around Italy. They've been going around, you know, Spain and seeing what these beautiful light juicy styles can do and they can see what garnacha can do. Um, when it's, you know, in that almost at that Joven kind of like interpretation of it and that's how they wanna make that grenache now. So we're seeing a lot of really exciting, really like lifted lovely stuff coming out of both Barossa and McLaren Vale.

Janina Doyle 00:45:48 OK. Interesting. So watch, watch this space basically.

Melissa Worrall 00:45:51 There's start, they are starting to see some over here, which is exciting. I think, um, Chaffey brothers, um, are really like...

Janina Doyle 00:45:57 Oh we love Chaffey Bros.

Melissa Worrall 00:45:58 Yeah. Yeah. And um, The Wine Society have brought over Whistler wines. Um, and they do a really lovely, they they've got that quite young, fresh, um, minimal sort of minimal fining, minimal filtration, um, and um, juicy style there as well. So I check them out.

Janina Doyle 00:46:19 So next week Mel will be back and as her master of wine studies has taken her to Rust in Austria, which is quite an iconic place for master of wine students to go. Next week's episode is gonna be on Austrian wine. So don't forget to tune in. Now as always, I shall finish with a wine quote and I think you're gonna like this one. This is by Dr. Philip Norrie, who is an Australian GP and is also known as the wine doctor. So he's created the world's first REW, stands for resveratrol enhanced wine. So resveratrol is the antioxidants that we find in our wine, that's good for us. He's found a way to increase that. What is not to love. So I feel in dedication of this even healthier wine, I shall use his quote which is:

“Wine is the thinking person's health drink.”

I shall certainly second that. So that is it for today. Make sure you have subscribed. If you haven't already liked the podcast, share the podcast. And if you're listening on apple podcasts do leave me a review and a comment because it makes the podcast more discoverable. You already know what's coming up next week. So until then, cheers to you.