

Food & Wine



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The Root of The Barbarians
Namibian Neuras
The Wines of Sablet

**Food & Wine Matching at
Berry Bros.**
A House With a History



CHAIRMAN'S

MESSAGE

After the initial excitement of taking the Chair (a visit to America and three branch anniversary dinners in 6 weeks) I am now getting used to the more mundane administration duties that go with the role.

Our lease on the office in the In&Out Club has come to an end. This is the Society's registered Head Office for legal purposes but has not been used as frequently since we decided to do without a full time Executive Director and operate with a part time administrator. We require some type of office to run the Society and I have become involved in the process of deciding what we need to do. Some (but not many) members enjoy the 'associate status' membership at the 'In&Out' and the facilities there so whatever happens I would hope to retain some benefits there.

A number of members have queried progress with the new website. Having had experience with a number of Government computer projects, which have always been late and have often not worked, I have always viewed delivery dates a little cynically. At the EAC meeting in January we heard from our EAC sub committee under John Valentine that the project was behind schedule. As a Society project it is being implemented by an International Project Team, comprising members from each of the three areas, with a Californian firm employed to deliver our requirements. The EAC were concerned that many of our own plans are dependent on the new website and that they may be delayed by any slippage in timescales so I have written to Council stressing its importance to us. I understand that the overall project is being split into phases and I am hopeful that we will be able to see some results by our Annual Branch Representatives meeting in Broadway on 11th May.

We need the new website to attract new members either in new or existing branches. Most of our EAC membership is as old as I am and we need to bring in new generations to take our place. Our unique selling point is the matching of wines with food; or vice versa which is why I am pleased that Stewart Turner agreed to submit an article for this edition. Our branches are all different (mine is far more biased to wine than food) but we can all learn from each other and enjoy our differences.

The Asparagus Awayday that follows the ABRM has sold out and we have a waiting list. This demonstrates yet again that members are happy to engage in events that are aimed at a wider audience than their home branch. I look forward to being able to support future Awaydays in Continental Europe and Africa. In this edition of the Magazine we detail the next EAC festival based in Liverpool. Festivals are expensive because we aim for top quality in both food and wine. It would be wrong to subsidise them from general members funds so they are priced to make a small profit for the region and not to risk making a loss. Because many of the participants will come from overseas we have also arranged a Post Festival event in the Lake District. This will be sold firstly to Festival participants but if there is space it will be opened to other members. Similarly a number of the events within the Festival can accommodate greater numbers than others. These events will be offered to members nearer the date of the Festival and will give members the opportunity to meet without committing to the whole Festival. However individual events will be priced so that it is always advantageous to attend the whole festival.

One final thought; a new couple in the North of England joined the Society at the end of last year. They do not live close enough to a branch to enjoy normal branch events. They applied for the Asparagus event and were too late so are on the waiting list. They then had to fly to Dubai for a fortnight to help their daughter-in-law with a new baby grandchild. They contacted the Dubai branch and were invited to attend a function. That's one advantage of an International Society.

Ron Barker

CONTRIBUTORS

Stewart Turner, after completing a



three-year Chefs Diploma, gained experience in many top establishments, including Michel Roux's Waterside Inn. As Head Chef at Berrys he has changed the face of Berrys'

food, bringing a more restaurant and fine dining feel to the menus, without losing their ethos of food and wine matching. When not slaving over a hot stove, Stewart loves going to new restaurants to keep up with current food trends and spending time with his young family.

Alan Harrison ready for reciting and



piping during another busy Robert Burns night. Alan is on the Herefordshire Branch Committee and is coordinating its drive to increase membership. Before Christmas Alan joined the EAC Subcommittee dealing

with the new Society website and has produced a set of recommendations for them.

Lincoln Siliakus was raised in



South Australia, became a lawyer, worked for the environment, met his French wife and travelled a lot until settling in Sablet, Provence. He spends his life editing, writing about wine and fix-

ing up their old house.



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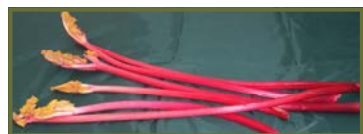
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Editorial

We were very much looking forward to joining Merseyside & Mid Cheshire for their 75th celebrations. Cumbria in November, what better time to enjoy the magnificent scenery whilst the hills are not alive with tourists, but as Sid pointed out as we drove through the mist and rain, 'Why do you think it's the Lake District.' After the third u turn, because of flooding, I was in a bit of a state when I had to do a three point turn in a narrow lane with Ulswater breaking around the wheels and no indication where the road finished and the lake began. Eventually we were warmly welcomed at Rampsbeck Lakeside Hotel (I did register that the hotel was well up the hill from the lake!) by Paul Bishop with umbrellas at the ready. Frayed nerves were quickly soothed and we were soon enjoying the hotels cosy hospitality that made the occasion a wonderful weekend, thank you Val and Paul.

A few days into the new year found us with no power for three days due to the disastrous heavy snow bringing down several of our specimen trees across the power lines. We were reminded that it was a similar winter, some years ago, that convinced Sid he needed a live in farm hand.

I am sad to record the passing of a colleague and friend, Margaret Drake. Margaret took over the editorship of this magazine in March 2001 and continued putting her inimitable style into the publication until Ron Barker succeeded her in March 2004. We miss you Margaret.

Once again we have an eclectic collection of articles for you to digest from martial menus to the story of a desert vineyard. Members have been on their travels and there are some recipes for you to try but make sure you have a few days free before you undertake the lemon meringue pie!

As I write, the 2010 Michelin Guide for Great Britain & Ireland has just been unveiled, five days ahead of schedule, after online retailer Amazon accidentally shipped copies of the guide ahead of its publication date - well done Amazon. According to Caterer & Hotel-keeper 'the overall results were extremely positive', with celebrity chef Alain Ducasse's eponymous restaurant at London's Dorchester Hotel being awarded three stars. It is the first time since 2004 that Michelin has handed out three new stars to a British establishment and it brings the total of restaurants in the UK holding three stars to four, including Gordon Ramsay's Royal Hospital Road, Heston Blumenthal's Fat Duck and Alain Roux's Waterside Inn - which celebrates 25 years of holding three stars. The big news is that Ducasse has declared London to be 'the gastronomic capital of the world'. Well done Alain, our members could have told you that a long time ago but it is not news until a French man recognises it!

So England's chief medical officer Sir Liam Donaldson is now accusing parents of fuelling binge drinking by offering children watered wine. If this is the case why does France not have the same problem where alcohol prices are lower. Instead of hiking taxes on all alcohol, thus penalising the moderate drinker, the government should be looking to the root of the matter - target the youngsters. If a motorist breaks the law - parking or speeding - a fixed penalty fine is issued. Why not a fixed penalty for every youngster that is picked up on the street or turns up in A&E drunk. If they can't pay I am sure a few nights 'community service' mopping the floor when their colleagues are brought in drunk would give them a different perspective on over indulging.

I leave you with the snow firmly behind us - I hope - and looking forward to a really warm summer, with plenty of time al fresco - I hope!

Pam Brunning



© The Ritz Hotel London

Dear Members

With some of the worst weather to hit the UK in nearly 30 years, I never thought I would be pleased to see the snow replaced with rain (I am sure I wasn't alone).

Looking to the year ahead, Council agreed at their October meeting that the IS should consider benefits for members which are in line with the intrinsic interest in food and wine, as well as continuing to offer special accommodation rates in London.

As a start I contacted the people at **Decanter** magazine who have kindly offered a special rate for IWFS members. In addition, I have once again sourced discounted accommodation prices for you in central London should you be planning a trip here this year. As hotel accommodation in London is an extremely competitive market we continue to offer prices from just two of London's exclusive hotels in prime central locations, namely **The Ritz** (Piccadilly) which has recently completed its renovation project and the **Mandarin Oriental Hotel** (Knightsbridge) which is planning to open up a new and exciting restaurant, in the autumn, with the internationally acclaimed chef Heston Blumenthal of The Fat Duck fame. Affiliate rates are also still available to IWFS members at the "**In & Out**" (Piccadilly), home of the IS - a special rate in August and December 2010 offers a twin/double room at £100 (inc VAT) per room per night. The club took on a picture postcard look during the recent snowfall.

For full details of these offers please go to the members only page of the IWFS website www.iwfs.org or alternatively e mail me sec@iwfs.org or tel. 01753 882320 and I will forward the information to you.

Do let me know if there are any benefits that you feel would be welcomed by the IWFS membership as a whole and I will look into this for you.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Andrea Warren



Margaret Drake - 1931-2009

Margaret Drake, who died on 9th November, 2009,



was a former member of the IWFS International Council of Management and a holder of the André Simon Silver Medal. She represented the European & African Committee on the Council between 1992 and 1996, and for the last three of those years was the Society's Hon

Secretary. At that time she was also the Secretary of the EAC.

In 2001, Margaret took over the editorship of *Food & Wine* from Peter Bennett-Keenan. She entered into this task with the enthusiasm and reliability she brought to all her activities, and continued until Ron Barker took over in early 2004.

Margaret was born in 1931, the youngest of three children, in Southgate, North London, and was educated at the Enfield County School for Girls, subsequently working as a journalist and librarian.

After a spell in South Africa, she found a job at the Combe Cross Hotel in Bovey Tracey in Devon, where she finally settled. She had a weakness for yellow Triumph Spitfire sports cars until advancing years meant that she could no longer get down into the driving seat.

She was once married to John Willis, but had no children. Sadly, her final days were not happy ones. She developed Alzheimer's Disease and was eventually forced to live in a care home. Her funeral was held in Exeter, and was attended by several IWFS members, as well as her niece Sue Drake and Sue's husband John.

Sue recalls that her aunt "always did things full on and with enthusiasm. She was an independent woman who challenged the traditional. As a small child I loved the presents she gave me – they were always slightly out of the ordinary and she lived an exciting life with exotic travel and challenging jobs."

Margaret liked to meet friends and colleagues in her favourite pub, the Nobody Inn at Doddiscombsleigh, near Exeter. There they would find a feisty lady who would guide them through the labyrinthine politics of the upper echelons of the Society, and provide trenchant character sketches of the main players.

Peter Bennet-Keenan, a fellow former Council member, writes, "The Margaret I knew was a real-life tough-as-nails character with a frequently fiery tongue hiding a heart of gold. Versatile to a tee, whichever task she next took on, and they were many and varied, she gave it her all from the privacy of her country hideaway in Bovey Tracey."

Philip Clark

A RECIPE WITH A STORY TO TELL

Hungarian Chocolate Biscuit Cake

After a most successful 'Starters & Puds' lunch organised by Surrey Hills Branch your Editor asked me about the following recipe and its origins.

Soon after Robert and I were married we joined a small dining group of other young couples in the Woking area.

Each September our names were drawn out of a hat in groups of four couples and this would be our dinners for the year.

We met bi-monthly and the host would organise the main course and wines, one person would bring the starter and another dessert. We shared the cost and the recipes, many of which I am still using regularly today.

Four couples organising bi-monthly events covered eight months so the last event before the summer break was completely organised by the men! Through this club we made new friends, learnt new recipes and had great fun.

One of my standbys is now Hungarian Chocolate Biscuit cake. It never goes wrong and is great for travelling to events around the countryside.

Ingredients:

8ozs good plain chocolate

8ozs digestive biscuits

8ozs unsalted butter

2 eggs

2 level dessertspoons sugar

2 generous tablespoons of brandy

½oz chopped walnuts

2ozs chopped glace cherries - if you prefer you can use crystallised ginger but slightly less.

Method:

1 Butter a 6-8 inch tin with a loose base.

2 Melt the chocolate with a spot of water in the microwave on low being careful not to burn.

3 Melt butter and allow to cool.

4 Beat eggs with the sugar.

5 Pour butter onto eggs and then beat in chocolate.

6 Break biscuits into ½inch pieces and fold into chocolate mixture with the nuts, cherries and brandy.

7 Transfer to the cake tin, smooth down and refrigerate until set.

8 Cut into wedges and serve with pouring cream

Bon appétit

Joan Sykes - Capital Branch



Capt John Stewart O.B.E., FRAGS, RM 1922-2009



John Stewart died on December 18th, he personified the enthusiasm and excitement of his generation. He was intended for a medical career but when he volunteered in 1940, after a good lunch, he decided to join the Marines. He was in the Dieppe raid in 1942, and a year later, aged 21, was in the forefront of the assault on Sicily where he was captured, then shot in the arm when he escaped the same night. Although wounded, he continued in active service and was later parachuted into Yugoslavia. His career was filled with traumas, his back was seriously injured when he parachuted into the sea, striking floating timber. In Cyprus he was in a car blown up by a terrorist bomb and suffered permanent hearing damage.

In 1945 he stayed in the Marines as a captain. He married Eileen, a Wren, who had served with him on HMS Implacable.

On retiring from the Marines in 1957 he returned to the family farm at Weston Underwood, near Olney, Buckinghamshire, took an Agricultural Diploma and became an enthusiastic farmer, specialising in beef cattle.

Food and wine remained a permanent interest as John had always been a good cook. He became involved with the Nuffield Farming Scholarships, became Chairman of the Nuffield Farming Trust and worked as a Director for 20 years. As well as teaching young farmers to appreciate the good things they produced he made friends with French and young Commonwealth farmers. He and Eileen entertained them at the Mill House instructing them about food and wine - as a sideline to farming.

In 1970 the owners of the French Partridge at Horton, in Northamptonshire (prompted by the IWFS in London) suggested to him that they form a local IWFS branch. John, as usual, threw himself into the task becoming a member of the EAC. The Northampton Branch owes a great deal to John. As secretary, a post he held for 17 years, he inaugurated a system by which new members were encouraged to plan functions with older members, creating friendships as well as memorable events. He and Eileen loved entertaining, a remarkable lunch at the Mill House included all the members of the Northampton branch plus Limerick branch members here on an exchange visit.

John delighted in first courses and entertained friends and fellow IWFS members to dinners comprising six or eight starters, each with its own wine. He would talk passionately about each as he darted from dining room to kitchen, preparing the next dish. Enthusiasm marked John's life, along with great aspirations to achieve the best - and in every field he was successful. We will miss him.

John Stewart is survived by his wife Eileen, three sons and a daughter.

Maggie Angeloglou

RHEUM RHABABARUM -

"THE ROOT OF THE BARBARIANS."



BY PAM BRUNNING



Some say that rhubarb is a native of Siberia and for this reason it grows well in the 'Yorkshire Triangle'. It likes to be cold and damp, conditions that West Yorkshire can easily replicate!

In fact rhubarb originated in China and Tibet. Records' dating back to 2700BC show rhubarb was used mainly for medicinal purposes, primarily as a remedy for constipation. In the mid 1500's, it was much more expensive than cinnamon in France and by the mid 1600's, rhubarb was double the price of opium in England. The earliest record of it being grown for culinary use was in Europe around 1608.

The word rhubarb comes from the Latin word "rhababarum" which means "root of the barbarians." The Romans labelled people who ate rhubarb barbarians.

Rhubarb (genus *Rheum*) belongs to the plant family Polygonaceae and contrary to popular belief it is a vegetable, not a fruit, being a close relative of garden Sorrel. It was legally classified as a fruit in the U.S. in 1947, even though botanically it is a vegetable.

It is said that at one time there were several hundred varieties but many have died out. Today Brandy Carr Nurseries at Wakefield have over 100 different varieties in stock including both ornamental and culinary.

Rhubarb is 95% water and it contains no fat, sodium or cholesterol. It is a source of potassium and the crisp, sour stalks are rich in vitamin C, dietary fibre and calcium. The leaves however are toxic. During World War I rhubarb leaves were recommended as a substitute for other green leaf vegetables that the war made unavailable. According to records there were cases of acute poisoning and even some deaths. Some animals, including goats and swine, have also been poisoned by ingesting the leaves. The whole plant contains oxalic acid but there is a lower level in the stalk than the leaf and nowhere near enough to be dangerous. The oxalic acid is not a problem but the leaves also contain Anthraquinone Glycosides and it is thought that the combination of the two may be the reason the leaves are poisonous. It is not recommended that you put the leaves on the compost heap.

Around 1810 the first rhubarb reached the London market but out of five bundles sent only three were sold. By 1820 Myatts of Deptford and Lewisham were supplying the market regularly. It is estimated that in 1831 over 100 acres of culinary rhubarb was grown around London. Many of the varieties grown then have since disappeared.



I am very grateful to Ralph Mills for the super photo of forced rhubarb on the front cover. I found it at his website www.twoatlarge.com If you click on Allotment 45 you will find a fascinating story of the development of a Nottingham allotment.

"Six hundred square yards of weeds, giant slugs, decaying wood, rusty iron, old bricks, broken glass and more weeds..."

Ralph and Lenore Ogilvy took over 'allotment 45' in Nottingham's Whitemoor Allotments, on October 1st 2006 and their website gives a record of the fun, and food they have enjoyed ever since. They are also inveterate travellers and enthusiastic photographers and the site is loaded with wonderful photos from around the world.

I asked Ralph if he forced his rhubarb under one of the terracotta pots available to gardeners his reply was, *"My rhubarb was forced under something much more prosaic...an old plastic dustbin."*

It is amazing the number of things old plastic dustbins can be used for!

Benjamin Franklin's cure for flatulence was dried rhubarb and attar of roses dissolved in wine.

The original "Rhubarb Triangle" was not a triangle but more of a rectangle, from Leeds and Bradford to Meltham and Wakefield. Many of these farms were also producing 'forced rhubarb'. Cheap and plentiful coal to heat the forcing sheds, and good rail links to London helped in the development of the Yorkshire rhubarb farms. By 1937, 8,175 acres of rhubarb was being grown in the "Triangle", 3,819 acres of which was in the West Riding. By 1980 that figure had fallen to 422 acres due to the vegetable falling out of fashion and imports of more exotic dessert fruits.

Forcing" rhubarb - growing it in dark conditions - only began in the early nineteenth century. In 1877 the first consignments of forced rhubarb from Leeds reached the northern markets and in 1878 it was seen for the first time in Covent Garden.



Forced rhubarb is much more succulent and delicate than that grown outdoors in the garden. The two year old crowns are moved into heated, darkened sheds in early winter and the best colour, quality and texture are obtained when the rhubarb is grown at a temperature ranging from 55°–60° F (12.8°–15.5° C). The freezing of roots before forcing is said to be very important. It kills any pests present and is said to make the young shoots more succulent. This can be done by natural freezing as well as by chemical treatment. A long rest period after freezing is also recommended before planting.

The vigorous crowns are quick to shoot and standing quietly in a darkened shed is an eerie experience. There is a rustling, cracking and popping as all around the crowns force themselves into life. The stalks push up tall and straight searching for light and are harvested when the yellow leaves start to unfold. The stalks are harvested by candle light so as not to disturb or upset the growing crowns.

Gardeners and allotment holders replicate the conditions of the commercial forcing sheds by using terracotta rhubarb forcers such as the one above.

Today only a handful of commercial growers remain but the EU in its wisdom has recognized the produce of the world-famous Yorkshire Rhubarb Triangle as a unique regional food. This should protect the brand across the EU from cheap imitations, great news for growers and consumers alike.

RHUBARB PUDDING

This is a delicious rhubarb recipe, the sweetness cuts the sharpness of the vegetable, even young children enjoy it. The method sounds very bizarre - pouring a cup of boiling water over the top prior to baking but it produces lots of rhubarb flavoured jelly in the bottom of the dish.

300g forced rhubarb cut into 2cm pieces
85 g butter
160g sugar
130g plain flour
1 tsp. baking powder
¼ tsp. salt
120ml milk

Butter a 20cm x 20cm baking dish and cover the bottom with the rhubarb.
Sift dry ingredients, cream butter and sugar and add flour mixture alternately with milk to make a stiff batter.
Spread the batter mixture carefully over the rhubarb.
Mix 110g sugar with 1 tbsp corn flour and sprinkle evenly over the batter.
Pour 230ml of boiling water carefully over the top trying not to disturb the mixture too much, this is best done pouring the water over the back of a tablespoon. Place the dish on a baking tray - because with all that liquid it will boil over. Bake at 190°C/375°F for 50-55 minutes until the top is crisp and caramelised.
Serve warm with pouring cream or ice cream.





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Food & Wine Matching

by

Stewart Turner

Head Chef at Berry Bros. & Rudd

As the head chef at Berry Bros. & Rudd I look at food and wine matching from a slightly different perspective to most chefs. Whereas most people are selecting wine to go with their food, at Berrys we are doing things the other way round and writing our menus to work in harmony with the wines. A lot of wines actually need food to be enjoyed at their best and that is our aim.

Entertaining at Berrys is split into two areas: private hire and what we call, our 'brochure events'. For private events, I write the menus three times a year based around seasonal produce, with additional special themed menus such as asparagus, mushroom, truffle and game offered. I write these as most chefs do, but pay far more attention to making all dishes wine friendly. We try to stay away from anything overly acidic and look to have different dishes that will complement a wide variety of wines. With private events, whether they are held by a company or family, very often we find white Burgundy is a perennial favourite to accompany the starter, often leading on to red Bordeaux with the main course and rounding off the meal with a delicious wine from Sauternes or Tokaji...to be honest I can't blame them!

The brochure events are where the food and wine matching really comes into its own. They are based on a specific theme from Chateau or producer to country or region. These menus are all bespoke and written with the specific wine choices in mind. We take guidance from the wine makers on what they think works with their wine, although sometimes this takes a lot of refining before the dishes are ready to go on the menu. Many wines have evolved to complement the cuisine of the region, and this is a good starting point for finding food and wine combinations. We research the areas of production and find out about local produce and traditional dishes. Many of the traditional food and wine combinations hark back to the days when wine was produced and consumed in a relatively small area, in those days the wine didn't travel as it does to day. Italy is a great example of this: they produce wines to work with the local ingredients. As we all know in Italy the tomato is king. The acidity in tomatoes is a real killer for most wines, but Italian reds are designed to work with tomatoes and have higher acidity to match. Obviously there's a lot more to Italian food and wine than tomatoes and acidic reds, but this generalisation proves that wines were developed to accompany the regional cuisine and personally I feel that this research is an important part in the process of menu development.

When I took the job at Berrys in January 2008 I really didn't know what to expect. I understood a little about food and wine matching, but my background of working in hotels and restaurants meant I would create menus, but it was the job of the Sommelier to find the best wines to match my dishes. I soon realised that there are a lot of misconceptions when it comes to matching food and wine. The first thing to remember is there are no hard and fast rules; a lot will depend on personal taste, however I always use the following guidelines:

My first consideration is the weight of the wine, full bodied powerful reds need rich heavyweight foods like game, casseroles or roasted meats; whereas crisp, dry whites marry with acidic or delicately flavoured foods such as citrus, goat's cheese and oysters. I always think balance is the key so that neither the food nor the wine overpowers each other.

Then we look at the flavour profiles, the intensity and fruit character: grapey or floral wines work well with fruit based dishes. Wines with spicy flavours are winners with spicy foods, whilst oaked wines work well with smoked foods.

Wines with higher acidity can be used twofold: firstly, as I've mentioned, to match with acidic foods, and secondly to cut through oily fish or fatty foods: a good example of this is pairing red Burgundy with duck. The tannins in the wine are also very important (this is predominately all important with red wines); big tannins will require something very meaty like steak, whereas low tannins will match better with chicken or guinea fowl.

Older wines tend to need simpler and slightly more delicate dishes, but that said they can still be interesting and varied. A roast lamb dish doesn't have to be reminiscent of Sunday lunch at home. Since being at Berry's my team and I have spent a lot of time refining and improving the quality of the food so that it is not seen as the poor cousin but is equal in quality to the wine, ensuring the whole dining experience is better for it - or so we hope!

Some people insist that certain ingredients don't match well with wine for example artichokes. In our last autumn menus we produced an artichoke mousse using Jerusalem artichoke, it had quite a subtle flavour and a very creamy texture with an almost buttery finish; we garnished the mousse with a fricassee of wild mushroom that gave the dish balance with some earthy undertones. This worked really well with premier cru and grand cru white Burgundy: the buttery and creaminess of the mousse with earthiness of the mushroom, complementing the wine. This was a seasonal treat and proved to be a great success with our clients and, as I recall, became our Chairman's favourite dish of the season.

Producing wine friendly menus is not only about the ingredients, how it is prepared and what is used to accompany and complete dishes are all important too. Convention tells us that that foie gras should be served with a rich dessert wine, but in the traditional dish tornadoes Rossini, the foie gras is pan fried and served on top of a fillet steak thus completely changing the wine match to fine Claret.

Having said all that, so much of food and wine matching really boils down to personal taste. In the same way that a particular wine appeals to one person, the food and wine combination might appeal to one person and not another. The key is to have a go, when you've picked your wine do a little research and think about what you enjoy eating...prepare a dish around these items bearing in mind the principles outlined. You will only know if things match or don't by trial and error, but as endeavour goes, this is a lot of fun! When we come across new magical pairings, it can certainly lift your spirits and without doubt, it gives my team a great sense of pleasure in their work!



Fish with Beetroot



Stewart Turner

A Request From the Editor

We are very grateful to Stewart Turner for his interesting article. You will find we have more discussion of wine pairings on other pages. I would like your comments, observation, or any ideas you have of interesting combinations.

From now on I intend to keep a page for 'Members Letters'. Send your comments on articles, let me know your likes and dislikes and make suggestions for future issues. They need not be long letters, just a short note or e mail will suffice. My address is on page three.

We have the branches involved with 'around the branches' now I would like individual members to have their say. I am keen to hear from 'Independent Members', let me know your opinions, get involved, it is your magazine.

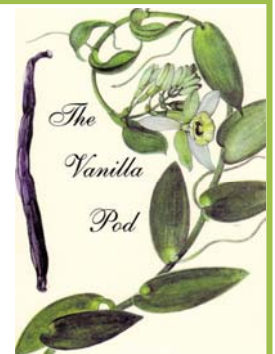
Pam Brunning

Correction - December 2009 Food & Wine - Page 6
Marketing Manager **Tim Gittins** e mail address
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Danesfield House

Hotel & Spa

Medmenham Buckinghamshire



The Adam Simmonds Restaurant at Danesfield House Hotel has undergone an enlightenment in more ways than one. When we visited some years ago The Oak Room - as it was then - was a dark forbidding room with sombre panelling. The food tasted as if it had come straight from the freezer to the table via the microwave and we had to show the wine waiter which way round to use the cork screw!

“What is that big white house on the hill?” is the question I would ask as we travelled along the Thames valley from Maidenhead to Marlow. The huge white mansion glowing on the hillside in the afternoon sun always held a fascination for me as a child.

“That’s the house made of chalk that your grandfather helped to build”. I would then be told the story of how, as a young man, he would cross the Thames from Temple to Medmenham, by ferry, every Monday morning with his gang of workers and return again on Friday evenings. The horse pulling the cart carrying the weary workers home knew all the hostelrys along the way and my grandmother rarely saw him until Saturday morning.

The present Danesfield House is the third property to be built on the site of a large multivallate hill fort known as Danesfield Camp, which was originally the site of a Danish encampment - hence Danes-field. The present Neo-Tudor style house was built, with no expense spared, between 1899-1901 for the Sunlight soap magnate Robert Spear Hudson. Standing high on the Chiltern Hills it commands extensive views across the Thames and the Berkshire/Buckinghamshire borders, being visible for many miles around as it is built of chalk, hewn from the hillside. The contrasting elaborate red brick Victorian chimneys’ were made at Warner’s Star Lane brickworks in Knowl Hill where my grandfather lived.

The house became the temporary home of 80 boys evacuated from London during the Second World War and was then requisitioned by the Air Ministry for the RAF in 1948. It was sold to Carnation© (Nestlé©) in 1977, to become their corporate headquarters. Carnation© sold up in 1989 and I once again became involved with the house’s history when we spent the entire day at the auction buying a lot of the catering equipment, fittings and furniture.

After complete refurbishment Danesfield opened as a country house hotel in 1991. This Grade II* listed building is now part of ‘Small Luxury Hotels of the World’ group.

Last year we lunched in the Orangery Terrace Brasserie, a glassed-in portico, which runs the length of the house, with magnificent views down the Thames towards Henley. We were very impressed with the quality of the dishes on the ‘Orangery Escape Menu’ which offers two courses for £12.50 and three courses £17.50 so decided dinner in the à la carte restaurant was worth another try.

Being the end of January I thought they might be keen for business so e-mailed for a dinner bed and breakfast price and was quoted £230 for a double room (£110 allowance for à la carte menu), which included use of the spa. We arrived on a damp, cold February afternoon and our good intentions of using the pool were soon abandoned as we relaxed in one of the beautiful Executive Double Rooms watching the mist rise off the Thames way below.

We enjoyed a glass of Philipponnat Réserve Rosée Brut with fresh crunchy green olives and spiced almonds, in the bar while perusing the menu and the three hundred bottle wine list. Eventually we went for the easy option - the Adam Simmonds Tasting Menu and the Restaurant Manager/Sommelier Gary Smith’s choice of matching wines. Gary a real enthusiast, talked us through the wines he had chosen to go with each dish and explained his love of creating unusual pairings.

The restaurant has been completely refurbished and lightened by liming the oak panelling and adding mirrors. The only omission, a lack of bright flowers to lift the mute creams. Orchids on the table instead of the contemporary balls of stuck together leaves would have softened the rather masculine austerity.

We commenced with two amuse bouche, a water melon granita with ginger beer foam and diced water melon was followed by a cup of pea soup sprinkled with tiny parmesan chips. The ginger beer foam was really ginger beery and complimented the melon flavours. The pea soup, which was rich, creamy and very delicate was a little overpowered by the parmesan but the crispness gave a delightful texture change. With these we were served another glass of the rich, floral flavoured Philipponnat Champagne

We then moved on to a seared scallop with truffle jelly and globe artichoke purée. With this we drank an intensely fruity 2007 Chablis, Domaine Colette Gros - one of the best Chablis I have tasted for a long time - the flavours blending well with the sweet scallop and the earthy truffle and artichoke aromas.

Next, a confit of foie gras with pear compote, hazelnut purée and rocket. The foie gras was just the right temperature - not hard from the fridge as is so often the case. With this the sommelier had chosen an Austrian wine, a 2008 Grüner Veltliner "Hoher", Weingut Geyerhof. It went well with the scallop but unfortunately the slightly sweeter pear compote dulled the palate to some of the wines intense fruit flavours. The rocket came in the form of a micro salad, those small fine shoots that are becoming increasingly popular as a garnish. Many of these are produced abroad but they are easy to grow at home and commercial herb growers in the UK are now investing in their production.

On to the fish course - a poached fillet of brill on a bed of caraway creamed cabbage, bacon and caraway gnocchi dressed with a yeast foam. I always taste foams first when a plate arrives just to see if they really do work. This one was not as yeasty as the first was gingery but just slightly salty. We continued with the Grüner Veltliner with this course and that really was a sensational pairing. The spiciness of the caraway combined with the slight saltiness of bacon and the yeast foam spiked the palate and the wine blossomed beautifully.

The 'slow cooked' Pheasant breast was in fact cooked 'sous vide' - 'under vacuum'. The breasts were sandwiched together, vacuum packed and cooked in a water bath at around 70°C for a relatively long period. This preserves all the flavour and makes the meat particularly juicy and tender. Sliced rounds of breast were served with purée potatoes, sprout leaves, cèpes and walnuts. Once again an unusual wine pairing, a 2007 Barbera d'Asti "Ronco Malo", Vittoria Bera from Piedmont. A complex wine with herby undertones but with a lightness that went well with the dish.

On to my favourite course - not one but two puds. The first a liquorice parfait with olive oil and pistachio, a pineapple sorbet and a liquorice dressing. The parfait, which was soft and creamy with a light liquorice flavour, was surrounded by cubes of caramelised pineapple and crunchy sugared pistachio giving, once again, good texture change. The pineapple sorbet was smooth and with the liquorice dressing it complimented the dish well. A beautiful melange of flavours and textures - delicious. Our final course was a milk chocolate, banana and rum millefeuille served with a banana parfait. I questioned the logic of this dish - it sounded too rich made with milk chocolate but I was assured by Gary that the rum cut the richness. He was right, the ultra thin crisp layers of chocolate gave a lovely contrast to the smooth rum and banana filling. For us though, this time, Gary didn't hit the spot with the wine. A 2006 Jurançon La Magendia de Lapeyre from the Pyrénées was spicy and luscious before the puds but dried off and lost its character as soon as the creamy liquorice hit the palate. We discussed this with Gary and he disappeared to return with two glasses of 2003 Recioto di Soave Vigna Marogne Tamellini from Veneto. A much heavier wine, intense but not cloying, it matched the liquorice and the chocolate much better.

At this stage we decided it was time to give up. I just couldn't manage coffee and petite fours! An extremely interesting evening, excellent wines chosen with care, to accompany well thought-out, balanced dishes which were perfectly seasoned. Even the superb brown and white sour dough bread had just the right amount of salt. Service, with two young ladies and the restaurant manager looking after us, was first-rate. Long chats with Gary about the merits of pairing wines with complex dishes made the evening even more memorable. Both Adam and Gary were trained at Le Manoir as was one of the young waitresses and they had learnt their craft well.

Continental breakfast was served in the Orangery, again peering down on a mist shrouded Thames. A lovely venue especially when the sun shines but I am not sure what granddad would have thought of the food, I expect he had to survive on bread and cheese when away from grandma's home cooking.

The Adam Simmonds Tasting Menu is £68.50 the accompanying wines £55.



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In Search of Namibian Wine

by Chris Graham



Artesian well pond

Namibia is famous for its Red Desert, variety of animals, wonderful scenery and friendly people, making it a great touring destination. But wait, is Namibia not “just a bit north” of the Western Cape? Do they not have strong ties with South Africa? Surely they must make wine there?

A recent trip to Namibia saw some intensive internet research throw up just 3 possible vineyard locations, but not a lot of detail on wine making, so I resolved to taste the local product at our overnight stops along the way. This proved to be much harder than I had imagined. Although I asked if they had any Namibian wine for the first 6 nights, the answer was always “no”. I did, however, get to taste some very good wine from the Western Cape.

Finally at Nonna’s restaurant in Swakopmund I found someone who knew something. The owner was indirectly related to the people who had bought Kristall Kellerei, just outside Omaruru, about a year ago and his wife knew the family Boschoff who made wine in the Otavi Mountains, but “no”, they did not have any Namibian Wine for me to try. Later, in Swakopmund, I met Jurgen Baas, owner of the Grapevine restaurant, he often has 4 or 5 whites and 4 or 5 reds open on the bar for tasting, and then for sale by the glass or bottle. An excellent idea – but still no Namibian wine. Jurgen did know of a wine estate in the South of Namibia which made good red wine and finally our guide, Ernest, said that the Neuras Wine Estate in the Namib was no more than 40 minutes drive from one of our overnight stops. The prize was within our grasp!

Ernest was right, a phone call from Desert Homestead and 40 minutes later we were shaking the hand of Allan Walkden-Davis who, with his wife Sylvia, have owned Neuras since 1996. The location of Neuras does not immediately strike one as an ideal location for a winery. The Namib is very dry, with only 80 to 100mm of rain per year – statistically a desert with very stony soil, but looked at more closely there is a very interesting balance of pros and cons.

Allan has 5 artesian wells on the estate providing a continuous supply of high quality water with an ideal ph of 7.9. Today only 2 of these have been cleared and they flood irrigate the 1 hectare of vines under cultivation through a series of irrigation channels. These were originally put in by the German Schutztruppe, when they were settling in for a siege, in the first quarter of the 19th century to water their vegetable garden. Water control through the channels uses the largest corks I have ever seen – simple but effective. About 1.2 metres under the ground lies a strata of impervious rock in a bowl formation. Here the vine roots spread out, not down, and the rock bowl keeps the water around the roots.

Irrigation channels



Ripe grapes are very attractive to the white moth in Namibia and are also favoured by the local bird population, particularly the red-eyed Bulbul. To counter this Allan covers his vines in a fine white mesh which repels the birds and through which the moths cannot pass. A positive side effect of using this method is that the mesh filters out between 8 and 12% of the sunlight, which can be very harsh in this part of the country. This lengthens the ripening process and ensures maturity in all parts of the grape.

The very dry heat in the Namib ensures that there is no need to worry about rot of any type, red spider mite or rust. The main problem occurs when it comes to fermentation; the high ambient temperatures make galloping fermentation a real possibility. Allan claims he cares for the wine in fermentation “just like a baby”, checking on it every 2 hours. The tanks are draped with heavy fabric hosed down with water, which, on evaporation, cools the tanks. In addition 2 litre plastic bottles of ice are suspended in the liquor and must be replaced frequently.

When Allan first came to Neuras he knew very little about wine and his knowledge has been enhanced by many people who have come to wonder at this unique vineyard. Recently Arbe Brouwer, owner of the well regarded Springfield Estate outside Robertson, has been helping Allan and probably learning as much as he teaches as together they try new ideas to improve the processes and the quality of the final product. One 2005 visitor was very interested and seemed to know all the right questions, even asking permission to go under the mesh to pick a grape and test the feel of the inside of the grape skin. He turned out to be international wine celebrity Oz Clarke visiting “incognito”. He went on to herald the 2005 Shiraz for its “wonderful chocolaty-blackberry flavours”.

Wine tours here normally take an hour, but 3 hours later, after an excellent and detailed discussion, we were just sitting in the tasting room waiting expectantly. First the Namib Red 2006, a 12.8% Shiraz/Merlot blend: mid ruby and glossy in the glass with slight age rim, the wine is quite high in acid but this gives it freshness, very long with red berry fruits. Then the Neuras Shiraz 2008 at 14.5% had a very deep red colour, earth in the nose and spicy with a lovely velvety mouthfeel. Some vanilla but not overpowering. Very, very good. We were very fortunate to be offered a taste of the 2005 Shiraz. This was a very bad year in which an October frost of -4°C destroyed 75% of the crop and saw only 42 bottles of this vintage produced. Only 5 now remain, but what a vintage: almost black in the glass, it has a liquorice nose and a port-like consistency, very long in the back of the mouth. We had finally tasted real Namibian wine.

Ironically our next overnight stop at Zebra River lodge, not a Namibian stone’s throw from Neuras, had a bottle of Neuras Rosé 2002 on display. However it was not chilled and had probably been in the cellar for longer than intended. This was, finally, the only lodge where we could have tasted Namibian wine.

So Namibian wine, and excellent wine at that, does exist, but there is still wine from Omaruru and Otavi that remains undiscovered, enigmatic and untasted – reason enough for another visit to Namibia? Yes, I think so.



Allan Walkden-Davis



David Everitt-Matthias at LE CHAMPIGNON SAUVAGE



Lemon Meringue Tart



“One of my favourite classic desserts is lemon meringue pie, but only when it is as fresh as possible – after 5–6 hours the meringue starts to ‘weep’. So I came up with this version for the restaurant. It is assembled at the last minute and because of this you have wonderful crisp meringue and very crisp pastry, giving a perfectly clean and refreshing dessert. It is served with angelica and lemon sorbet and jelly, plus some zingy, fresh homemade cardamom yoghurt.”

Recipe taken from ‘dessert’ by David Everitt-Matthias available at: www.lechampignonsauvage.co.uk

For the tart

1 quantity of Sweet Pastry (as below)
250ml lemon juice
grated zest of 3 lemons
600ml double cream
14 egg yolks
125g caster sugar
250g unsalted butter, diced
3 gelatine leaves

For the meringue

30ml liquid glucose
50ml water
125g caster sugar
100g egg whites (about 3)

For the angelica and lemon sorbet

225ml lemon juice
grated zest of 2 lemons
250ml water
25ml liquid glucose
100g caster sugar
100g fresh angelica
1½ gelatine leaves

For the angelica and lemon jelly

200ml lemon juice
150ml water
180g caster sugar
40g fresh angelica leaves
2 gelatine leaves

Sweet Pastry

I devised this sweet pastry when I was in the National Chef of the Year competition and wanted something that would be very quick to prepare and wouldn't shrink if it was cooked without resting first.

Ground pistachios or walnuts could be used instead of almonds, or you could substitute Demerara sugar for icing sugar to give a completely different taste.

270g plain flour
150g cold unsalted butter
50g ground almonds
grated zest of 1 lemon or 1 orange
seeds from 1 vanilla pod
100g icing sugar
1 egg
1 egg yolk

Place all the ingredients except the egg and egg yolk in a food processor and pulse until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Add the egg and yolk and pulse until the mixture starts to form a ball. Turn out onto a floured surface and knead as lightly as possible, just until smooth. Form into a ball, flatten, then wrap in cling film and chill for at least 3 hours before use. This pastry is suitable for freezing; thaw for 24 hours in the fridge.

Cardamom Yoghurt

Of course, you don't have to make your own yoghurt, but we do at the restaurant. It takes so little time and you can be sure of injecting your own personal taste into it. You can create so many flavours: coriander, vanilla, coffee, liquorice, oh I could go on and on. But one of my favourites just has to be cardamom. The slight acidity of the yoghurt and the almost citrus tang of the cardamom just seem to be made for each other. I use it for adding a light touch to desserts. It can help cut the richness of chocolate and is a great accompaniment to anything citrus. So a small yoghurt maker is essential in our kitchen. If you want to make plain yoghurt, just omit the cardamom from this recipe.

10 cardamom pods
1 litre whole milk
200g natural live yoghurt

Place the cardamom and milk in a saucepan and bring to the boil. Remove from the heat and cool down to 35°C. Pass through a fine sieve, then mix in the live yoghurt and place in a yoghurt maker. Leave for 8–10 hours, then store in the fridge until needed.

If you want a thicker yoghurt, add 35g of dried skimmed milk powder to the milk before boiling. After the initial use of bought live yoghurt, you can use 200g of your own homemade yoghurt for the next batch.

Tart

Roll the pastry out on a lightly floured surface until it is 2mm thick. Cut to a 12 x 36cm rectangle, transfer to a baking sheet and place in the freezer for a few minutes to firm up. Remove from the freezer, prick all over with a fork and cut into 10 rectangles about 3.5 x 12cm. Transfer to a baking tray lined with baking parchment and place in an oven preheated to 160°C/Gas Mark 3 for 5-7 minutes, until golden brown. Remove from the oven and leave to cool. Store in an airtight container until needed.

Bring the lemon juice and zest to the boil in a medium saucepan, reduce the heat and simmer for 2 minutes. Pour in the double cream and bring back to the boil, then remove from the heat. Whisk the egg yolks and caster sugar together and pour on the lemon cream, whisking constantly, then beat in the butter a little at a time. Return the mixture to the pan and put it back on the heat for just a couple of minutes, until finger warm. Soak the gelatine in cold water for about 5 minutes, until soft and pliable. Squeeze out all the water and add the gelatine to the pan, stirring until dissolved. Pass the mixture through a fine sieve into a jug.

Line a 36 x 11.5 x 4cm metal cooking frame with a double layer of cling film with a little overlap. Put the frame in a roasting tin lined with a cloth - this helps protect the lemon mixture from direct heat. Fill the frame to the top with the lemon mixture, then half fill the roasting tin with hot water. Place in an oven preheated to 120°C/Gas Mark 1/2 and bake for 30-40 minutes, until the custard is just set when you shake the tray gently.

Take out of the oven and remove as much water as you can from the roasting tin. Leave to cool in the tin and then place in the fridge in the tin to chill.

Meringue

Place the glucose, water and 100g of the caster sugar in a saucepan and bring to the boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Cook without stirring until it reaches 120°C on a sugar thermometer. When it reaches 110°C, start whisking the egg whites with the remaining caster sugar in a freestanding electric mixer. When the egg whites have formed soft peaks and the syrup has reached the correct temperature, turn the machine down and slowly pour in the syrup down the side of the bowl in a thin, steady stream. Continue whisking until the meringue is cold.

Place the meringue in a piping bag fitted with a small nozzle and pipe it into 4-5cm spikes flat along a baking sheet lined with baking parchment. Place in an oven preheated to 100°C/Gas Mark 1/4 and bake for 50 minutes-1 hour with the door slightly open. The meringues should be dry and crisp; return them to the oven for longer, if necessary. Leave to cool and then store in an airtight container until needed.

Angelica and lemon sorbet

Place the lemon juice, lemon zest, water, glucose and caster sugar in a medium saucepan and bring to the boil, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Remove from the heat, add the angelica leaves and then pour into a liquidiser. Blend until smooth. Soak the gelatine in cold water for about 5 minutes, until soft and pliable. Squeeze out all the water and add the gelatine to the syrup. Stir until dissolved, then pass through a fine sieve. Transfer to an ice-cream machine and freeze according to the manufacturer's instructions. Transfer to the fridge to soften slightly about 10 minutes before serving.

Angelica and lemon jelly

Bring the lemon juice, water and caster sugar to the boil in a medium saucepan, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Remove from the heat, add the angelica leaves and place in a liquidiser. Blend until smooth. Soak the gelatine in cold water for about 5 minutes, until soft and pliable. Squeeze out all the water and add the gelatine to the syrup. Stir until dissolved, then pass through a fine sieve into a baking tray to a depth of 1cm. Place in the fridge to set.

Serving

Trim the ends of the lemon mixture and cut it into 10 slices the same size as the pieces of pastry. Place directly on to the cooked pastry bases, then top with some pieces of meringue at different angles and flash a blowtorch over them to colour them lightly.

Place a few streaks of cardamom yoghurt on each serving plate. Then add the lemon meringue, 2 scoops of sorbet and a couple of small scoops of jelly.



Martial Mentions on the



By Alan F Harrison

The article preceding this one was printed in the December magazine and dealt with garnishes within *haute cuisine* relating to the early stage. It concluded with mention of Gilbert and Sullivan's Savoy operas. We proceed to menu-matters martial. In Gilbert's "Princess Ida" the "warriors three" Arac, Guron and Scynthus are "Growing thin and wizen/ In a solitary prison" who were "... longing for the rattle/ Of a complicated battle/ For the rum - tum - tum/ Of the military drum/ And the guns that go boom! boom!" No doubt the valiant soldiers were also longing for lunch. Some of our subjects here longed for battle but were not aware of their future eponymity on the menu.

While the present coverage goes beyond garnishes at times, the previous formula of not describing each one prevails. They derive from the chef's bible within *haute cuisine* ... *Le Repertoire de la Cuisine* which will be referred to here as the *Repertoire*. As before, the garnish etc names are in bold text.

We will look at the last battles led by the appropriate monarchs and, separately, involving sailing ships. One of the dishes etc mentioned also helps point the end of chivalry.

So far, the variations are dishes and garnishes. A dish may have been named after a General, Marshall or battle-ground etc. A garnish added to a dish may have been so named. The third, minor group, is when a sauce or process within cooking a dish is named after a martial figure, venue or event. Let's begin with a dish. Variations in *subject* include those who were famous but not martial figures. They are here as war-perimeter people such as advisors to royalty and other leaders.

The well-known **Beef Wellington** in the British mind celebrates 1815 when Napoleon Bonaparte met his Waterloo. Since the *Repertoire* was formulated by French chefs for French chefs and *leurs clients*, it is interesting to ponder the inclusion of a garnish associated with French defeat. Perhaps it is there to celebrate the man, the Duke of Wellington, but let's hear from the French themselves in a later magazine! Meanwhile, enjoy eating fillet of beef, foie gras and mushrooms wrapped in puff pastry.



More beef but less gunfire from the man in question. The Comte de **Mirabeau** (1749 -1791) was a French writer, popular orator and statesman. During the French Revolution, he was a moderate, favouring a constitutional monarchy built on the model of the United Kingdom. He unsuccessfully conducted secret negotiations with the French monarchy in an effort to reconcile it with the Revolution. The Mirabeau garnish applies to beefsteak and tournedo and features olives and anchovies. There are three sole dishes and a turbot dish bearing his name.



Wellington was a gentleman but other gentle men include Nicolas de Neufville, Seigneur de **Villeroy** (1543 – 1617). He was a Secretary of State under four kings of France: Charles IX, Henry III, Henry IV, and Louis XIII. The most distinguished of all sixteenth-century French secretaries, Villeroy rose to prominence during the French Wars of Religion, a period of almost insoluble difficulties for the French monarchy and government. He often found himself responsible for the negotiation of peace treaties. Perhaps his greatest achievement in that field was the Treaty of Fleix in 1580, which he concluded in one month. It brought to an end a short but dangerous war involving Henry of Navarre (the future Henry IV of France). The garnish Villeroy is used in cooking brains, cutlets, sweetbreads and sole



Back to the front! *Larousse Gastronomique*, that huge culinary resource, can be relied on for a lot of detail.

"**Chicken Marengo** is named after the Battle of Marengo (14 June 1800), at which Napoleon Bonaparte defeated the Austrians; it was created on the battlefield itself by Dunand, Napoleon's chef. Bonaparte, who on battle days ate nothing until the fight was over, had gone forward with his general staff and was a long way from his supply wagons. Seeing his enemies put to flight, he asked Dunand to prepare dinner for him. The master chef at once

sent men in search of provisions. All they could find were three eggs, four tomatoes, six crayfish, a small hen, a little garlic, some oils and a saucepan. ... Dunand first made a panada with oil and water, and then, having drawn and jointed the chicken, browned it in oil and fried the eggs in some oil with a few garlic cloves and the tomatoes. He poured over this mixture some water laced with brandy borrowed from the general's flask and put the crayfish on top to cook in the steam. The dish was served on a tin plate, the chicken surrounded by the fried eggs and crayfish, with the sauce poured over it. Bonaparte, having feasted upon it, said to Dunand: 'You must feed me like this after every battle.' In the course of time the traditional garnish was replaced by mushrooms and small glazed onions and the preparation was also used for veal. ... " Mrs Beeton seemed to like it.

Dunand considered the crayfish out of place but "...Napoleon said angrily 'You have left out the crayfish. It will bring me bad luck. ...' Willy nilly, the crayfish garnish had to be restored, and it has remained to this day the traditional garnish for the dish." It is easy to see that the fried eggs would have been done to death while the crayfish steamed and the eggs are cooked separately today.

Marshal **Suchet**, 1770 to 1826, comes next as he relates to Marengo. He was one of the most brilliant of Napoleon's generals. The son of a Lyon silk manufacturer, Suchet originally had intended to follow his father's business; but, having in 1792 served as a volunteer in the cavalry of the national guard, he manifested military abilities that secured his rapid promotion.

Suchet contributed to the success of Napoleon's crossing the Alps, which culminated in the Battle of Marengo. He annihilated the British army at Maria in Spain in 1809. He received the title of Duke d'Albufera da Valencia in 1812. He was made a peer of France by Louis XIII but, having rallied to Napoleon during the *Hundred Days*, Suchet was deprived of his peerage in 1815. Sauce Suchet replaces his peerage now.



Sauce Suchet - "Sauce made with a julienne of vegetables stewed in butter, to which white wine and fish stock are then added. It is reduced and finished with butter." - *Larousse Gastronomique*, 2001.

To be continued in the next issue.

More about garnishes in Alan's text book *Gastronomy* www.gastronomy.org.uk/

Alan would like to offer his services to event organisers. There are various subjects on which he can speak and if you are contemplating a Burns Night Supper next year, get in touch quickly. He pipes, recites and does the speeches.

For more details go to:
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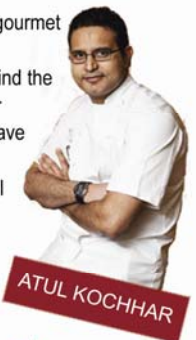
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WATER

“Water, water everywhere and not a drop to drink.”

The Ancient Mariner by Samuel Taylor Coleridge

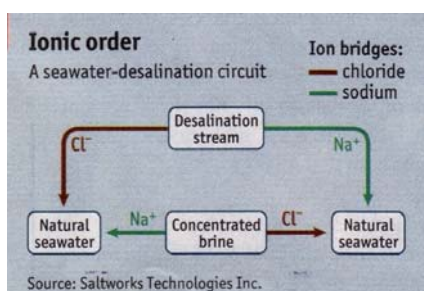
Water is one of the strangest substances known to science. It combines two of the most common elements known to man but does not behave like any other substance. It is the only body that is found simultaneously as liquid, solid and gas. It expands as it cools and becomes lighter - this is why icebergs float. Water molecules tend to stick together hence its high boiling point; it takes ten times as much energy to heat water as it does iron.

Ninety seven percent of the world's water is in the oceans and of the three percent of fresh water three quarters of it is locked in the polar ice caps. Seventy percent of available fresh water is used in agriculture and it is estimated that by 2025 over half the world's population will be facing severe shortages.

Ben Sparrow, on a break from his studies at the Simon Fraser University in British Columbia, was backpacking in China in 2005 when, in the middle of the night he had a eureka moment. He was meditating on how to use a thermodynamic law, in which the tension between two different concentrations of the same solution converts energy. When he applied the law to salt water he found that the energy from the ions of a hyper-saline solution could pull salt from a third water stream as the ions naturally move from a high to a low concentration of salt water.

Today Sparrow's Vancouver based company, Saltworks Technologies Inc. is on the final development of a saltwater powered battery. The battery can desalinate water up to 80% cheaper than conventional methods, such as reverse osmosis and electrodialysis, which are in use throughout the world today. Saltworks' process transfers chemical energy from the tension between salt ions which means that the only energy needed is to power low-pressure pumps and for a few other moving parts. Also a low-grade heat source, sunshine or waste heat from other industry processes, is needed to evaporate salt water to the concentrations required to create the voltage. Another big advantage of the Saltworks method is that it is a low pressure system in which inexpensive plastic pipe work can be used thus causing no problem of corrosion as there is with steel pipes.

Sparrow, who holds a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Alberta said, “We would like to complete our first customer installation in 2010.”



WINE

White wine with fish, not red, is a rule that has been perpetuated for many years. The combination can result in a strong unpleasant fishy aftertaste considered to be due to the high level of tannins in red wine. Occasionally a red wine turns up that does go well with fish and up until now scientists and sommeliers have not understood why. Results of experiments, published in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* recently, have now provided an answer. Takayuki Tamura and his colleagues working at the Product Development Research Laboratory of Mercian Corporation in Kanagawa, Japan fed seven experienced wine tasters scallops while drinking red and white wines. The tasters had to rate the presence of any fishy aftertaste on a scale of zero to four, with zero being no aftertaste and four being extremely strong. In four sessions, they were presented with 38 red wines, 26 white ones, 2 sherries, a dessert wine, a port and a Madeira. The drinks were offered in random order, in coded glasses. The team found that the wines rated with the strongest fishy aftertastes were those with high levels of iron. To cross check their results the researchers removed the iron from the wines with a high iron content by treating them with a chemical called a ‘chelating agent’, which bound up the dissolved iron and they added iron to wines without iron. They also separately added zinc, manganese or copper to see if the effect was specific to iron or could be caused by any metals. The team found that it was only the wines that contained iron that produced the fishy aftertaste and the other metals had little or no effect.



They then soaked scallops in wines, and did a chemical analysis of the resulting solution. The unpleasantly fishy solutions formed by high-iron wines also contained several volatile compounds known to create foul flavours reminiscent of fish, fat and oils. These compounds are formed by the reaction of iron with the unsaturated fatty acids which make seafood healthy to eat. The fatty acids in red meat are saturated and don't cause this reaction.

There is also a theory that the high acid in some wines acts as chelating agents, reducing the iron content making them palatable with fish.

Unfortunately, as yet, there is no way of predicting the iron content of a wine but maybe one day the legend on the bottle will tell us “Low iron - fish friendly”. Meanwhile many will stick to the mantra “white wine with fish”.



The Wines of Sablet

By Lincoln Siliakus

Sablet, population 1,282, is a winemaking village in the Ouveze valley in northern Provence near Vaison-la-Romaine. As one of the eighteen villages in the *Cotes du Rhone villages "communaux"* category, it is allowed to put its name on the label. This puts it just under the highest category, the *cru*. The well known *crus* of Gigondas and Vacqueyras are just to the south. Rasteau, across the Ouveze, is about to become a *cru* and Cairanne, further down the valley, is also well on the way. This is powerful country, with extremes of temperature and a mistral wind that "can blow the horns off a bull" as the locals say. The best wines have as much character as the people who make them.

Sablet village itself sits on the top of a small fortified hill just off the ridge that forms the western boundary of the hills called the Dentelles de Montmirail, a popular tourist site. The towering cliffs for which it is famous have eroded into limestone clay soils on the slopes below them. There is also some sand, especially around the village. On the other side of the Ouveze, the clay plain is covered in river stones like those at Châteauneuf du Pape.

The soils along the slopes tend to produce more delicate, subtle and long lasting wines than those from the stone-covered plain. The wines from the sandy areas can be a little soft on the palate. Many *vignerons* blend these terroirs to achieve highly balanced wines. Sablet is relatively small by Rhone standards, with only 291 hectares (570 acres) under vines.

Sablet's reds are supposed to be at least 50% grenache with a minimum of 20% of syrah and/or mourvèdre and a maximum of 20% of other varieties such as cinsault and counoise. These restrictions are often overlooked. I've tasted some wonderful Sablets made discreetly with syrah only. Sablet's whites are opulent if fermented and aged in barrels but tighter and fresher if done in vats.

Jean-Marc and Sophie Autran at Domaine de Piaugier seek less exuberance, basic fruitiness and alcohol than recent trends have encouraged. They produce ample and aromatic whites and a range of reds with some special cuvées that showcase their syrahs. They also work a small parcel of the rare counoise into a bottling they call Ténébi. They are replacing their barrels with 600-litre (160 gallon) demi-muids for even better oak balance and they have noticed an increase in demand since they started using a de-stemming machine. Just the other day, I tasted barrel samples of their 2009 whites. Grandiose! This is to remain a secret until I have bought a few cases: 2009 may well be a myth down here.

Paul Roumanille, on the hot stony terroir across the river, makes somewhat forced but fruity, alcoholic wines that are a bit rustic when young but which soften beautifully after a couple of years in the bottle. His wines are often compared to Chateauneufs, but they sell for a quarter of the price.

Lincoln was raised in South Australia, became a lawyer, worked for the environment, met his French wife and travelled a lot until settling in Sablet, Provence. He spends half of his life editing, half writing about wine and another half fixing up their old house.

Perpetually bemused by the beauty, richness and bizarreness of life in France in all its contradictions, he is also fascinated by the enduring gulf between the French and the "Anglo-Saxons". He believes that nothing reflects this better than wine. He also likes its taste.

In the forward to his book 'Portraits of Terroir' he explains how he rode an old moped from Chablis to Sablet to learn the secrets of vineyards from some of the best winemakers in France:-

"Why would anyone want to travel across France on a 1966-model Solex? Nothing could be more old-fashioned. It putters along at hardly more than 20km per hour and goes on strike as soon as it sees a hill. You have to pedal the thing into the wind and up hills and you risk getting wet or cold or hot."

"Mind you, I must admit that I was lucky. The Solex did not break down. Indeed, the only thing it broke was the ice. Vintners who are normally too busy to see anyone were happy to see me. They wanted to see the crackpot on the old motor bike fall over as he skidded into their courtyards. Aubert de Villaine, co-owner of the Domaine de la Romanée-Conti, set the theme. He believes that we are all in too much of a hurry, and complicate our lives as a result. He is right; some things take time and cannot be rushed. Wine is one of them."

To learn more refer to his blog site <http://vinesolex.over-blog.com>

Ron Barker

Leicester's Trip to Cahors

Hotel Terminus



Château Eugénie

Ch Mercuès



Cahors

by train. We are heartily sick of airports so for this years trip we decided on Eurostar to Paris, then the five hour train journey to Cahors.

On arrival we gathered in the art deco lounge bar of the Hotel Terminus, an old fashioned family hotel owned by Gilles and Alexandre Marre, before proceeding to the restaurant Le Balandre for a superb six course dinner. A pumpkin risotto with roasted langoustines and smoked ham was followed by a speciality of the house, a poached egg on cooked foie gras with a truffle sauce. The fish course was lotte (monk fish) on carrot puree with a sauce of Izarra - a basque version of green chartreuse. A delicious rack of lamb followed and then four different tiny chocolate puddings on a beautiful white plate. To finish we had figs roasted with port, nuts, coffee and petit fours. An excellent Chardonnay, Domaine Belmont, vin du pays du Lot, was followed by our first Cahors wine - a straight Malbec - La Bérangeare 2006. Our host then produced a surprise, a special wine made by the family in the hotel cellars - Château Cèdre 2002 highly rated by Robert Parker.

Next morning, the tour organisers - Christopher Pollard's company, booked our coach to take us to Château Combarieu, a small hill farm that has been in the same family for several generations. Most of their production is in stainless steel tanks but some wine is matured in oak barrels. Malbec is used for their red and a very good rosé, we tasted vintages from 2002 to 2007. Surprisingly they are able to sell their entire production in local French markets - four members of the family travelling to different markets each week. They also cater for weddings in a large salon attached to the farm, providing the food and their own wines.

We travelled east beside the River Lot to the Grotte de Pech Merle near Cabrerets. In glorious sunshine we enjoyed Christopher's delicious picnic while taking turns to join a guided tour of the extensive caves and caverns dating from 25,000 BC. Later we visited the lovely hill top village of Saint Cirq Lapopie and had dinner at Le Marché, in the square beside the cathedral. Successful first courses were stuffed clams and a tower of foie gras, black pudding and apple tart. The mains generally disappointed: tough steak, fatty lamb, veal liver or swordfish but the fig tart and chocolate soufflé for dessert pleased. I chose badly - a lemon and ginger sorbet was partnered with rather a nasty glass of very alcoholic trifle.

Saturday morning, we visited Château Eugénie for a tasting. This company makes wine from a mixture of malbec, merlot and some tannat. I was surprised to learn that they are now selling twenty percent of their wine in boxes.

Then to Rocamadour where we had an excellent lunch in hotel Le Belvédère's beautiful restaurant with an amazing view of the cliff side town. We were revived with a glass of Kir before a mousse of cod with a cream sauce, followed by roasted breast of duck with a wine jus and roast potatoes. Cheese was a local cabouchon from Lacoste Rocamadour. Pudding was a simple strawberry ice with whipped cream. We drank a crisp white wine - Domaine de Tariquet 2008, a classic vin du pays from the Cotes de Gascony made from ugni blanc. The red was good - Château la Regne 2007 made in the Cahors tradition.

That evening we walked into the centre of Cahors finding a bistro popular with locals. We enjoyed an omelette with ceps and a small amount of salad, but no chips, for 16€!

On Sunday we visited Château de Mercuès perched on a cliff above the Lot valley. This castle was once occupied by the bishops of Cahors, but is now a Relais Château Hotel with a Michelin star. The present owners have built a winery and beautiful chaiz under the garden. Their wines are very successful and win many prizes. Matured in new French oak barrels, the Château Mercuès 2006 we tasted was very elegant.

We gathered in the bar for an aperitif - a mixture of Cassis, walnut liqueur and red wine and tiny canapés. In the lovely dining room, with high ceilings and tall windows, the maître d. explained the dishes as they were presented. A cold vichyssoise with truffle oil was followed by a plate of avocado, crab and salad inside a smoked salmon roll. We drank Château Bicoty Bergerac 2008 made from semillion, sauvignon and muscadelle. Our main course, quail with sautéed potatoes and roasted garlic was accompanied by Château Mercuès 2007, very smooth. A plate of cheeses, Brie, Rocamadour Fermier and a frilly cheese called Monk's head was followed by a pineapple cheesecake. We lingered over coffee and petit fours.

Next day we were up early on a beautiful frosty morning to catch the 8.24am train to Paris and were home by 9pm. A wonderful trip, interesting journeys, marvellous food and a pleasant surprise - the wines of Cahors had improved out of all recognition since we last visited in 1986!

Mary Jewell



Bath & Bristol's Italian Odyssey



Le Marche has been called Italy's best kept secret "the new Tuscany". It lies between the Adriatic Sea and the Apennine Mountains, and consists of a picturesque rural patchwork of medieval towns, hill country, and long sandy beaches.

Our twenty members' first taste of regional cuisine was at the Ristorante Persi. We enjoyed a "light" supper of spaghetti con pomidorini, followed by scallopini cu la Marsala (veal), insalata mista, and then Tiramisu, with constantly replenished carafes of local wine. We arrived late but somnolently at the hotel, I Calanchi. This four star hotel is in a beautiful hill-top setting between olive groves and vineyards, with impressive views across the valley to the nearby town of Ripatransone, about 12 kms from the coast.

Early next day we embarked on a guided tour of the town of Ascoli Piceno, about 50kms away. This town has been built up over 2,000 years in the local warm Travertine stone and still retains its medieval streets built over the original Roman roads. Our walking tour took in numerous historical buildings which are a repository for many impressive works of art. The attention of some of the party however was more immediately drawn to the Art Deco Caffè Metelli, one-time frequented by Ernest Hemingway, and the setting for several films. Here "real" coffee, and even a semifreddo di cioccolato, were sampled. Our guide, Marco Rotunno, an enthusiastic Anglophile, was a walking lexicon on all aspects of the area. We felt fortunate indeed to have him accompany us throughout the week.

Gastronomically this part of Le Marche blends with the Abruzzo region to the south in offering hot, savoury, foods with, particularly, Montepulciano wines. Stopping for lunch in a small ristorante recommended by Marco, we were given an antipasto della casa ("house" starter) of olives, Ascoli style (al'ascolana). These are giant green olives filled with a mixture of meats, then deep fried – mouth-watering, but quite filling. Next came the Primi Piatti of pasta, then a Secondi Piatti pork dish. (Why did we have that icecream at Metelli!).

Next we had an appointment at the Velenosi Vineyard (recommended by EAC Chairman Ron Barker), where we had an outstanding tasting of seven wines tutored by their export Manager, Andrea Bianco. We sampled three whites, a Verdicchio, Pecorino, and Passerina, and three Montepulciano e Sangiovese reds, ending with a "sweet" red Visciola, a blend of wine with viscioli cherries.

This company have only been producing wines for 20 years, but have established a winery with state-of-the-art equipment producing excellent wines. The tasting was accompanied by garlic bread, meat-stuffed olives, and other delicacies, with the result that we went on to our hotel sympathising with the olives, and lukewarm towards the prospect of a four course dinner a few hours later. This was only the first day!

The second day took us firstly to the historical town of Offida, famous for its lace-making since the 15th century. On the edge of the village we visited the fascinating church of Santa Maria della Rocca. While inside the weather changed dramatically and we hurried for the cover of the coach which was to take us to the coast at San Benedetto del Tronto, and the promise of a seafood lunch.

The Trattoria MoloSud is situated on the seafront and lived up to its reputation. After zuppa di pesce, we were offered vast communal plates of pasta con frutti di mare, followed by again communal dishes of calamaretti e gamberoni fritti, a local delicious speciality. Acceptable wine, but of no known provenance, kept the party happy and loquacious.

Next day was spent in Fermo, Marco's home town. He led us through the central Piazza del Popolo to the Palace with its large store of paintings including an "Adoration of the Shepherds" by Rubens painted in 1608. A long lunch, not for vegetarians, introduced us to more regional specialities, including interestingly, lamb skewers (arrosticini di castrato), followed by pork with roasted wild mushrooms and potatoes (prosciutto di maiale al forno con funghi e patate arrosto). The day concluded with a tour of the Duomo (cathedral) before returning to the hotel for dinner.

The final day was an excursion to the snow-capped Sibillini mountain range in the Apennines. This National Park containing Mt Vettore (2476m), is home to a wealth of flora and fauna, including blue gentian, wolf, golden eagle, and peregrine falcon. The route and views were stunning, and we visited Norcia the centre of lentil production, and the black truffle.

Lunch, ravioli with spinach and ricotta, then Norcia sausages with brown lentils was taken in the remote village of Castelluccio which is home to only 20 residents in winter as it is cut-off by snow for several weeks. On the way back we stopped for a wine tasting tutored by Stefano Illuminati at his vineyard in Contraguerra. The vineyard is about 300m above sea level with striking views of the Adriatic on one side and the snow-capped Gran Sasso mountain on the other. There was much praise for the wine from the Zanna vineyard, a 100% Montepulciano, which is the last one to be harvested, from selected grapes, and only produced in the best vintages.

So to our final dinner at I Calanchi. I have refrained from detailing the hotel menus, but suffice to say they reflected the most varied and enjoyable produce of the Marches. We did not drink fine wines with the meals as the food of the Marches is simple, country cooking, reliant on local produce, which only requires to be complemented by young, uncomplicated wine. The charm of Italy lies in its diversity, whether it be natural beauty, art, music, gastronomy, and above all its people.

Neville Bagot. Chairman Bath & Bristol Branch

MERSEYSIDE AND MID CHESHIRE 75TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Of all the weekends in the whole year Val and Paul had to choose this one! It was probably the worst weather for years in the Lake District, and only 30 miles from devastated Cockermouth.

Val, contrary to belief, is not omnipotent so could not be blamed for the inclement weather. She has to be congratulated for organising a wonderful weekend in spite of the constant rain and floods which prevented most of us from admiring the gorgeous scenery, although a few intrepid walkers did venture out, but not for long!


The hotel was warm with lovely log fires, the owners and staff most welcoming and on Friday afternoon members from various parts of England trickled in to tea and shortbread. Many were amazed that they had managed to reach the hotel in spite of the flooded roads.

Members from Merseyside and Mid Cheshire were joined by friends from Manchester including the Awards Officer, Committee Secretary, the past two, and the present Chairmen. Also the Chairmen of Blackpool and Capital, the past three and present Chairmen of the Europe and African committee, the Membership Secretary, Editor Food & Wine and the Chairman of Council

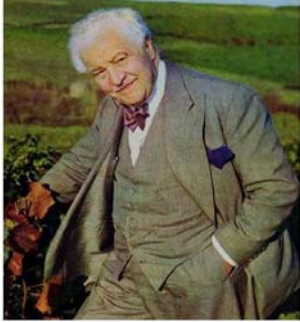
This august company and us lesser folk assembled for an aperitif of Oloroso Sherry and varied Canapés at 7pm on the Friday followed by an excellent dinner of local produce.

The Chick Pea and Pancetta Soup served in very small cups was an intense taster which led to a Hot Roast Smoked Salmon on Pickled cucumber, which blended very well.


The Pendle Hill Lamb Fillet with a Macadamia Nut crust was perfectly cooked, crunchy and pink with a Sweet Potato Fondant and garlic confit as a perfect accompaniment. The Chateau Musar 2001 donated by Paul Bishop from Cheshire and the 2002 by Derek Fletcher and David Chapman from Manchester were just perfect with the lamb, smooth full bodied and with a marvelous after taste.



INTERNATIONAL WINE & FOOD SOCIETY
Merseyside & Mid-Cheshire Branch
75TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS



Rampsbeck Lakeside Country Hotel
20th to 22nd November 2009




Dr Paul Bishop thanking Chef Andrew Mc George

large paneled dining room for a delicate Leek and Potato soup followed by delicious and perfectly Seared Scallops with Avocado Puree and a Spiced Shallot Dressing which would have pleased any Master Chef Judge, apart from the time taken. Admittedly it is difficult to cook scallops "au point" for so many people to be served simultaneously. ➡

The dessert of Baked Pear in Sablée pastry and White Wine Sabayon was slightly too large for most of us but the accompanying Ice Cream of Prune and Armagnac was unusual and delicious.

The alternative Cheese Board of British, Irish and French Cheeses served with Pear Chutney, Apple, Celery, Grapes and Biscuits would have sufficed as a meal on its own.

Obviously the management did not wish their guests to leave the table still feeling hungry as we were then served Coffee with large plates of Assorted Petit Fours.

Saturday morning we all rose to a typical Northern English Breakfast with everything to choose from. Warmed by the offerings some of us ventured out to explore, to Penrith for shopping, to the local Castle Museum for a sight of Cumbrian life, to Local Craft Shops and some for wet walks. However spirits were high and even those who did not venture out played table games or read the papers by a huge fire.

The oldest pub in Cumbria and a famous Pie Bakery were within 10 miles for those who did not want to venture too far for a light lunch.

In the afternoon a wine tasting was held by Piers Mortimer of Corney and Barrow Independent Wine Merchants. Tasting these reasonably priced New Zealand whites and reds was a pleasant way of spending a very wet afternoon. I think Piers was slightly surprised by the knowledge of some of the participants and the questions and answers which caused some amusement.

The Gala dinner started in the lounge with Canapés and a fragrant Cremant de Loire donated by Ron Barker. We then proceeded to the



around the branches - East Anglia

BRASTEDS RESTAURANT

Our 9th Annual General Meeting was held on 4th December at a restaurant just outside Norwich called "Brasteds"

The welcome to this "fine restaurant" was warm and genuine. We were immediately provided with a glass of "Prosecco" which we savoured very slowly accompanied by some very fine canapés. Well, the first glass was slow, the next one not quite so and those who managed a third - as the service was very attentive - were glad we were ushered very gently to our table.

The setting was perfect for our AGM, the table being ideal in size for the 16 who attended. We had been informed that the formalities of the AGM would be over fairly quickly and would not distract from the main theme of the evening - the food and drink! Our Chairwoman, Melanie Benns, rapidly went through the agenda. There were no startling revelations and even the treasurer was able to report a healthy financial balance. Following a few thank yous and reappointments the AGM was duly closed.

A spiced parsnip velouté was presented in a small cup and accompanied by a fruity New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc called "Paua Bay" from Marlborough. The wine chosen matched and enhanced the spiciness of the veloute which was just right in terms of consistency and seasoning, the perfect dish to whet the appetite.

Nick, our host for the evening, described in more detail where the wine was grown and then presented, with the next course, another Sauvignon Blanc but this time a Sancerre "Domaine Fouassier".

Our next course was seared fillet of sea bass on pickled vegetables with a chervil foam. Those who managed to have several glasses of the Prosecco were rapidly becoming a little like the vegetables this beautiful piece of fish was sitting on.

The freshness of the New Zealand wine had now been replaced by the much more mature Sancerre. Nick informed us why a grape could produce two different styles and yet still contain the basic characteristics of the variety.

The main course, tournedos of beef wrapped in home-smoked bacon, was accompanied by a Rioja Crianza which is aged for at least two years, at least one of which is in oak, thus differentiating itself from a reserva which is aged for at least three years. The wine had been decanted which allowed it to breathe and become more complex. Later on in the evening we experimented with another red wine, this time from Lebanon, a Chateau Musar to see whether decanting really made a difference - it did - I wonder if Father Christmas has any in stock!

The beef was perfectly cooked with just the right amount of pink meat and extremely tender. The accompanying vegetables ensured we reached our "5" a day and the light jus was just as described.

Fortunately we were now able to have a little rest before pudding and again Nick enlightened us with his wine knowledge and answered questions from the table, though he did not know the answer to "Where do lentils come from?" or "Where does yeast come from?" - we were beginning to digress!

A traditional tart tatin was served next with brown bread ice cream. An unusual combination but it reflected the bravery and ingenuity of the restaurant.

Again another short break which allowed the males in the party to move two places down, most were still able to count, others did their best!

During the interval before cheese a short auction took place and the raffle was drawn, both helping to raise funds for the branch.

The cheese selection arrived and was washed down by further glasses of the Rioja.

At midnight our taxis were waiting to convey us home. A very pleasant evening, with great food, perfectly matched wines and excellent service - let us hope we return soon.

Ed & Rachel Lancaster



Merseyside & Mid Cheshire 75th continued

Our palates were rested with a Lime and Champagne Sorbet before being awakened by a superb Loin of Cartmel Venison with Blackberries, Swede Confit, Braised Red Cabbage and Juniper Jus. This beautiful course was accompanied by a smooth full bodied Mas de Daumas Gassac 1994, donated by Chris Bonsall, which was perfect with the venison.

Next a Symphony of Desserts would have satisfied any dedicated follower of sweets with again an alternative of the Cheese Board for anyone still feeling hungry.

To end an inspirational meal, Coffee and Petit Fours were served followed by a speech from the Chairman of Council, Chris Bonsall, which was very well received

The Chef Andrew Mc George, his team, the staff and Tracy and Marian the Managers then assembled to be thanked and congratulated for their outstanding efforts that ensured the success of the weekend, by John Gray on behalf of our Branch. He also gave a special thank you to Paul and Val for organising and coordinating the week end so beautifully, no blame attributed for the weather. He also praised Val highly for all the work and enthusiasm she puts into arranging the various Branch trips to Egypt, Russia, Istanbul, Canada, China, and soon to New Zealand. These trips are always, although sometimes tricky, so successful and fun. Most importantly, John thanked the generous donators of the fine wines which helped to make the dining so special. Chris Bonsall, Ron Barker, Derek Fletcher, David Chapman and Paul Bishop, thank you again.

A very special and enjoyable weekend to celebrate the Merseyside and Mid Cheshire 75th Anniversary, thank you everyone who attended and helped to make it such fun. Stay with us Val and Paul, we can now look forward to the 80th!

Ginette Grey





Making Pearls



Adding Pearls



Draining Sauce



Prof. Anu Hopia with nitrous oxide siphon

**The Martha organization is a Finnish home economics organization, founded in 1899 to promote the quality and standard of life in the home. It also carries out cultural and civic education. The cookery events of the IWFS Helsinki Branch are usually held at their training kitchen.*

MOLECULAR MYSTERIES

What exactly is meant by the term “Molecular gastronomy”? Some of our members had read the book on the subject by the French Professor **Hervé This**. A few had listened to the lecture given in Helsinki by **This** and the Finnish specialist, Professor **Anu Hopia**, who is Professor of Food Chemistry at Turku University. A few more members had participated in an excursion to a food wholesale market in Stockholm, where the “Texturas” brand of special chemicals for restaurant kitchens was demonstrated. So we felt that it was time to spread the knowledge among our membership.

One Saturday last October, at the monthly cooking event of our Branch, in the training kitchen of the Helsinki Martha Society*, Professor Anu Hopia gave us a lecture on the subject. He instructed us how to cook a ‘molecular dinner’, our menu, with recipes and comments, are recorded here:

Kir Moleculaire

The welcome drink was a glass of sparkling wine with half a dozen red sodium alginate pearls; see www.khymos.org (recipe by **Martin Lersch**: Kir Moleculaire). The participants began the day’s cooking by converting blackcurrant juice into small “pearls” that were then used to decorate the wine in the glasses.

68 Degree Egg

As a snack while cooking, “68 degree eggs” were served. We used a special cooker, but the eggs can be cooked at home in a large pot of water in an oven or on the stovetop, if the stove is equipped with an accurate thermostat. For the desired consistency of the eggs, it is important that the temperature of the water is kept at 68°C for the entire cooking time, a minimum of 45 minutes. A longer cooking time, even several hours, will not affect the consistency of the eggs, provided that the temperature is not allowed to rise over 68°C. The water temperature should be monitored constantly. The egg yolks get an interesting homogenous texture, much like ice cream, while the whites of the egg curdle, but remain somewhat runny. After separating the yolks, the runny whites can be hardened by pan-frying with butter, and served together with the yolk, with a sprinkling of chives and pepper on top. (Recipe by **Arto Rastas**, Helsinki Culinary Institute).

Five o’clock Bloody Mary

The idea behind this drink is to combine the aromas of strong tea and tomatoes. One large, ripe tomato per person is chopped into small cubes and infused up to 30 minutes in a cup of hot tea. The infusion is put into a blender with salt, pepper, Tabasco, and sugar added according to taste. The pulp can be sieved, if a smoother drink is desired. Finish with a shot of gin and serve in a cup with a stick of celery. This recipe, developed by Professor Hopia, is based on ideas presented by **Pablo Escobar** in the “TGRWT” blog (“They go really well together”), originally from the blog of the Norwegian Martin Lersch; see www.khymos.org Professor Hopia did not mention the amount of Tabasco, and our eager cooks, obviously not knowing the power of this exotic spice in Finland, put in too many drops of it, so the drink became too hot for most participants.

Fillet of Veal ‘Sous Vide’

The fillet, sealed tightly in a vacuum bag, is heated in a water bath at a constant temperature according to the desired doneness: For medium rare, 54.5°C; for medium 57°C; for well done 59.5°C. The minimum cooking time depends on the thickness of the meat. Three hours are enough for medium cooked, if the steak is 50mm thick. As with the “68 degree eggs”, the meat will not become overcooked, even at several hours cooking time, if the temperature does not exceed the set value. For closer instructions, see the booklet by **Douglas Baldwin**: *Practical Guide to Sous Vide Cooking*. -- When the meat has reached the desired temperature throughout, it can be dried carefully and browned in a very hot pan, or using a gas burner. Use the juices from the vacuum bag as the basis for a delicious sauce. Serve with vegetables and salad foam.

Salad Foam

For this foam, a ‘whipped cream charger’ is used. As opposed to the normal soda siphon, in the whipped cream charger small bulbs of nitrous oxide, not carbon dioxide, are used. The foaming agent is xanthan gum (E415). For about five people, 500grams of salad vegetables, such as a mixture of tomatoes, cucumber, iceberg lettuce, etc. are needed. The ingredients, together with desired herbs and spices, such as lemon balm, rocket, salt, honey, balsam vinegar, truffle oil, etc. are blended and pressed through a sieve. About three grams of xanthan gum should be added, drop by drop, under constant stirring, until a consistency of light syrup is obtained. The resulting fluid is cooled and filled into a nitrous oxide siphon (whipped cream charger), by which it is finally applied on the plates.

Chantilly of Chocolate and Port

For 3 to 4 portions, melt 75 grams of dark chocolate with 100ml of port in a bain-marie. Let cool and fill the bain-marie with ice water. Using an electric hand mixer, whip until the foam forms soft peaks. The chocolate fat crystallizes rapidly, so be careful. If the foam crystallizes, melt and try again. If foam does not form, add chocolate, if it becomes too hard, add liquid. The ready-made foam is very stable, and after filling into a cake decorating bag, it can be kept several days in the refrigerator. For serving, just pipe it in mounds on biscuits and serve with your favourite berries or fruit.

Report & Photos by Jaakko Rahola

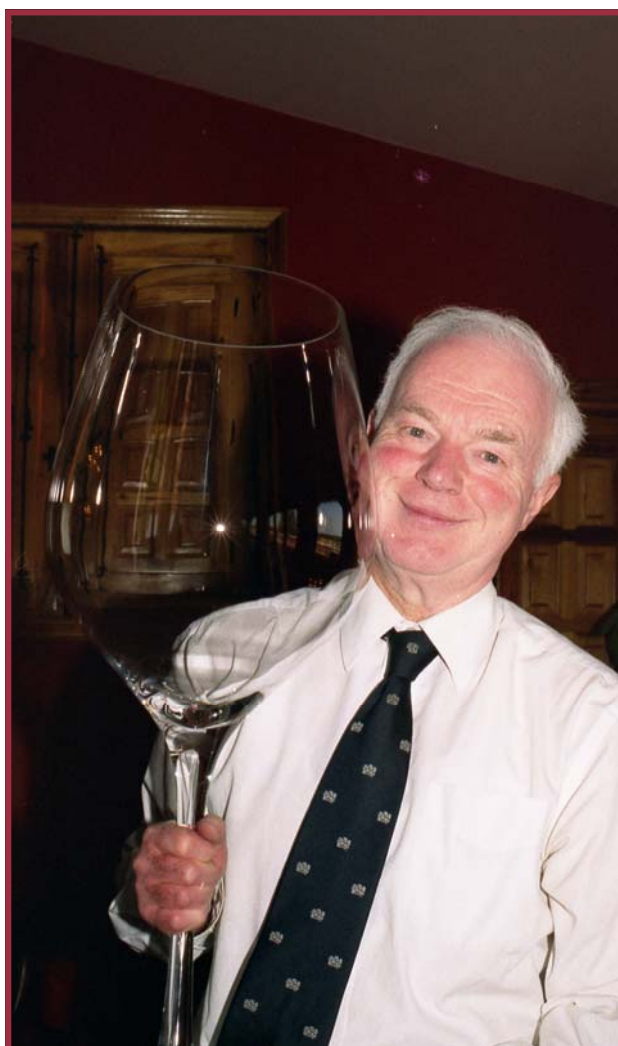
A TIME-SPAN OF ENGLISH WINES

This tasting covered an unusually large time-span for English wines, including some extreme rarities and a big range of grape varieties.

The organiser is a member of the United Kingdom Vineyards Association and all wines were from his private collection. As some had been kept way beyond the normal time, he was relieved that 11 out of 12 were in excellent condition. He gave a brief introduction to English wines and the wineries.

We started with three Traditional Method sparkling wines, where English ones often beat champagnes in blind tastings. **Nyetimber Chardonnay Blanc de Blancs 2000, Brut**, from West Chiltington, West Sussex; this was a lovely gold, with a big attractive fragrant/fruity bouquet and a delicious flavour. The **Nyetimber Chardonnay Blanc de Blancs 1995, Brut**, had a deeper colour, more bubbles, and a more complex biscuity nose. It was very fruity and was generally preferred to the younger wine. The first vintage of the Nyetimber Blanc de Blancs was 1992. The 1992 won a Gold (best in Class) at the International Wine & Spirit Competition this year, having been the first English sparkling wine to win a medal in this competition in 1996. **Meopham Valley Rosé 2005, Brut**, from Chardonnay and Pinot Noir grown in Happy Valley, Meopham, Kent, was a pale rosé colour with plenty of small vigorous bubbles, with lovely soft fruit on the nose and palate. It was simply delicious. The Meopham Valley wines, from David Grey and family, are made from organic grapes.

We next tried three dry whites. The **Wickham Special Release Fumé 2007** comes from Shedfield, Hampshire, with mainly Bacchus and Reichensteiner grapes. It was very aromatic, with the Bacchus/nettles bouquet. It was big in the mouth, with loads of fruit and well-judged oaking. The **Denbies barrel-fermented Chardonnay 1995**, from their large vineyard near Dorking Surrey, was a lovely gold colour. In spite of the wine being well past its usual time for consumption, there was no trace of oxidation, and a slightly honeyed elegant bouquet. Carole Goldberg likened it to an aged Mersault; "perfect nose; perfect richness, buttery". It would have kept several more years, having good acidity and length. **Denbies Vineyard Select The Limes Riesling 1999**: this was also gold, with a real Riesling nose (flowery, with slight petrol), a mature Riesling flavour and attractive acidity. Denbies grubbed up their Riesling as the yield was too low to be commercial.



English red wines are less famed than the sparkling ones and dry whites, but two of these three showed very well. **Chapel Down Pinot Noir 1997**, from Tenterden, Kent; the cork broke, refused to come out and had to be pushed in. The wine was brown-red, with a fairly good bouquet and flavour, but with farmyardy overtones (as does much mature Burgundy from that grape). It would have been better a few years earlier. **Chapel Down Epoch Reserve 1995, from Rondo and Dornfelder**: this wine astonished the Cape Town Branch of the IWFS in 1997 by beating 29 wines from Bordeaux, Burgundy and South Africa in a blind tasting there. It still had an excellent red colour, a good big fruity bouquet, and was fruity and complex in the mouth, with smooth tannins. It would keep a lot longer, and showed members just how good English reds can be. **Wickham Vintage Selection Special Reserve 2004**, Rondo with some Pinot Noir; this was purple with an excellent bouquet, a good fruity flavour and plenty of oak. It seemed a bit young and would improve on keeping.

English medium to sweet wines can be great but are not often made. The **Meopham Valley Rosé** had no vintage and was from Triomphe d'Alsace and Reichensteiner grapes. Medium in sweetness, it had excellent fruit and length, an ideal summer evening drink. **Bothy Vineyard Paradox 2007**, from Frilford Heath, Oxfordshire, was made by the Liwicki family from Ortega and Findling grapes. This pale, medium-sweet wine was absolutely lovely in bouquet and flavour. One expects sweeter wines to come from hot summers and late harvests. This was called Paradox because it came from a summer with heavy rain in July and the grapes were picked early to keep the acid/sugar balance, which was perfect. The grapes did not set seed and remained small, but developed high sugar levels. Only 1,218 bottles (50 cl) of this nectar were made, and sold out very quickly. **Pilton Manor Late Harvest Westholme 1994**, from Somerset, grapes not stated: this was amber-gold, with a lovely rich barley sugar and honey bouquet. It was delicious - rich, sweet but not cloying, with an excellent length, and would keep for years more. The vineyard was grubbed up in 2001.

Members differed widely in which was their favourite wine of the evening, with votes for sparkling, dry white, dry red and sweet wines. One wine was enthusiastically described as "out of this world", and another as "orgasmic"! Carefully-selected English wines can excel in all these four categories.

Bernard Lamb - organiser and speaker

around the branches - St. James' s



PUTTING

ON THE



Happy 15th Birthday to the St. James' s Branch!

To celebrate the occasion, last November, Branch chairman Ari Sofianos thought there could be nothing more appropriate than The Ritz and sixty delighted diners would heartily agree with him!

The evening began in the very elegant surroundings of the Marie Antoinette Suite where some of the best canapés anyone could remember were served. These included little canapés of foie gras shaped like minuscule ice cream *bombes*, smoked salmon paté served in what appeared to be miniature ice cream cornets and utterly delicious melt-in-the-mouth goat's cheese with orange and savoury sablé. The champagne was Benard-Pitois Brut Réserve from Mareuil-sur- Ay, an attractive and elegant wine made from 60% pinot noir and 40% chardonnay

At the appropriate moment, the entire company was invited to cross the main thoroughfare of the Ritz and enter the newly re-decorated Music Room. Here we feasted our eyes on the glittering sight before us but far more serious feasting was to follow! Ari and the great John Williams MBE – executive chef of the Ritz - are good friends and they worked tirelessly together to achieve a menu close to perfection.

We started with Cornish crab salad with ginger jelly in a lovage and celery vichyssoise which elevated some of us straight into the stratosphere! The Alvento Viognier was an ideal partner for this. It was kindly donated by Branch member Morrie Neiss and comes from his Canadian vineyard on Lake Niagara. A year or so ago we had tasted his first vintage which was quite heavily oaked. Now, without the oak, the fruit could sing and the wine showed its elegance and purity. It was much appreciated by all.

The second course was curry-spiced fillet of halibut with baby leeks and carrots and a Vouvray velouté. Don't worry, John Williams knew exactly how little curry was needed so that not a single nuance of the excellent Chassagne Montrachet 1er Cru La Romanée Château de la Maltroye 2001 in jeroboams would be missed. Commenting on this wine, Beverley Blanning MW said it reminded her exactly why people love chardonnay so much.

The main course was medallions of some of the tenderest venison you could ever imagine served with a chestnut and foie gras tourte and red wine sauce with Alsace bacon. This was accompanied by two fifth growth clarets each in an almost perfect state of maturity. The Chateau Batailley 2001 still had a hint of blackcurrant fruit but was beautifully velvety and supple on the palate. The Chateau Cantemerle 2000 was a little riper and fuller and surprisingly (given its higher percentage of merlot) just slightly more structured. Both did full justice to John Williams's superb venison.

The final wine of the evening was a glorious 1989 Sauternes, Chateau Lamothe-Guignard, which Alex Paul had generously donated. The challenge was to find a pudding that would harmonise rather than fight with this exquisite nectar and John Williams certainly succeeded. His pudding was described as an exotic fruit salad with lemon *clafoutis*, passion fruit and banana. In fact it was a finely chopped *duxelle* of exotic fruits on a thin bed of sponge with a crisp slice of wafer-thin dried pineapple. It was perfect in picking up the tropical nuances of the Sauternes. The combination of an extremely hot summer and mild, misty September mornings made 1989 an exceptional vintage in Sauternes and the joy of this particular wine was that, although it was very rich, the sweetness was not overwhelming.

The Branch's fifteenth birthday was commemorated in speeches from Chris Bonsall, Ari Sofianos, Michael Broadbent MW and John Avery MW and there, apart from some delectable frivolities (Ritz-speak for *friandises*), the evening ended. No menu or wine list can ever reach perfection but many of those present felt that, on this occasion, we had come extraordinarily close to it!

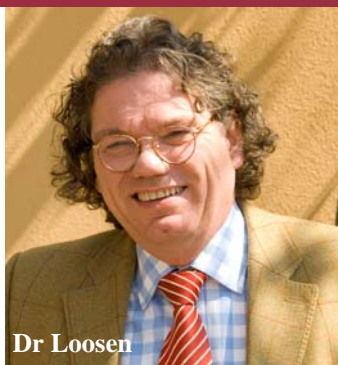
Gregory Bowden



around the branches - Berkshire & Wessex

DR LOOSEN WINES IN BERKSHIRE

Dr Ernest Loosen (pronounced Loh-zen) needs no introduction to members of the IWFS. He has a string of accolades and awards to his name including being voted “Man of the Year” by Decanter magazine in 2005 and “Best German Producer” by Wine & Spirits magazine in 2007. We were fortunate to have met Kate Dowdeswell from his UK importer, Awin Barratt Siegel Wine Agencies, at the London International Wine Fair earlier this year and she agreed to come along and share her knowledge and experiences with us whilst we tasted some of Erni’s famous wines. Dr Loosen’s fame is firmly based on the light and elegant Rieslings he produces from the Mosel estate which has been in his family for over 200 years. Less well known is the fact that in 1996 he bought an old vineyard called Villa Wolf in the village of Wachenheim in the Phalz. Now he can complement his Mosel wines with the more powerful, full-bodied Phalz wines which have higher alcohol levels and rich flavours of fruit and stone.



Dr Loosen



Kate Dowdeswell

Ernest prefers to make wine in a dry style and the climate and slate terroir of the Mosel estate along with the old, and these days unusually, ungrafted vines help in this respect. At Villa Wolf the estate includes many parcels of land with the red volcanic soils of the Phalz which have grown vines for decades with name such as Jesuitgarten and Pechstein, both designated Erste Lager (or Grand Cru).

The evening was divided into three: first we would taste 3 Villa Wolf Rieslings, then 2 Mosel Rieslings and finally 4 Phalz Pinot Noirs, a Villa Wolf rosé and one red each from Villa Wolf, Rudolph Fürst in Franken and Karl Johner from Kaiserstuhl/Baden. We were in for a good evening’s tasting!

However, we started with something very unusual: a vintage, and 1990 at that, sekt called Dr Loosen Graacher Himmelreich Sekt. The name refers to the vineyards and means “Kingdom of Heaven”. The deep gold colour and light fruit nose gives way to a very full rich mouthful with some gooseberry/lemon flavours and very long lasting. Definitely an alternative to top quality champagne. Unfortunately it is not imported into the UK.

The Phalz Rieslings were excellent with the 2007 Wachenheimer Reisling Dry gaining top marks of the evening. The Mosel Rieslings were also excellent but represented a completely different style of wine and at 7.5% and 8.5% alcohol, were easy drinking with very slight sweetness and some spice & honey. The rosé went down well, even if we were well into Autumn.

The Pinots were a mixed bunch. The Fürst was a very light style of wine whilst the Johner had much more body but we did enjoy the Villa Wolf Pinot Noir with supper. Perhaps that is how we should best enjoy Pinot Noir?

Charlotte’s researches into German cuisine led her to decide on pork & beer stew with red cabbage and mash, followed by stolen bread & butter pudding. The supper fayre went down extremely well and Kate’s knowledge of Dr Loosen, his wines and his methods provided an entertaining and educational evening for us all.

Chris Graham



Supper

WESSEX BRANCH PARTAKE OF DIM SUM

In November we visited Ocean City, an authentic Chinese restaurant in Bournemouth, for a lunch incorporating Dim Sum. The Dim Sum (meaning “touch the heart”) was, we were told, born hundreds of years ago when merchants on the Silk Road would stop at tea houses en route to rest and drink tea with their fellow travellers and share dishes of little sweet and savoury snacks. It is now a staple of Chinese culinary culture, particularly in Hong Kong and members welcomed the opportunity to partake of the experience.

We began with a sparkling aperitif a Lindauer Special Select NV from New Zealand, and then moved on to lunch in a section of the restaurant especially screened off. Two conventional Chinese dishes had been arranged, separated by two courses of Dim Sum. Seated at round tables, we helped ourselves to the various dishes.

The first course was mixed seafood served with iceberg lettuce wraps and moo shu pork - stir fried minced pork, diced vegetables and egg served with pancakes. Both were delicious and were perfectly complemented by an aromatic and well balanced Wunsch and Mann gewürztraminer from Alsace. The gewürztraminer, as the classic combination for Oriental food, was also the wine served with the next two courses.

A selection of steamed Dim Sum, included dumplings stuffed with pork or prawns, and a sweet steamed bun stuffed with honey roast pork. The third course offered a choice of various fried or grilled Dim Sum and included griddled savoury turnip cakes with preserved meat, tempura yam croquettes stuffed with pork and grilled dumplings with various fillings. The dishes were all freshly prepared by skilled Dim Sum chefs. Our members did full justice to the tasty and appetising morsels and very little was sent back to the kitchen!

We then reverted to the more conventional Chinese menu. Dishes included jumbo prawns stir-fried with ginger and spring onions on a bed of crispy noodles, Chinese greens with oyster sauce and a platter of honey roast pork and crispy roast belly of pork, once again the standard was excellent. A South African chenin blanc, Sizanani from Stellenbosch, accompanied this course, a dry but fruity white wine intended to complement the king prawns and cut the richness of the roast meats. However, although a good wine in itself, it was not the best of matches with the food and with hindsight the gewürztraminer would perhaps have been a better choice to drink throughout the meal.

Dessert was a red bean pancake with vanilla ice cream, which was very enjoyable, we finished with coffee or Chinese tea.

There was a minor drama halfway through the meal when a light bulb exploded in the ceiling and showered broken glass on to one of the tables below, forcing members to abandon their plates and wine glasses! The staff, who had been attentive and friendly throughout, rose to the occasion and quickly set up another table with clean china and fresh supplies of food and wine. Despite this mishap the meal was, in the best traditions of Dim Sum, a loud and happy experience and was greatly enjoyed by everyone.

Joan Cardy

around the branches - Malmo

ART IN THE KITCHEN

In many cities all over the world restaurants situated in museums are good choices for lunch, Malmo is no exception. Restaurang Smak (Taste), in Malmo Exhibition Halls for contemporary art, is a busy place offering innovative cooking on a high level. The restaurant is open for lunch only but thanks to many members of our branch being frequent visitors the owner Nina Christensson not only opened up for dinner in September, but also let 15 of us into the kitchen to take part in finalizing the dishes under the supervision of head chef Rasmus Bergkvist. I do not know really whether we were of great help or not but it resulted in a delicious five course dinner with matching wines. After the aperitif Crémant d'Alsace, Paul Ginglinger, and the amuse bouche Tartar of duck liver with lemon, parsley and roasted pine nuts we were served:

Terrine of lightly smoked eel with white cabbage, fennel, lemon, tarragon and green peas

2006 Pinot Blanc Barrique, Albert Mann

Fried cod with roasted egg emulsion, butternut squash, apple and chervil

2007 Riesling Grand cru Rosacker, Dom. l'Agape, Vincent Sipp

3 x calf - back, leg and thymus (sweetbreads) with cauliflower, apricot, almond, marjoram and fresh truffle

2006 Côte du Rhône Village, Cairanne l'Ebreascade, Dom. Marcel Richaud

2006 Gigondas, La Tour Sarrazinc, Le Clos des Cazeau

Local blue cheese with apple and anise

2005 Amarone Classico, Aldo Degani

Lemon soufflé, chocolate crème, caramelized almonds and cacao beans

2007 Banyuls, Dom. de la Rectoire

All dishes were very tasty and the combination between food and wine brilliant. Especially the Rhône wines stood out and went very well with their "companions".

We were very grateful for having been given the opportunity to come back-stage, which made us even more impressed by all efforts made to prepare the different dishes and to make them ready to present simultaneously for all guests.



RESTAURANG ATMOFÄR

In the very southern part of Sweden, Scania, people are, by tradition, celebrating the goose on the 10th Nov. The story behind this comes from France via Germany to Sweden and is a bit uncertain. A flock of screaming geese are said to have unveiled a man who hid away to avoid being appointed arch bishop (!) and the geese had to be punished by being eaten! There are always reasons to celebrate and at our dinner on the 6th of November the goose contributed with its most vital part only in the five course meal.

The place was Restaurang Atmosfär where we have arranged several very much appreciated dinners. This restaurant changed concepts last year and went from fine-dining to high class gastro-bistro offering mid-size portions of all dishes at only about €11 each and desserts at around €6. This was perfect timing for meeting the recession and has filled the restaurant ever since! On this occasion the owner Henrik Regné and his team served the following excellently cooked menu:

Aperitif: 2007 Pouilly Fuissé, Fournier

Amuse bouche: Pan-fried scallop with avocado-mango roasted paprika and foamed mussel bouillon.

2008 Côte-du-Rhône Village, Séguret la Daurèle, Dom. de l'Amauve

Fried cod with ragoût vichyssoise and leek in pancetta

2005 Macon-La Roche Vineuse "Les Gras", Merlin

Glazed beef with foie gras, parsnip crème and frisée lettuce

2006 Chianti Classico Riserva, Querciabella

Wild duck with potato boiled in broth, artichoke gratin and red wine sauce

2006 Mentors Shiraz-Cabernet Franc, KWV

2004 Barbaresco Asili, Ca' del Baio

Mont d'Or a 5 years old Swedish hard cheese with fig marmalade

2004 Barolo, Bricco Rocche Brunate

Banana parfait with caramelized crushed hazel nuts and nut honey

2007 Gewurztraminer Grand cru Rangen, "Clos St. Theobald", Dom. Schoffit

All dishes were indeed delicious but the long-cooked, almost caramelized, tender piece of beef topped with a slice of goose liver will probably be remembered as the highlight of the evening and went well with the Chianti. After the dinner the guests showed their appreciation by congratulating the whole team of chefs and waiters in charge of this memorable evening. We will definitely be back!

Rolf Fransson

around the branches - Moscow & Sussex

TO DRINK OR NOT TO DRINK, THAT IS THE QUESTION IN MOSCOW!

Last year was not the easiest one. What does one do when the “hard time” is here? We try to spend less – on trips and vacations, on restaurants and shows, on expensive things, we choose nice but simple presents for our friends and relatives. But true wine connoisseurs and gourmets won’t deprive themselves of their ‘gastronomic holiday’ - Italy, Mexico, USA, Asia, Bulgaria, Greece, Germany, France – these are all the subjects of tiny two-hour journeys within the borders of tutored tastings, in which the members of Moscow Branch participated in 2009.

However, the crisis has the other advantageous side. All undue excesses’ have gone; the rest is the best, the most fascinating and essential, the most valued and appreciated. Moscow Branch is like a balloon, high in the sky, above all that fuss. We are free from ballast, gained the height, feel the fresh air and keep travelling all over the world. The backbone of our community remains the same – life-lovers from Moscow, Togliatti, Samara, among us is a citizen of Scotland and a citizen of the UK. We also have 20% new members, mostly because of launching new format of wine & food event – the show-tastings. Within the “Mystery of Taste” project we got deep into the atmosphere of New Zealand, Chile, Austria, Italy and USA. Maori dances, the original band from Easter Island, rousing Tyrol dances, passionate Italian melodies, the best Russian country-music band “Kukuza” were great complements to the outrageous amount of tastes and aromas of national cuisines and extremely great wines of these various countries.

Thanks to the branch’s work, wine connoisseurs and gourmants visited several wine and food salons: Portuguese Wines Salons in St-Petersburg and Moscow, Greek Olive Oil Salon in Moscow and others.

“Like calls to like”. There’re not just words. One project smoothly causes another. Getting introduced to a Bulgarian winemaker caused the wine tour to his “Villa Vinifera” winery, where guests were good at assemblage and created cuvee.

People say that Russians do not smile often. Maybe. Except those who love good wine and tasty food. The rays of the sun are absorbed by the wine, reflect in our eyes and make our world brighter. There is always a place for joy.

Elena Zyryanova

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GOURMET DINING AT GRAVETYE

Last November the **Sussex Branch** thoroughly enjoyed its third visit to the Michelin star restaurant in the Gravetye Manor Hotel. Our pre-dinner champagne was taken in the lovely beamed lounge, which boasts a traditional log fire, before moving into the main restaurant, which was reserved exclusively for our dinner. We were offered a choice of starters; game terrine with apple chutney or butternut squash soup garnished with winter truffles and parmesan, served with a Reisling, Les Princes Abbes 2005.

Puy lentils and Jerusalem artichokes were the unusual accompaniments to the delicious roast loin of local venison whilst the vegetarian option was forest mushroom risotto with a cappuccino of cepes. The meal concluded with a mouth-wateringly rich chocolate tart followed by coffee and petit fours. A Shiraz Viognier, Innocent Bystander 2005, complemented the main course and Elysium Black Muscat was served with the dessert.

Andrew Russell, the manager, organised a wonderful evening of exceptional quality for us, Chef Mark Raffan and his brigade produced an excellent dinner and the service throughout was impeccable. Sadly this proved to be our last visit under the present management. At the beginning of January, in spite of 18 months of negotiation with the bank by co-proprietors Andrew and Mark, this beautiful, secluded Elizabethan mansion with its thousand acres of woodland passed into administration. Gravetye Manor which was established in 1958 as one of the first Country House Hotels, was not only one of the Sussex branch’s favourite restaurants but had for many years been a well-loved “institution” in our home town of East Grinstead. This marks the end of an era.

Lesley Berry



around the branches - Zurich

The International Wine & Food Society, Zurich Branch "Constitution Luncheon" Ristorante Il Casale, Wetzikon, Switzerland

*Champagner Brut, Pierre Vaudon
Avize, Champagne*

Grissini

*Chasselas non Retrogradé 2007
Christoph Schenk, Villeneuve, Vaud*

Dreierlei vom Saibling

*Merlot di Gudo Riserva 2006
Tenuta Sasso Chierico Sagl, Gudo, Tessin*

Steinpilzrisotto mit Rebhuhn

*Gantenbein Pinot Noir 2005
Daniel Gantenbein
Fläsch, Graubunden*

Gemsrücken mit Kartoffelfrappeé

Coffee

Kastanien - Variation

Friandises

Chef Antonio Colaianni

November 14, 2009 saw the presentation of the IW&FS Charter to the Zürich Branch. The occasion was held at Il Casale Ristorante in Wetzikon, just outside Zürich. Twenty-two members and six guests sat down to a special autumn game luncheon accompanied by some of the finest Swiss wines. This was the second time the Branch had held a function here and Chef Antonio Colaianni out performed his previous event.

Chris Bonsall, outgoing Chairman of the EAC, presented the Charter to the new President of the Zürich Chapter, Philippa Keller, and the event was overseen by the Honorary President of the Society, John Avery. Their wives, Sue and Sarah were also in attendance as well as Peter and Anita Bennett-Keenan, all as guests of the Branch. Peter was instrumental in many aspects of organising the Zürich Branch, making sure all 'T's were crossed and all the 'I's were dotted.

Although the Charter had been in place since May 2008, there had not been a suitable moment to get everybody together in one place. Needless to say a fun and boisterous time was had by all. For those of us who may not be up on our German/Swiss culinary terms a few minor translations of the menu:- Saibling is a Alpine mountain trout not dissimilar to a Char; Perlhuhn is partridge; and Gems is chamoix. All these were game birds/animals and not farmed as is so often the case with many 'game' meals offered by restaurants. Antonio brought out his Brigade at the end of the meal to a great round of applause and welcomed questions from the attendees on various aspects of the courses. Unfortunately, recipes were not forthcoming, just minor details on how this was done and what was in that, but no secrets were let out. However by the end, we all had the feeling that one of the main ingredients was butter!

As is the case when everyone is having a good time, regaling each other with tales of derring-do, the afternoon flashed by in no time and Antonio had to come and ask us to leave so he could set up for the evening.

The next morning, several members of the local Board met at the President's house for a brunch (more wine and food!) with Chris and Sue and John and Sarah before they took late afternoon flights back to England.

John Macdonald



Sunday Morning Discussions

Sunday Brunch



Peter Bennett-Keenan, Philippa Keller, John Avery



around the branches - London

FINE HUNGARIAN WINE TASTING

London Branch Chairman is Hon. Secretary and Past Chairman of the City Livery Wine Circle and with their Events Secretary, Michael Gilham, she arranged a special joint function. The tasting was held in the opulent Oriental Room in the London Capital Club behind Mansion House.

Having 'Fine' in the same sentence as Hungarian, came as a bit of a surprise to some of the 54 attendees. Michael Broadbent MW recently wrote that he believes the southern wine district of Villány in Hungary, is the natural home of the Cabernet Franc grape and that excellent wines are coming from the Villány and Szekszárd appellations. The appellation is Hungary's southernmost wine region and is located near the 46th meridian which is nearly the same latitude as Bordeaux's northern areas. In 2006 Villány was the first region in Hungary to introduce its own controlled origin scheme, DHC or Districtus Hungaricus Controllatus, which symbolizes the region's commitment to high quality standards. Szekszárd is situated about an hour's drive north of Villány-Siklós and the soil there is the rare iron rich "Terra Rossa", renowned the world over for growing high quality grapes. Tokaji wines have been proclaimed "the wine of kings and king of wines" and continue to make a significant contribution to the wine-drinking world.

The wines presented were supplied by Mephisto Wine Merchants (www.mephistowines.co.uk) who are dedicated to the supply and promotion of Fine Hungarian Wines in the UK and have carefully chosen the best quality wines coming out of Hungary. UK Directors, Laszlo Hesley and Solangela Tangarife and Hungary Director Janos Orgyan organised the tasting of white, red and sweet wines from leading producers including the Bock Winery, the Malatinszky Winery, the Takler Winery, and from Tokaji, The Samuel Tinon Winery. Judy welcomed members, guests and speakers and introduced Vivienne Franks of the Wine Education Service who conducted the tasting.

Mephisto Wines had invited the four winemakers to present their wines in person. Csaba Malatinszky, the son of a nobleman, started the tasting with his Noblesse Siklósi Chardonnay 2007, followed by his Noblesse Merlot Rosé 2007 and then his Kúria Cabernet Franc 2006 which attendees commented tasted like one of the finest Bordeaux wines. József Bock of the Bock Winery, who was awarded the prestigious title of "Hungarian Winemaker of the Year" by the Hungarian Wine Academy in 1997, then presented his wines aided by Laszlo Hesley who acted as an interpreter. Bock continues to produce award-winning wines and has won gold medals at Challenge International du Vin, Vinalies Internationales and Syrah du Monde. His first wine was a Hárslevrlü 2007, followed by a Portugieser 2008 and a Syrah 2006 which the attendees likened to a Côte Rôtie. The third winemaker, Ferenc Takler is of Southern German origin and is the 9th generation winemaker in the Szekszárd area. The winery is run by his father and two sons and they also won the "Hungarian Winemaker Of The Year" in 2004. Wines tasted were the Kadarka 2007, the Kékfrankos 2007 and the Kékfrankos Reserve 2006. Last but by no means least came the luscious sweet wines of the Samuel Tinon Winery. Born in Bordeaux, he graduated in viticulture and oenology in 1989 and was the first French winemaker to settle in Tokaji. His wines can be found in some of the top Parisian Hotels and in 2007 Geo Magazine singled out his 2001 5 Puttonyos Aszú as being one of the world's top 40 finest wines. He presented a Sweet Szamorodni 2004 followed by a Tokaji Aszú 5 Puttonyos 2004, it was nutty and rich with honey and apricot overtones.

It was clear everybody was impressed with the sheer quality of wines sampled. Following the tasting the Club laid on a splendid buffet and we had as many good comments about the food as we did about the wine. This was one of those evenings where everything was excellent, the wines, the food, the speakers and the venue. City Livery Wine Circle Chairman, Brian Jones remarked in his speech that it was the best wine tasting the City Livery Wine Circle had ever had. That is great praise indeed!

Judy Tayler-Smith, Chairman.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE'S ANNUAL DINNER

On a wet and windy evening Hambleton provided a welcome worthy of a Victorian country house Christmas. After champagne and canapés twenty five of us gathered in the main dining room round one oval table. Unfortunately our chairman, Catherine Fergus, couldn't be with us, but her husband, John, spoke on her behalf. Betty Meadows, who had arranged the dinner, gave Andre Simon's grace.

The first course was an assiette de fruits de mer, a huge platter containing clams, mussels, prawns and unexpected delights, oysters, razor clams, chunks of crab and delicious marinated scallops with peeled segments of clementines. The delicate Reuilly Les Pierres Plates, Denis Jamain 2007 was a tremendously successful accompaniment. Although finger bowls were provided, our outside linen napkins were changed at the end of this course, adding to the sense of Victorian luxury.

Roast Wissendine naturally raised veal was served with a Madeira jus. Aaron had secured the whole carcass from a local farmer. The creamed endive which accompanied it was delicious and Aaron later told us that it had been turned with sugar and orange juice in a heavy based pan. The Raptor Post Tulbagh 2007 from South Africa was an inspired choice to drink with the veal.

Our final course was a mixture of passion fruit and liquorice jelly. This long platter included liquorice cake and liquorice ice cream with a passion fruit sorbet, giving one the guilty pleasure of having a very upmarket sherbet dip. The Coteaux du Layon Chaume Branchereau 2006 was surprisingly not killed by the liquorice, but balanced it very well.

The chef, Aaron Patterson and the sommelier Dominique both spoke about their contributions to the meal, after which Aaron brought in his kitchen brigade so we could applaud them and the ever-efficient waiting staff.

Christopher Angeloglou



around the branches - Manchester

ALL FINE AT DIDSBURY LOCH FYNE?

Until recently, The Loch Fyne restaurant in Didsbury, was a well known student pub, called Ye Olde Cock, and had been last visited by many members some decades ago. So it was with great interest and nostalgia that we returned, in November, to a hostelry of our youth and to see the changes that had been wrought.

It had been opened out and modernised, but still had the same warm welcoming atmosphere, even if this time the students were the waiting staff! The ambience together with an aperitif of Jackson Estate Sauvignon Blanc 2008, Marlborough quickly ensured the 48 members who travelled there on a wet November evening relaxed and enjoyed the occasion.

Our tasty starter of Chicken Liver Parfait with Toast and Shallot Marmalade was accompanied by Dolcetto d'Alba Sucule 2008, de Forville. For most of us that is - for some - the Shallot Marmalade arrived after the Parfait and Toast had been eaten!

A delicious Seafood selection of Grilled Salmon, Bream, King Prawns, Seared Scallops, Spinach and Lemon Parsley Butter followed for the Main Course. Generous amounts of 2008 Gaba do Xil – Rodriguez Valdeorras accompanied this dish.

Complementary vegetables were served courtesy of the restaurant – for most of us at the same time as the fish – but for some - a bit later!

A refreshing Dessert of Poached Figs followed and the restaurant kindly provided an alternative of cheeses for those with special requirements – for most of us - but again for some - much later, after the waiters/restaurant had been reminded!

The food was well prepared, tasteful and good, the wines matched the food, albeit with some bottle variation in the red wine, the atmosphere warm and buzzing and the service by the friendly and good natured students, well meaning.

Part of the IW&FS' role is to be involved in education and training, and in this newly opened restaurant with new young waiters, we fulfilled our role. As we remember our own student days and the journey we had to travel, we wish this new Loch Fyne venture and its staff every success in the future.

A NON-TRADITIONAL TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Traditionally the Manchester Branch has its Pre-Christmas Lunch on a Sunday in a South Manchester Venue with a light-hearted vineous / gastronomic quiz and a non Christmas Menu. This year we took a deep breath and decided to make a change.

The Centre of Manchester looks very Festive in December and we had had excellent experiences of "Room", The Metro Tram Link was running again making access easier and solving the parking problem – so why not make a change?

"Room" doesn't do Sunday Lunches, however it was thought a change would be good, so the 1st Saturday in December was booked and advertised well in advance.

The best laid schemes..... do come adrift. There was a change of ownership and a hiccup with the booking. So at short notice we were offered the private room at "Room" on the 2nd Saturday in December and to facilitate things we chose a Traditional Christmas menu with no quiz - and we worried about the outcome.....

A late change of date meant that some people could no longer come – but others could, so we had our traditional good turn out. Our underestimation of public transport – the Metro – meant that many arrived early – in fact the Chairman and her guests arrived before the restaurant opened!!

A glass of Prosecco courtesy of "Room" proved a welcome ice-breaker and an appropriate lead into the first course – Slices of Smoked Goosnargh Duck with "drunken" oranges, shallots and a fine bean salad. A successful marriage of many flavours and the crunchy beans were appreciated by many, though some members preferred softer vegetables. The accompanying 2007 Barbera d'Asti "La Caplan"- Guido Natalino (Piedmont, Italy) was superb, well rounded with soft tannins, good fruit, and long lasting.

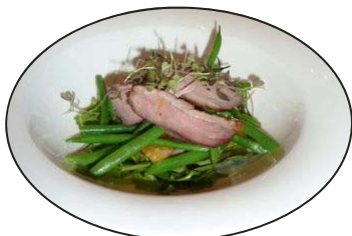
Our main Course, a traditional Christmas fayre of Lancashire Turkey – served like a round fillet on a bed of Parsnip mash with pork chipolatas, cranberry sauce and vegetables, melted in the mouth and melded with the rest of the accompanying food deliciously. It was well matched by 2008 Errazuriz Wild Ferment Chardonnay – Casablanca Valley (Chile).

The Dessert of Chocolate Truffle Torte with Valrhona chocolate sauce and Cherries in Kirsch made a good contrasting finish. A most enjoyable start to the tastes of Christmas.

Should we have changed? Should we have worried?

Well, our non-traditional venue, day and food was enjoyed and made a good prologue to the Christmas Season. Some of us will always worry but this time the change worked.

Tricia Fletcher



around the branches - Capital

SICILY'S FINEST

Several members from Berkshire Branch joined us for a very interesting tasting dinner at Donnington Valley Hotel, Newbury, in November.

The Planeta's are members of Sicily's latest wine generation. The cousins Alessio, Francesca and Santi are in their thirties with all the enthusiasm of 30-year-olds. The family owns and operates four wineries in distinct vineyard sites around Sicily and each territory produces a different grape variety. The family's latest vineyard area is on Mount Etna north of Catania, whose vines will yield their first wine in 2010. Despite having produced the first Planeta wines as recently as 1995 the family is now firmly established as one of Italy's most forward thinking quality wine producers.

Head Chef at Donnington, Kelvin Johnson, together with their sommelier Chris Neeves, had put together a menu to do justice to these fascinating wines. The Planeta's could not make the event so Penny Murray, their export manager, flew over to conduct the tasting.

We were welcomed with canapés served with a La Segrata Bianco 2008, 70% Greciano, 20% Chardonnay, 10% other varieties. Quite full flavoured showing ripe floral and melon notes, a simplistic quaffable wine. With our starter, a ballotine of foie gras with fig syrup and brioche we were served a 2007 Chardonnay - now I belong to the ABC club when it comes from anywhere other than Burgundy but - wow - watch out Burgundy, the Planeta will give you a run for your money. It was soft, smooth, rich and buttery with a good balance of acidity to cut the richness. It went beautifully with the foie gras, a good competitor to Gewurzts for a marriage made in heaven.

Loin of venison with braised red cabbage, baby spinach and gratin potatoes was served with a chocolate sauce - try matching that Planeta! We were first served a 2006 Merlot (95% Merlot, 5% Petit Verdot) then the 2007 Saint Cecilia - 100% Nero d'Avola. The Merlot was soft and fruity, a lovely wine but a little too soft for the strong flavours. The Nero d'Avola was superb, a rich aromatic wine typical of a well made wine of this grape - it went superbly with the dish.

Chocolate royal with strawberry & red wine reduction was served with the Planeta's one dessert wine, the 2008 Passito Di Noto, 100% Moscato Bianco. This was a brilliant golden colour with honey and tropical fruit flavours. Not too sweet but well balanced, it filled the mouth and the senses with a great burst of flavour - surely these would be lost with the pudding - but no, it had the stamina to come through, with the sauce cutting the richness of the chocolate, once again a great combination.

Thank you to Donnington Valley and Planeta for a wonderful evening with superbly matched food and wines. There was only one problem with the evening - with the best wines at around £20 a bottle they were too expensive to take home a few cases!

Berks Branch Webmaster and Chairman contemplate their wines.



FYNE FUN

Capital AGM's are notorious for their brevity so we often hold them in restaurants while we are on the aperitif, before dinner. This year was no exception so at 5pm on the last Saturday in November, 28 members came from near and far, in pouring rain, to Loch Fyne in Wokingham for what turned out to be a fun evening.

We decided to go for their Christmas Menu as they were offering three courses and coffee, with a glass of Prosecco thrown in, for £22. There was a choice of three dishes on each course with not a slice of turkey in sight. Whole baked sea bass with salsa verde and char-grilled Buccleuch rump steak with shallot confit and béarnaise sauce were the most popular dishes. Our menu selection was e-mailed to them the week before and when we arrived I was given cards with everyone's name on and their choice of dishes. This made service much easier for the staff when the dishes arrived.

We drank vast quantities of Viognier, Domaine de la Porvenquière 2007 and a Domaine de la Porvenquière Merlot/Grenache 2007, simplistic, quaffable wines.

The AGM lasted a little longer than usual - 22 minutes - so the restaurant was still quiet when we started on the main business of the evening. The dishes were cooked as requested and generally praised by the company and service was reasonably good. If the photos are anything to go by a great time was had by one and all. Well done Loch Fyne.

Pam Brunning



Society Awards

St James's at The Landau

Last July the St James's Branch held an event for sixteen lucky diners which, rather unexpectedly, turned out to be the revelation of the year! The venue was the Private Dining Room of The Landau Restaurant at the recently fully refurbished Langham, which had been Europe's first Grand Hotel when it opened in 1865. It was chosen following a tip from branch member Albert Roux, in whose kitchens at Le Gavroche Andrew Turner, the Executive Chef, had completed an invaluable apprenticeship in the nineties. He moved on to become Head Chef at Brown's, Bentley Kempinski, Pennyhill Park in Surrey and now The Landau.

This was one of those rare evenings when everything ran perfectly. The menu was a mixture of traditional and modern, with every dish showing beautiful presentation, ingredients of the highest quality and harmonious balance of flavours. The wines all had character, were an excellent match to the food and were very cleverly chosen within our budget by Head Sommelier Zack Saghir, previously at The Savoy Grill for 27 years. Service, directed by maitre d' Franco Becci, who had worked at The Savoy Grill and Brown's before The Landau, was exemplary, with meticulous attention to every detail.

After such an impeccable meal, it was no surprise that the restaurant was unanimously nominated for the Society's Award for Excellence. The nomination was swiftly approved by the Awards' Committee and another, equally stunning branch dinner was held in September, at the end of which Andrew Turner received, on behalf of the restaurant, the Award Certificate. The Landau must be, at the moment, the best kept secret in London!

Footnote: In October, a few weeks after the presentation, we learned that Andrew Turner had decided to leave The Landau to become Head Chef at Wilton's, the old-established British restaurant in Jermyn Street, London. He leaves behind an experienced and well trained team in the kitchen which, it is hoped, will be able to maintain the same high standards.

Ari Sofianos



Capital at The Vanilla Pod

Last May 26 members of the Capital Branch enjoyed a train journey on the Marlow Donkey from Maidenhead to Marlow to experience a superb lunch at The Vanilla Pod. This restaurant is run by chef/proprietor Michael Macdonald who is one of the Society's Heptinstall winners. A report of this fine lunch can be seen in the September 2009 Food & Wine.

Consequently members voted overwhelmingly to honour the restaurant with the Society's Restaurant Award so once again we took over the restaurant at the end of October to enjoy another splendid lunch and present Michael with his award.

On the first occasion members chose their own wines but on our return Michael and Antonio - the restaurant manager - put together a superb lunch with matching wines proving their expertise in all aspects of the trade.



Pam Brunning

MERSEYSIDE & NORTH WALES FESTIVAL

14th to 18th June 2011 based in

LIVERPOOL

The festival starts in the afternoon of Tuesday 14th June and closes with a dinner on Saturday evening. The festival hotel package includes Saturday night and Sunday breakfast. The draft programme shown on the back page is accurate as at today but the Festival is nearly 18 months away. Some of our chosen locations may lose their Chef or even go out of business. The organisers reserve the right to make alterations as necessary but will endeavour to replace events with ones of a similar standard.

We have tried to leave some spare time to allow members to visit the other facilities in Liverpool and the shops.

Friday evening has been left deliberately free. About 6 months before the Festival we will circulate participants with details of the events on at the main theatres and concert halls. We will also provide details of the best local restaurants that were not large enough to be part of the Festival. Group tickets can be arranged if required.

Booking details:-

To book please send your name, address, email details and phone number with details of your membership / branch affiliation to the **EAC Treasurer , Jim Muir, The Old School House, Llanhennock, Monmouthshire, NP18 1LT, UK**

before March 31st 2010 together with a deposit of £500 per person. You will be invoiced for the balance of £600 in October.

Cheques must be made out in sterling and drawn on a UK bank payable to IWFS-EAC. Payments by Electronic Transfer (BACS and International) but with all remittance charges to be borne by the payer, or credit card with an additional charge of 3% are possible:

For further details contact our Treasurer, **Jim Muir on +44 (0)1633 420278 or e-mail muir112@btinternet.com**

Booking and Cancellation conditions

Full terms and conditions will be sent out on receipt of deposits. Members will have a 14 day cooling off period during which they can cancel and receive the deposit back in full.

- A deposit of £500 per person is payable on booking.
- Cancellations must be notified in writing prior to the 1st October 2010.
- Balance of price must be received by 31st October 2010
- Effects of cancellation are:-

Prior to 1 st June 2010	Loss of half deposit (£250)
Between 2 nd June and 1 st October 2010	Loss of Deposit (£500)
Between 2 nd October & 31 st December 2010	Loss of 60% of total price (£660)
After 31 st March 2011	Loss of 100% of total price
- **You are advised to have full insurance to cover cancellation.**

Accommodation

The Festival is based at the Hope Street Hotel, a slightly quirky 87 room 'boutique' hotel positioned between the two Cathedrals.

They offer a range of rooms (including ones suitable for wheelchair users) and payment arrangements. Full details will be sent to all participants but may also be obtained in advance from Treasurer Jim Muir.

Bookings should be made directly with the Hotel **reservations@hopestreethotel.co.uk** quoting reference **92784**.

Liverpool has many other hotels ranging from inexpensive chains to a new 5 * Hilton and a Hotel themed on the Beatles; The Hard Days Night Hotel. However all events will start from Hope Street so members will have to make their way there. Taxis are plentiful and not over expensive.

Post Festival Extension

There will be an optional 5 day (4 nights) extension tour to the Lake District based at Holbeck Ghyll Hotel. This package is being organised for the EAC by Success Tours Ltd. Priority will be given to Festival attendees but if there is space, places may be sold separately. It is intended to be more relaxed than the Festival.



The cost is £1,500 per person including:

- 4 nights accommodation. Holbeck Ghyll was chosen by and for the cast of the 2007 film Miss Potter starring Renée Zellweger
- 3 dinners and one luncheon in Michelin starred restaurants or equivalents all with wines
- Executive Coach from Liverpool on Sunday morning 19th June and return to either Manchester or Liverpool airport or central Liverpool on Thursday 23rd June.
- Daily excursions including Lake cruise, 'Mountain Goat' guided tour, and visits to The World of Beatrix Potter and The Coniston Institute and Ruskin Museum (detailing Donald Campbell's death in BLUEBIRD attempting to break his own world water speed record.)



EAC Regional Festival 14th to 18th June 2011

**Based in
LIVERPOOL**

Hosted by Merseyside & Mid-Cheshire Branch Established 1934



The event will be based in Liverpool, the historic English Maritime City and World Heritage Site, with its two iconic Cathedrals, world class museums, art galleries and theatres.

We will also make use of venues around the area to produce a

MERSEYSIDE & NORTH WALES FESTIVAL

Although the programme is subject to alteration we intend to include:-

- Opening ceremony at the Liverpool Medical Institute followed by dinner in the roof top restaurant of the London Carriage Works enjoying views over the city.
- Guided tours of the city by coach and 'DUKW' - an authentic (converted) World War II landing vehicle, including visits to the Maritime Museum and Tate Liverpool.
- Dim Sum lunch to recognise the oldest Chinese community in the UK.
- Black Tie Dinner at Knowsley Hall, historic seat of the Earls of Sefton.
- Visit to Chester and tutored wine tasting on the River Dee.
- Dinner of local dishes in the Isla Gladstone Conservatory, originally built by the Victorian Prime Minister's family and recently restored at a cost of £12M.
- Drive along the North Wales coast to enjoy an introduction to Welsh cuisine and tutored English wine tasting at Llandrillo College.
- Lunch at Bodysgallen Hall, with an opportunity to enjoy 200 acres of gardens and parkland.
- Coach trip to view the 'golf coast' north of Liverpool and Anthony Gormley's 'Another Place'.
- Light buffet luncheon and wine tasting in the Crypt of the Anglican Cathedral.
- Closing Black Tie Dinner at a prestigious Cheshire location,

Although we intend to provide a full program of excellence there will also be time for members to follow their own wishes or just rest. We can be available to help members make bookings at the theatres, concert halls and restaurants.

The full cost will be £1,100 per person excluding accommodation. Numbers will have to be restricted because of the size of some of the venues selected. A deposit of £500 will be required by 31st March 2010. Further details and method of booking are shown on page 35.