

Food & Wine



June 2011

The Journal of The International Wine & Food Society Europe & Africa Committee

Free to European & African Region Members - one per address - Issue 107



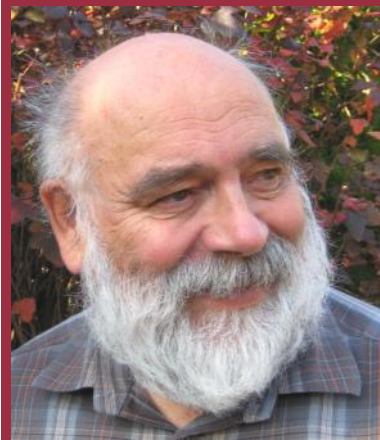
Wines of Mallorca

The Castle Cook

The Answers Lie
in the Yeasts

An Appreciation of
Sweet White Wines

© Pam Brunning



CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Dear Members

In April I was again one of the Judges for the International Wine Challenge (IWC) at the same time as our President, John Avery MW was judging for the Decanter Awards. These two bodies award the majority of UK medals and trophies that you see on wine bottles on supermarket and wine merchant shelves. This year the IWC received a record number of entries (over 12,000). All wine is tasted 'blind' by panels comprising a number of qualified judges. To be awarded a medal the wine will have gone before at least 2 panels and the 'super judges'. Most of the judges come from the industry in the UK or are wine makers from around the world who recognise the importance of the International market. The awards are first made known to the producers in May but not publicised until September.

Your Society has a 'Wine Committee' under the Chairmanship of Chris Bonsall. The members are experts on wine styles, regions and vintages. They meet in London following the London International Wine Fair in May each year to debate wine issues and to formulate the material that goes into the annual 'vintage chart' and your membership card. They meet in London because it is still viewed as the Capital of the wine world possibly because it is not a wine producing region so there is therefore no hint of bias. London is the centre of the wine world and many of the best tastings take place there.

I would not wish to give the impression that I back London in all things, although I was delighted that they will stage the 2012 Olympics. I support Leicester Tigers Rugby team and, since living next door to Alan Hanson, Liverpool Football Club. When I was appointed a Magistrate over 30 years ago (yes I judged both wine and men!) my Oath of Allegiance was to, 'The Queen Duke of Lancaster'. But I do accept that London is the centre of the world wine trade.

The Society was founded in London 78 years ago and this year the Society AGM will take place in London following an important Council meeting on Friday 4th November. In order to encourage as many members as possible to attend, the EAC Events Coordinator has arranged a special dinner in the Waterman's Hall in the City of London for the evening of 4th and we are arranging overnight accommodation at what we hope will be favourable rates. The two events, the AGM and dinner, are separate and members can attend one without attending the other, but we feel that putting the two things together may encourage greater participation.

On 30th June we have the Annual Branch Representatives Meeting (ABRM), just outside London and once again we have an optional evening event so that those travelling a distance to the ABRM can make a night of it.

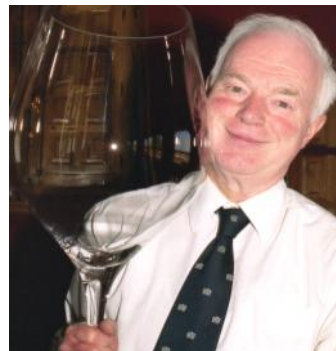
My own branch has just recruited 2 members who came to us through the new website. But unfortunately more than half our branches have still not got to grips with the technology. We need to recruit new younger members and the best way to achieve this is through new technology.

Although most membership involvement is through your own branch I encourage everyone to join us on events designed for members from around the zone and around the world. As well as the two mentioned above we look forward to an Awayday in Yorkshire in October (see back cover), a Great Weekend in Zurich in June 2012 and an International Festival in Vancouver in September 2012.

Ron Barker

CONTRIBUTORS

Dr Bernard Lamb has made wines and beers with cultivated yeasts for 43 years and is a member of the United Kingdom Vineyards Association. He has a DSc in fungal genetics and did research and teaching in genetics at Imperial College London for 40 years. His books include applied genetics, wine and beer judging, standards of English, and how to use the Queen's English. He is an IWFS member.



Jeffrey Benson has been in the wine trade for 35 years. He brings his knowledge of wine to the major wine growing regions of the world, meeting with producers as a buyer and wine maker. He conveys this knowledge through his lectures and consultancy work. He has been a member of the Society since the 1960's, and for twelve years ran the annual evening wine school for the Society. He is currently Chairman of the London Branch.

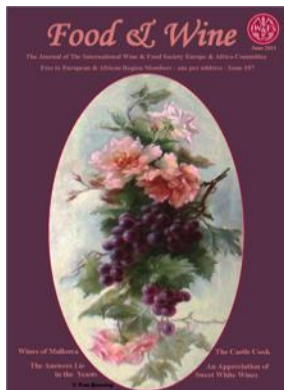


Rosemary Shrager who runs her own cookery school at Swinton Park is a talented and versatile chef, who loves talking about food as much as she loves cooking. She is a natural extrovert and communicator, whose professional career includes a period working for Pierre Koffman - at the internationally famous *Tante Claire* restaurant in London and also a period working for Jean-Christophe Novelli.



Jan Edwards is a former BBC local radio presenter who moved to rural Mallorca in 2004. A freelance writer, she's the main contributor to, and assistant editor of, *abcMallorca* magazine, published in English, German and Spanish. She's had eight articles published in *The Telegraph*, the weekly expat edition of *The Daily Telegraph*. Her interests are writing, food and wine, walking and reading.





Oil on canvas - 'Grapes & Roses'
Artist unknown

Food & Wine

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The International Wine
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European & African Region

Editor Pam Brunning
Brunsden Farm
Heath Ride
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 3QJ
Tel +44 (0)118 9733287
E mail
editor@sidpam.waitrose.com

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All Things Print
Judds Farmhouse
97, London Road
Stanway, Colchester
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The Society welcomes
application for Membership

For information please contact
Katie Wilkins
EAC Membership Registrar
14 Highbury, Jesmond,
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE2 3DX, UK
+44 (0) 191 239 9630
E mail
eacmembership@talktalk.net

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the Editor



Editorial

As we go to print a few storms are bringing much needed rain to our parched gardens in the south of the UK. We have enjoyed a beautiful spring, the only black spot, literally, being the forest fires that have been raging just two miles south of us in Swinley Forest. Sitting at the computer I watched the thick clouds of smoke being blown closer and closer. With the house reeking of smoke I was reminded of the summer of 1976 when fire swept through our woodland and of how the fire crews spent weeks soaking up the peat which continued to burn long after the fires were extinguished.

I do hope you are all enjoying some of the excellent special offers that are available at the moment. With the recession deepening and giants such as Von Essen going into administration there are some very good deals available in both restaurants and accommodation. We invested in a 'Groupon' offer recently at an unknown restaurant and enjoyed an excellent meal from the à la carte menu, two courses and a glass of house wine each for £24 for two. Looking at their menu prices you could see why they had to discount to attract trade. With so many the offers around it is good to see establishments having to give better value for money.

Members who complained about the change of cover layout on the last issue will be pleased to see it is back to normal. I did not realise it was considered, by some, as such a crucial format. You will see we have two short restaurant reviews this time. Unfortunately the Michelin star restaurant at the inn we stayed at in Wales was a big disappointment, or maybe I am getting more difficult to please as I get older. As we were leaving next morning four walkers, who were just off for a day in the hills, were talking of what a wonderful place it was and of how we had chosen a good place to stay for super food!

Suffice to say our sojourn at the inn was soon forgotten when we arrived at Upton Bishop church to join in the celebration of the life of a lady who was one of the Society's most active members (see page five).

We have two wine articles written by members and one from a new contributor, Jan Edwards, who is a former BBC local radio presenter. She moved to rural Mallorca in 2004 and writes with great insight on the wines of her adopted country. Rosemary Shrager who runs her own cookery school at Swinton Park tells us a little about her life and love of food and has contributed some recipes from her new book. Coincidentally we have an 'Awayday' organised in October at Swinton Park so those attending may bump into Rosemary while there.

Our Marketing Manager Tim Gittins reports on the highly successful launch of the Leeds branch. With fifteen new members, whose age group is somewhat lower than the Society average, this is our way forward. A few new members are joining through the website but due to the lack of enthusiasm from so many branches there are very few events advertised. All branches must make an effort to appoint a webmaster to keep their details updated. In this technological age it is the only way the IW&FS will become known and grow. Moreover bookings for all major events are now being taken through the website.

There are four very diverse events advertised within these pages. The first of which is the EAC Awayday at Grim's Dyke Hotel at the end of June. This is preceded by the Annual Branch Representatives Meeting, an important event to which all are encouraged to attend and have their say. There are some places left for the post meeting gourmet dinner and overnight stay so book immediately.

Meanwhile with the EAC Festival in Liverpool coming up shortly many members from around the world will be visiting, not only Liverpool but also London. Welcome all, we wish you a wonderful stay at the home of the Society at the heart of the world's wine trade.

Pam Brunning

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A Message from your Society Chairman Alec Murray



Dear Members

I am honoured to have been elected to serve the IW&FS as Chairman of its Council of Management, which is made up of six representatives from our three Zones. Three from the Board of Governors of the Americas (BGA), two from the European & African Committee (EAC) and one from the Asia Pacific Zone (APZ).

I would like to introduce myself to you and briefly give you some idea of what I would like to see the Society achieve in the coming years with your help and co-operation. I was born in the City of Medicine Hat in the southern part of the Province of Alberta in 1932. A third generation Albertan, my grandfather homesteaded and established a cattle ranch south of that City well prior to the turn of the 20th century. I completed my schooling and university training in Alberta graduating in Commerce and Law. I practiced Law in Edmonton, Alberta for 27 years. In 1987 I was appointed to the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta where I served until 2007 when I retired.

In 1995 I was elected to the BGA and still serve on the Executive, though as an Emeritus member. In 2002 I was elected to the Council of Management as one of the BGA's representatives, which brings us to the present.

I have had the privilege of serving under four Council Chairmen, the most recent being Chris Bonsall, all of whom were dedicated to the welfare of our Society through some very lean and difficult years. Fortunately, your Society is now on a solid financial footing due to a number of factors, not least of which was the hard work of John Valentine and Chris Bonsall of the EAC who were on the front line in London during those troublesome times.

The website is now first class due to the work of that committee made up of Brian Findlay, John Valentine, John Kuczowski, John Danza, Tim Gittins and Yvonne Wallis. I urge all members to explore and enjoy this electronic masterpiece. It is a wonderful source of information and ideas, as well as a tool for use by all the many levels of our Society.

Your Council has also taken its first step in resurrecting the educational aspect of our Society by making available a monograph dealing with the controversial subject of biodynamics in the wine industry. This work was authored by Beverley Blanning MW, who has written extensively on the topic, and is a serving member of our Society's Wines Committee. Council hopes that, if this excellent work is favourably received by the membership, it will signal the rebirth of the educational purpose of the Society. Our Wines Committee, under the Chairmanship of Chris Bonsall, continues to produce the vintage card which is one of the most respected objective assessments of wines available.

Council is responsible for organizing an International Festival every three years. Those who attended the Cape Town Festival in 2009, the organization of which was overseen by John Valentine, can attest to its great success. The upcoming International Festival will be held in Vancouver, British Columbia, from the 11th to 15th September 2012, the Festival Organising Committee is chaired by Dave Felton of the Vancouver Branch. You have been kept up to date on its planning through Food and Wine, an excellent publication.

Vancouver will be a wonderful experience and one you do not want to miss. As you are all aware the EAC has organized a Merseyside Festival for this June and for June 2013, the APZ is planning one in Kuala Lumpur.

It is my hope that in the coming years we can expand the membership into new areas of all three Zones with such aid from Council as is possible. It is imperative that we focus on youth, by youth I am thinking of young professionals in their mid 40s. This is a complex problem faced by many Branches, but hopefully we can come up with initiatives that will appeal to this age group.

The coming years will be challenging for our Society. We have made some positive strides. Council's hope is that, with the cooperation and goodwill of all we can continue to build upon these gains and make being a member of the IW&FS even more fulfilling and enjoyable.

Best wishes Alec Murray

Dear Members

Here in London we have been enjoying a long spell of wonderful Spring weather, the warmest since 1910 – and it would seem to be reaching the continent too. News from Jim Budd, our consultant in the Loire, is that the vintage there is advanced compared with previous years. There is, however, a considerable risk of hail with the unusually warm weather. Also good weather in April is no guarantee that the vintage will be good – both 1987 and 2007 went markedly downhill after a very sunny April.

I am glad to say that the weather contributed to our enjoyment of the Royal Wedding. The marriage of William and Catherine seems to have certainly rekindled support for the Royal Family and has also acquired a new generation of followers – three of which are in my household!

Other well wishers on the day were The Ritz who received permission to hang a large banner sending their best wishes to the happy couple. I am also pleased to say that The Ritz wish to send the following news to IWFS members:

“Complimentary Glass of Champagne from The Ritz to IWFS members”

The Ritz have kindly offered a complimentary glass of champagne to all IWFS members, and their guests, when they dine in The Restaurant for lunch or dinner. The Restaurant is considered by many as the most beautiful restaurant in Europe. Executive Chef John Williams MBE stands at the helm of this cornerstone of London luxury, creating classic culinary delights prepared with contemporary influences. This offer is available from 1st June 2011 to 1st June 2012. To receive your complimentary glass of champagne you should mention you are an IWFS member, when making your booking, and must produce your IWFS membership card when dining. Please visit their website for more details on dining at The Ritz on www.theritzlondon.com.

We hope some of you will be able to take advantage of this offer when you are next in London.

Best wishes

Andrea Warren , International Secretariat



©Ritz

Ikka Boyd 1935-2011



Ikka Boyd, a long time member and supporter of the Society, died in March.

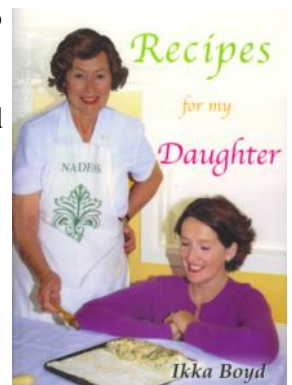
She had an unusual flair for food and wine although when she came to this country in 1960, from her native Finland to marry her husband John, she could hardly boil an egg. They lived in Haslemere where she attended Cordon Bleu classes. Her notebooks record a detailed and loving interest in food and almost immediately she began producing attractive and creative dishes. She was obviously a natural.

She and John started spending summer holidays in the wine producing regions of Europe visiting vineyards and indulging in the local cuisine. On moving to London they joined the IWFS London branch and with a partner Ikka set up a successful catering business called Victoria Cooks. Her repertoire included the cuisines of France and Scandinavia. On occasions, when the latest edition of the Good Food Guide was published, she would cater for the launch lunch for journalists. She also catered for the Finnish and other embassies as well as many private clients. They moved to Berkshire where they joined, and contributed to, the lively branch which was then chaired by Julian Jeffs QC.

Thus inspired, on moving to live near Ross on Wye, she set about encouraging an interest in food and wine in Herefordshire, which was regarded by some as a waste land. She planted a vineyard and founded the IWFS Herefordshire branch. Both continue to thrive.

For many years her daughter Karin had pestered her to record her recipes and culinary philosophy but it was only when she passed a big birthday and John said flatly, "Well, you'll never write it now", that she put pen to paper. The result was *Recipes for my Daughter* published in 2002 by Vanguard Press. It received kind reviews in the Society's magazine and elsewhere. More recently she was presented, by the Society's chairman, with the Andre Simon bronze medal for her contribution to food and wine, and she was made Life President of the Herefordshire branch.

She was renowned as a generous hostess. Characteristically, in a note written 10 years ago and long before she began to suffer from Alzheimers, she decreed that her friends should after her funeral be invited to a "slap-up" party, the menu for which she laid down. The first item was to be Champagne. Such a party was held in May at her home in Herefordshire and the many guests included the editor of Food & Wine. She was remembered in style.



John Boyd



'There is only one rule - don't wear black', those were the instructions on John Boyd's invitation. We were very honoured to be among those invited, by the Boyd family, to the memorial service and celebration of Ikka's life.

St John the Baptist Church, Upton Bishop, is a large and beautiful church much of which dates from Norman times. It was packed to capacity on May 6th with over 150 relations and friends determined to celebrate Ikka's remarkable life as she had requested. Her son-in-law painted a colourful picture of her life which was devoted to giving satisfaction to many, through good food and fellowship. Her love of France was then portrayed by a spectacular rendering of Bâiléro's Songs of the Auvergne by members of the Hereford Cathedral Choir.

At lunch the first item was indeed Champagne. Ikka's instructions as to the menu were followed to the letter. We enjoyed some excellent examples of her favourite dishes including Salmon Coulubiach, Boeuf Wellington and Pavlova, all accompanied by wine from her own vineyard.

Ikka's reputation of being a generous hostess continued beyond the grave. We all liked to think that she was with us in spirit, watching over the proceedings, making sure that everything went smoothly and above all that everybody was enjoying themselves, as she had done for many years when entertaining her friends. Her memory lives on.

Pam Brunning

IW&FS 2012 VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL



11th - 15th September 2012

CHECK THE WEBSITE NOW FOR REGISTRATION

The planning for the 2012 International Festival in Vancouver, British Columbia, has been ongoing since this gorgeous Western Canada destination was selected in the Fall of 2009. The Festival Organizing Committee (FOC) contracted last summer with Vancouver's beautiful new Fairmont Pacific Rim Hotel to serve as our headquarters, and we've been putting the actual pieces of a wonderful festival puzzle together ever since. The dates are set: Arrival at the hotel on the afternoon of Tuesday, 11 September 2012, to be followed there by an Opening Reception and Dinner. Four full days of superb meals, accompanied by the best wines of both the region and the world, along with special activities celebrating the diversity of this grand city, will take place in various locales in and around Vancouver during the following week. We will conclude with a Gala Black-tie Dinner on Saturday evening, 15 September, back at the hotel. We also are planning to offer an optional "turn-key" pre-festival cruise to Alaska and a number of optional post-festival land trips.

You can "see" festival articles, including the series titled **Vancouver Vignettes**, and other relevant information on the Society's new website, www.iwfs.org.

We expect to open registration for 200 attendees in early June 2011. Registration will be made through the IW&FS website, and payment by credit card will be handled through the site's Registration link.



The Bauschänzli in the heart of Zürich with a view of the old town.

The Zürich Branch are Proud to Present A Great Weekend in Zürich June 8 to June 10, 2012

We are pleased to invite you to a Great Weekend in Zürich. With its beautiful town, infrastructure, surrounding countryside and friendly people, Zürich is regularly rated, worldwide, as the city with the highest quality of living and this is well reflected in its wine and food.

The programme we propose combines many of the enjoyable aspects of the Zürich region. We're looking forward to accompanying you to a gala dinner in the most renowned historic guild house, a lunch at Bauschänzli followed by a cruise on Lake Zürich, a Swiss dinner in the small town of Rapperswil, and a wine tasting at a local wine museum followed by lunch at Restaurant Au, famous for the local fish specialties.....all in pleasant, mild Swiss June weather! We hope to welcome many members from around the world and assure you of a truly unforgettable Great Weekend.

Cost of participation will be CHF 720 - approx. £475 including wines, food, entertainment and local transportation.

The cost of the event programme does not include transport to Zurich or hotel accommodation.

We have agreed on a special rate in the preferred Hotel St. Gotthard at CHF 250 per double room per night.

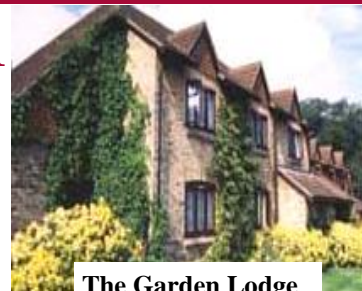
Full details and registration form can be found on the website www.iwfs.org

EAC Annual Branch Representatives Meeting & Awayday



Thursday 30th June - 1st July 2011

**Grim's Dyke Hotel,
Old Redding,
Harrow Weald,
Middlesex, HA3 6SH**



The Garden Lodge

**The EAC Annual Branch Representatives meeting will be held at 4pm on 30th June 2011
All members are welcome to attend, come along and find out how your Society is run.**

We still have a few places left for the Gourmet Dinner, Bed & Breakfast following the meeting.

The evening will commence at 7pm with a Kir Royal, followed by a five course dinner which will be choreographed by Head Chef Daren Mason, who is a Society Restaurant Award holder. Alan Gowan of Anthony Byrne Fine Wines will join us to talk us through the wines which he will select to match the menu.

Rooms, which are all en suite, are in the Garden Lodge, a few yards from the main house and are available from 2pm.

The inclusive price for Dinner, Bed and full English Breakfast will be:

£110 per head for participants sharing a double room. £142.50 per head based on single room occupancy

£67 per head Dinner only - Dress - jacket & tie.

Grim's Dyke, which is 12 miles from central London, is 15 minutes by train from Euston. The house is set in 49 acres of tranquil gardens and parkland which will be a riot of colour and a haven from the heat of central London.

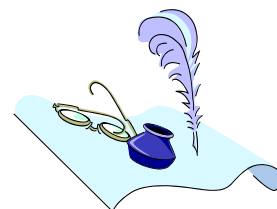
For transport options see <http://www.grimsdyke.com/grims-location.php>

Those wishing to book please send cheques immediately, made payable to **IWFS EAC** drawn on a UK bank to:

EAC Treasurer Jim Muir, The Old School House, Llanhennock, Monmouthshire, NP18 1LT.

For overseas bookings please contact: **Jim Muir: muir112@btinternet.com Tel: +44 (0)1633420278**

Readers' Letters



Dear Editor

I was interested to read the account of your visit to La Gavroche in 1973.

We too went there in 1973, and we too enjoyed the Souffle Suisse - creamily, cheesily, oozingly delicious.

Once at our table, we spent quite some time enjoying the menu and deciding what to have. A lady dining alone at the next table could not cope with our enthusiasm, and pronounced in a loud voice "This place is going off." A gentleman, also dining alone, came towards us when we reached the coffee stage. He introduced himself to us as Albert Roux saying "You are just the sort of people I like to see at my restaurant." As he brought up a chair to our table he asked a waiter to bring three brandies. The lady at the next table observed all this, to the evident satisfaction of Monsieur Roux.

A memorable evening - one of the jewels of life experience one does not forget. We were all young then, weren't we?

Josephine Jackson, Manchester Branch

Dear Editor

As an independent member I have been looking forward to the new website very much. I envisaged being able to log on and find out what events were taking place at branches all over the area but alas, it just has not happened. I click all through the branch names and nine times out of ten there is not even an 'overview' of the branch let alone any events I can book for. Am I missing something? From all the publicity I have read in Food & Wine I thought the idea with our wonderful new website was that each branch appointed a webmaster to keep their space up to date with all the details of their events, to keep members informed of everything that is going on. I know, for some reason, there is a great paucity of letters in this magazine. Does our members inability to write extend to websites as well? It is very disappointing after all the work that seems to have gone into its construction.

Chris Long, Independent Member.

Attar of Roses



By Pam Brunning



"What though youth gave love and roses, age still leaves us friends and wine"

Thomas More, (English Humanist, Statesman and Chancellor of England, 1477-1535)



Rose-picking in the Rose valley near the town of Kazanlak in Bulgaria, 1870's, engraving by an Austro-Hungarian traveller Felix Philipp Kanitz. Published in his book "Donau Bulgarien und der Balkan" ("Danubian Bulgaria and the Balkan"), Volume I, Leipzig, 1879

Over the centuries much has been written about the rose but the line between myth and fact is very often blurred. It is believed that the rose originated in Central Asia about 60 to 70 million years ago, during the Eocene epoch, and spread over the entire Northern Hemisphere. They grow wild as far north as Norway and Alaska and as far south as Mexico and North Africa, but it is said that no wild roses have ever been found, growing uncultivated, below the equator.

Forty million years ago, a rose left its imprint on a slate deposit at the Florissant Fossil Beds in Colorado, and fossils of roses from Oregon and Montana date back 35 million years. Fossils have also been found in Germany and Yugoslavia. About 500 B.C. Confucius wrote of roses growing in the Imperial Gardens and it is said that the rose gardeners of the Han dynasty (207 B.C.-A.D. 220) were so obsessed with these flowers that the emperor had to order some rose gardens ploughed up because of the need to produce food.

It is commonly believed that the Crusaders brought the rose to Europe from Asia but Jennifer Potter in her new book 'The Rose', which took five years to compile, refutes this theory and believes that it was more likely to have arrived

with the Moors during their sojourn in Spain. She also rebuts the stories of the Empress Josephine's wonderful rose garden at Malmaison. She maintains, 'she never had a rose garden at Malmaison' but that it was planted as a feature long after Josephine's reign'. In some parts of the world in the seventeenth century roses, rose water and oil were in such high demand that they were considered legal tender. They were used to barter in the markets and for the payment of taxes which the common people had to make to royalty. Cleopatra adored roses and was convinced of the romantic powers of their perfume. In an attempt to seduce Anthony she covered the palace floor knee deep in petals to welcome him home from the wars.

"As she talks, her lips breathe spring roses: I was Chloris, who am now called Flora." Ovid, Roman poet.



Chloris is said to have created the first rose. Walking one day in her garden, she came upon a lifeless nymph. She decided to change the girl into a flower to preserve her beauty. Chloris beseeched Aphrodite for help, and the Goddess of Love was kind and gave the nymph a portion of her beauty; Dionysus, the God of Wine, then gave a drop of nectar to give her a pleasurable fragrance, and The Three Graces gave her allure, brilliance and elation. Zephyrus came and blew a clearing in the clouds so that Apollo, the Sun God, could shine upon the nymph and cause her to bloom. And so the Rose was born and was immediately crowned the Queen of Flowers. This time of cooperation by eight Gods is immortalized in the rose.

It takes approximately 60,000 roses to produce just one ounce of rose oil, about two and a half dozen roses to make just one drop. Seventy per-cent of the world's attar of rose is produced in one river valley in Bulgaria from *rosa damascena*, the damask rose. *Rosa centifolia*, the cabbage rose, is also used for attar but is more commonly grown in India, Morocco, France and more recently China has begun producing rose oil from *centifolia*.

The Bulgarians maintain their oil is the best in the world because flowers cultured in The Valley of the Roses enjoy a perfect location and climate, the gentle sunshine, ensures minimum release of the aromatic ingredients from the flowers. The wax film on the petals of *rosa damascena* remains thin because the plant does not need to strive to protect itself from strong solar radiation as do roses in hotter climates. This leads to a lower content of stearoptenes (waxes and solids) in Bulgarian rose oil. For centuries, Bulgarian women known for their small hands, have harvested the delicate blooms in the darkest hours of the night. Modern research has proved that as soon as the sun starts to rise it evaporates the volatile oils and up to 59% can be lost. Growers that pick late can lose over half their crop. A true attar is a perfumed oil made from flower petals distilled in water using low heat and pressure. It is a very labor-intensive process, requiring great talent, skill and patience. It can take over two weeks to make a small batch of attar. Anything from twenty-five to three-hundred and fifty pounds of rose petals are distilled at one time. As soon as collected they are placed inside a deg - a round copper still - from the deg a long pipe leads downward to a copper receptacle that contains sandalwood oil. Water is added to the deg, the lid is sealed down and it is placed over a fire to heat slowly. As the steam collects, it condenses and flows into the receiving vessel. The fire must be constantly monitored to keep the correct temperature as too much heat will burn the flowers and if too much pressure is created it can explode. The low heat and pressure preserves the fragile fragrant oils better than the hotter steam distillation method used to obtain other essential oils. The receiving vessel sits in a pool of water and is continually rotated to blend the oils and keep them from overheating. Throughout the day, the master distiller monitors the deg and receiving vessel by feeling them with his hands and listening to the sounds from inside. If necessary a wet towel is rubbed over the vessel to keep the temperature down. At the end of the day, the distillation is stopped and, overnight, as the oil cools down the water separates out. In the morning, the water is poured off from the oil and put back into the still. Freshly picked flowers are added, and the process begins again. This process will be repeated for fifteen to twenty days, until the sandalwood oil is completely saturated with the fragrant oil of the petals.

In some parts of the world archaeologists have found degs that are at least five-thousand years old. Following the seasons of the flowers in India, traditional attar-makers travelled with their degs all over India to make their attars on-the-spot. Even today, rural areas often lack good roads to quickly transport the harvested flowers, and a few traditional attar-makers still travel with their degs to be close to the harvest. Their equipment has changed little in the last five thousand years. These traditional attar-makers are highly skilled and their oils fetch a high price. When the process is complete the distillation water which is called hydrosol is sold as rose-water. The key flavour compounds that contribute to the distinctive scent of rose oil are beta-damascenone, beta-damascone, beta-ionone, and rose oxide. The Beta-damascenone presence and quantity is considered as the marker for a quality rose oil. These compounds exist in less than 1% quantity of rose oil but they make up for slightly more than 90% of the odor content due to their low odor detection thresholds.

Rose oil is mainly used in aromatherapy and perfumes and unless you can verify that the supplier has certified their rose oil for food use following the standards required from the country of production, it is not advisable to use rose oil or rose water for culinary purposes. If the supplier can verify his products for culinary use they make interesting ingredients in a diverse range of dishes.

One of the great things about roses is that they taste the same as they smell so when choosing roses to use in the kitchen forget the paralysed florists' offerings or your big blowsy hybrid teas. The Gallicas, are some of the oldest known garden roses with dark velvet blooms and rich scents but damask, floribunda or moss roses can all be used, picked fresh from the garden in the early morning when they are dewy and redolent with scent. Rose water and powdered roses are used often in Indian and Middle Eastern cooking. Rose water is sprinkled on many meat dishes, while rose powder is added to sauces. The most popular use, however, is in the flavouring of desserts such as ice cream, jam, Turkish delights, rice pudding, yogurt etc. and chicken with rose is a popular dish in Persian cuisine. Western cookery today does not make so much use of roses, rose water or oil but it was a popular ingredient in olden days and continued to be common well into the Renaissance.



This 10 litre handhammered copper still has a strengthened bottom and is suitable for using on an open fire for the extraction of essential oils.

Hartmut Haas www.potstillmakers.com



AN HISTORICAL APPRECIATION OF SWEET WHITE WINES

*Jeffrey Benson attempts to unravel and explain
the mysteries of this complex subject - Part 1*



Chateau Yquem vineyards

More than the dry wines, which are relatively independent of one another, sweet wines have a common history, which is linked to world political and economic fluctuations.

As with many other cultures, the traditions of French vine growing originated in the eastern Turkish highlands, and spread from there down to the warm areas of Syria, Greece and southern Italy. The vines of antiquity produced wines of a high alcoholic content, often sweet, but lacking the acidity and mineral salts needed for preservation, and furthermore, they were kept in heavy pottery jars which did not allow for racking. Various methods were tried in an attempt to enrich and stabilise these wines, even the adding of water to them before they were drunk. They tried adding salt, resin, salves and various spices, sugaring or sweetening with honey, also concentration by boiling - in other words every known trick.

The Middle Ages produced very ordinary wines, which also fermented quickly. At a time when sugar was unknown and fruits poorly grown, people liked wines which we would now consider being defective and which contained natural residual sugar (thereby giving rise to the traditional sweet wines of the country). The only mediaeval wine worthy to be called a great wine, on account of its richness and maturity, was Cyprus wine, which was golden in colour and sweet. The method used to produce this wine, by means of straining, was famous in the 13th century. This method, which utilised the concentration of sugar and mineral salts in the grapes by drying them in the sun, was handed down from the Knights Templar in the Holy Land

After the fall of Constantinople and the Greek Archipelago to the Turks in the 15th century, the tradition of making sweet wines was resumed in Venice, with a residual production still continuing in some Turkish territories, for instance Samos. Under the name Malmsey (derived from Monemvasia, the last Venetian colony in Greece)

Muscat vines began to grow from Dalmatia to Sardinia. Today's Italian appellation, Soave perpetuates the tradition of this old Venetian viticulture, although the wine has now become dry, with the exception of the Passito appellation.

The Turkish advance in the 16th century, and the decline of Venice and Italy, meant that the production of these luxury wines was pushed towards the west and North. Muscat vines spread to Spain (Malaga, Alicante, Perpignan), and then to France (Frontignan) as far as the Bordeaux region. (Muscat de St Cricq was produced near Sauternes up until the end of the 18th century). In Hungary the Tokay vineyards adopted the method of filtering and straining through straw but kept the local vine stock, which, in the colder climate, led to the discovery of and use of the "pourriture noble", a fungus, which dehydrates the grape into a shrivelled raisin thereby, giving high sugar content. This gave the rich variety of aromas after the ageing process (as produced in the vineyards of the Rakoczy princes at the beginning of the 17th century), and a sweeter wine (Eszencia).

In Italy the invention of "mutage" (arresting the fermentation by the addition of brandy) changed the viticulture of luxury wines from the beginning of the 16th century onwards. The use of additives in wine then continued and this development culminated in Piedmont, in the 19th century, with the modern aperitif industry.

Spain and Portugal remained more moderate as far as these processes were concerned, and wine modifications, other than the addition of alcohol, were limited to the more natural actions of ageing or oxidation by bacterial action (Sherry, Madeira, and Port in the 17th and 18th centuries).

Grapes, laid out to dry





Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries the Dutch and German traders in France continued to add brandy, or other forms of alcohol, to all kinds of sweet wines, for instance Frontignan, Bergerac, Anjou and Langon (the future Sauternes). During a visit to Hamburg a Marquis de Lur-Saluces tasted some of his

Preignac wines and found them to be unrecognisable, but approved of the merchants' skill at reinforcing wines. This sort of treatment could also be extended to red wines, and the Russians gave the name "Kaourskaie" to a fortified sweet red wine, which was sometimes used as a tonic. The Lillet family still continues these processes at Podensac, near Sauternes, as a small concern making aperitifs based on sweet wines.

The last Turkish invasion of Hungary at the end of the 17th century disrupted the production and distribution of Tokay, and various replacements began to appear. Johannisberg in Rhine adopted the use of "pourriture noble", and further to the South, Arbois and Colmar continued the use of filtering through straw well into the 18th century. The practise of picking grapes at different stages which was already being used for many of the great dry white wines, was now systematically adopted for wines made from the "pourriture noble" method.

The rapid development of Northern and Eastern Europe favoured the spread of Rhenish and Tokay wines, and although the fashion of the day meant that these sweet wines commanded high prices, the addition of alcohol, sugar or blended wines was forbidden. Faced with prices that were often excessive - in 1788 Thomas Jefferson was outraged to see a Colmar wine which was twenty times the price of his best Frontignan, which itself was dearer than Chateau d'Yquem of the day - Northern merchants spread the Rhenish methods to the various other vine stock which would be affected by the "pourriture noble".

Botrytis cinerea on Semillon grapes in Sauternes



At the end of the 18th century merchants seemed to give up adding brandy to sweet Bordeaux wines, thereby leading to the spread of the more stable white wines (white Graves). In contrast the Sauternes region is distinguished by the fact that the development of its techniques (fining, racking, sulphuring and more severe pruning and picking) meant that it could often obtain sweet wines, which were equally stable, by natural methods (Chateau Suduiraut 1784, Chateau Yquem 1808). It was not easy to effect the introduction of Sauternes wines into the commercial market of the best wines, affected as it was by the fashion and political trends of the day, and the recourse to less expensive techniques explains the various 'rediscovery' dates (Yquem 1808 or 1815, Chateau La Tour Blanche 1836, Yquem 1847). The promotional effort in Sauternes resulted in the appellation spreading, after the Revolution, to neighbouring communes, and even to England where the different sweet Rhine wines (Hock) and Muscats (Malmsey) gained popularity.

The French Revolution impoverished the area of the 'great' white wines. All Sauternes chateaux suffered and many noble families were bankrupted or extinguished as early as 1794. War then halted trade, prices were frozen arbitrarily, and by the end, people were even compelled to uproot the vines and replace them with food crops.

When the situation began to settle down under Napoleon, trade resumed and the fame of the great vineyards returned. In many cases the new owners reinstated their earlier names, a practise which established the names that exist to this day. A few of the older families recovered part of their possessions and often grouped vineyards together through inter-marriage. Several branches of the Lur-Saluces family inter-married and established one of the most extensive land and vineyard estates of the time. These included most of the vineyards in the Sauternes commune.

Jeffrey Benson has been in the wine trade for 35 years.

He meets producers worldwide as a buyer and wine maker, conveying his knowledge through his lectures and consultancy work. He was involved in the formation of 'Wines of Canada' and was the only non-North American judge to join their tasting panel at a three day event evaluating over 200 wines to determine medal winners.

While advising the wine makers of Zimbabwe on the correct blends required for export, in 1993/4 Jeffrey was instrumental in forming the Zimbabwe Vintners Alliance. After his four years of negotiating with the E.U. Zimbabwe was registered as a wine producing country, enabling the three vineyards to export to the UK.

For twelve years, Jeffrey ran the annual evening wine school for the Society. He continues to lecture and adjudicate the Wine and Spirit Education Trust examinations and has written and contributed to seven books and many articles on food, wine and travel.

Part 2 of this article will follow in September



The first time I tasted something so special that I did not want to let it go was, as a very small child, eating freshly picked soft fruit with sugar and cream on top. I remember sitting outside on the door step in the sunshine, the delicious taste and scent, how pretty it all looked in my bowl. This might seem a very simple thought but it was an experience that involved all my senses. It was a very strong first impression which was all about seasonality. Later in life a similar experience occurred sitting on the harbour in Marseille and enjoying one of the most distinctive dishes that I have ever tried to encapsulate. It was a boulibase, it was the pure strength of flavour and also atmosphere that made it incredible, to this day, whenever I make a soup de poisson or boulibase I always try to conjure up that flavour.

My mother was my first mentor in the kitchen. I was very fortunate to be brought up with someone who loved food and growing things, so my understanding and my enthusiasm started from that. We grew our own vegetables plus we had rabbits, geese and chickens. I remember digging up the new potatoes and smelling them, the smell of new potatoes when they have just come out of the earth still enthralls me. Mother inspired me to want to cook. I would enter competitions at the local fair and win with my scones made with milk that was invariably off. It made incredible drop scones and no one understood what the unusual taste was. That period was really important for me as that was when my love of food really started.

My early career was as an interior designer but my heart was not in it so, realising cooking was my absolute passion, I changed direction. I started a business doing directors lunches and from there went on from being a cook to a chef. I loved it so much I never thought of it as career, it just developed because of my love and passion for food. I was living in Cornwall at the time and Jean-Christophe Novelli asked me to come and work for him at the Nansidwell Hotel near Falmouth. I worked my backside off for him and he really appreciated it. He was just starting out and was fantastic. I told him I had no formal training, he said not to worry, 'I'm going to teach you so much'. He was such a great teacher, a hard taskmaster but a very kind man.



After moving to London I wrote to Pierre Koffman at La Tante Claire and he offered me a week's unpaid work and after that he offered me a job making the breads, pastries and petit fours. I was delighted, he was such an inspiration. He encouraged me to push myself forward, to work hard for a man like that is never a chore, exhausting yes, but never a chore. Every night after work I'd write down everything I had learnt, drawing pictures, putting ideas down, what he did and said. Even now I always carry a notebook with me and if I see something interesting I write it down.

I dislike cooking out of season produce. It's wrong and we should look forward to the seasonality of food. My experience running the cookery school Amhuinnsuidhe Castle on the Isle of Harris was such a fantastic opportunity because there was an abundance of fresh food. We had our own lamb and mutton, our own venison, grouse, local snipe and loads of mackerel. I had divers bringing me fresh scallops every week, and baskets of langoustines, sea urchins, dog whelks and razor fish. It was a foodies dream and I was in heaven. The trick was learning to be ready for any inevitability up there, we might not have the boats in for a week because of the weather so my dry store cupboard had to be prepared for all eventualities.

I had five years at Amhuinnsuidhe running the cookery school, and when the Bulmer family decided to sell the castle I was given the school and decided to move everything lock stock and barrel. That is when I was invited to Swinton Park. At the time the kitchen was a squash court but I could see the potential and I designed the kitchen in the same layout as Amhuinssuidhe Castle which had worked so beautifully. I insisted on a central aisle so that people can cook together and feel part of a team.

The TV career actually started before I went to Amhuinssuidhe. I was given a role on the BBC Food and Drink show and used to be the trouble-shooting chef going round doing the jobs that no one else would do. I didn't get paid for it because I had never been on telly before but it was fun. A little while later I made 'Castle Cook' with channel 5 which I absolutely adored. I just loved performing and I was hooked.

My book is designed as it is because I wanted to show people how to do techniques properly. It was inspired by all the questions I had been asked by students over the years. I have based it on 20 basic techniques with variations for the procedures, plus 10 recipes using the techniques in one way or another. I hope it will help a lot of people to begin to cook. I wish I had had a book like this to help me when I started out.

I learned early on in life from books and I had many people I admired like Michele Guerard and Roger Verge who inspired me. There are some brilliant chefs around today like Andrew Fairlie, Marcus Wareing, Michael Caines. And why? Because they are so brilliant and dedicated to what they do and they have such passion for cooking, as I do.

SUMMER MINESTRONE WITH PESTO

Serves 4

This is the perfect summer soup. On a very hot day try serving it cold for a refreshing starter.

12 asparagus spears
4 tablespoons olive oil, plus extra for drizzling
4 large spring onions, sliced
250g new potatoes, scraped and cut into small dice
500g peas in their pods, shelled or 150g frozen peas
125g French beans, topped and tailed, then cut into short lengths
About 1 litre vegetable stock
1 kg broad beans in their pods, shelled
1 quantity of Pesto (see below)
2 tablespoons chopped mint
2 tablespoons torn basil
sea salt and black pepper

1 Trim the asparagus by breaking off the lower woody part of each stem.

Cut the stems into short lengths, reserving the tips. Set aside.

2 Heat the olive oil in a large pan, add the spring onions and cook gently until softened.

Add the potatoes, peas, French beans and asparagus stalks (but not the tips) and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes.

Add enough vegetable stock to cover and then bring to the boil. Simmer for 15 minutes or until the potatoes are tender.

3 Cook the broad beans in boiling water for 3 minutes, until tender, then drain and slip off the thin green skins. Boil the asparagus tips for one minute, then drain and add them to the soup with the broad beans. Season to taste with salt and pepper, remove from the heat and stir in the pesto. Adjust the seasoning if necessary, scatter with the chopped mint and basil, then drizzle with olive oil before serving.



I have given the traditional method of making pesto using a pestle and mortar but if you want a smoother mixture, you can make it in a food processor instead.

PESTO

Serves 4

100g basil leaves
1 teaspoon coarse sea salt
1 garlic clove, finely chopped
30g pine nuts
50g Parmesan cheese, finely grated
150ml olive oil
Sea salt and black pepper

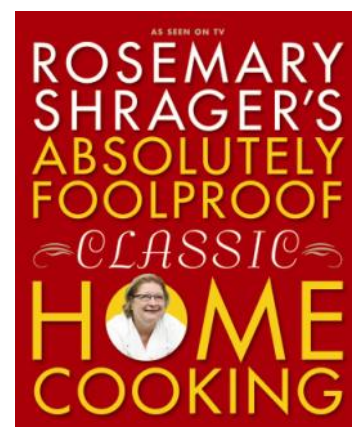
Put some of the basil leaves in a mortar with the salt and crush them with the pestle. Gradually add the remaining basil leaves, working them with the pestle, then add the garlic and pound until well incorporated. Add the pine nuts and pound to a rough paste. Mix in the Parmesan and then gradually mix in the olive oil. Season to taste.



Rosemary has written three cookery books in recent years. One is based on her Castle Cook cookery school, and one is based on her School for Cooks TV series. Her most recent is:

Rosemary Shrager's Absolutely Foolproof Classic Home Cooking

Published by Hamlyn at £18.99 www.octopusbooks.co.uk



APPLE AND PEAR CAKE

I like to serve this warm, with whipped cream or ice cream, as a lunchtime dessert.

75g unsalted butter , plus extra for greasing
150g caster sugar
2 eggs, lightly beaten
125g plain flour
125g self-raising flour
½ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda
1 teaspoon cream of tartar
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 tablespoons apple juice
2 tart apples, preferably Granny Smiths, peeled, cored and cut into small dice
2 pears, peeled, cored and cut into small dice
2 tablespoons pine nuts
1 tablespoon granulated sugar



- 1 Grease a 23cm cake tin and line the base and sides with baking parchment. Using a wooden spoon or an electric beater, beat the butter and sugar together in a bowl until light and fluffy. Beat in the eggs a little at a time.
 - 2 Sift in the flours, bicarbonate of soda, cream of tartar and cinnamon and fold them in with a large metal spoon. Fold in the apple juice and then the diced fruit.
 - 3 Transfer the mixture to the prepared cake tin, smooth the top and sprinkle with the pine nuts and granulated sugar. Place in an oven preheated to 160°C/Gas Mark 3 and bake for about 1 hour, until the cake is well risen and a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean.
- Turn out on to a wire rack and leave to cool.

©Rosemary Shrager



A 'Mal' Lunch at a 'Mal' House

They say 'there is no such thing as a free lunch', but we can hope that sometimes, in these recessionary times, a good cheap one will come our way.

A member friend told us of this special offer. They had tried it and said it wasn't bad and it was the best cup of coffee they had been served for a long time, so we decided to give it a go. Two courses, a bottle of wine and coffee for two people for £30 +10% service.

We knew the venue of old, a Great Western Hotel, a beautiful building where, in our youth, we would dance the night away in the grand ballroom to the strains of some wonderful dance bands. Oh, how hath the mighty fallen. Decorated entirely in black and dark

brown the atmosphere was oppressive in the small partitioned off rooms. The ballroom we learnt had been turned into bedrooms. The restaurant was so dark that several business men requested a window seat so that they could see to read but they were all reserved

When we asked what the wine was we were told, Spanish, 'vino tinto or vino blanco'. Say no more, if they paid more than £3 a bottle for it they were robbed.

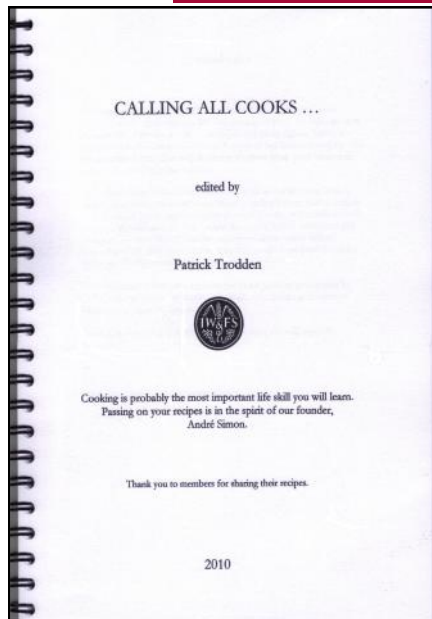
My salad of roasted beetroot with Barkham Blue cheese and hazelnuts arrived minus the Barkham Blue and had to be sent back for the addition of a few crumbs of cheese, most would have not even noticed in the dark. Roast butternut squash soup was served au naturel - accompanying bread would be £2.45.

'Onglet steak with fries' the menu said, as a died-in-the-wool carnivore, I had never heard of an onglet steak. "Ah, you see madam," our Polish waiter explained running his hand down the front of his chest, "it is szz bit at szz front of the beast." "Ah," I said, "the flank - is it braised slowly to tenderise it?". "Oh no madam, it izz cooked very quickly and it izz very tender." I decided to take a gamble, our other main course was mussels so I thought I can sit and chew while the mussels are being dealt with, no problem. My three generous portions of onglet and a large pot of mussels duly arrived. The steak was just as expected, decidedly chewy but very flavoursome. The mussels had good size shells but the poor little chaps inside hadn't had any sustenance for years. Many of the shells were empty but we anticipated the meats swimming around in the sauce at the bottom but no, there were three times more shells than there were meats. By this time my jaws were aching so I passed my last piece of steak over to make up for the lack of mussels.

A large cup of very hot, strong coffee was indeed excellent. On inspecting the facilities I decided they would not be out of place in a brothel, with the black silk quilted walls and red counters. When I commented on the fact I was quizzed as to how I knew what a brothel would look like.

As 'Mal' translates as 'bad', while 'maison' is house it is certainly an interesting choice of name for a hotel group. Maybe it was not far off the mark, this one was really 'mal'. One could say it lived up to its name but hardly the way to do a promotional drive!

A RECIPE WITH A STORY TO TELL



Diana was the Roman Goddess of wild animals and the hunt. The sister of Apollo, she was praised for her strength, beauty, athletic prowess and hunting skills. In the 19th century sauces “a la Diane” were dedicated to the goddess. They were composed of cream, truffles and ample amounts of black pepper and originated as an accompaniment to venison.

The first mention of Sauce Diane, (as opposed to a la Diane), comes from Auguste Escoffier in 1907 but his version added hard cooked egg white to the a la Diane formula. The dish, as we know it today, was all the rage in the top dining rooms of New York and London in the 50's and 60's.

This recipe and story is kindly supplied by Patrick Trodden of Manchester branch who reproduced it in the book ‘Calling All Cooks’, a compendium of members’ recipes which he edited for the branch. The first print run sold out and the next one will be available in the autumn from the Manchester branch secretary.



Diana the Huntress by Gaston Casimir Saint-Pierre 1833 - 1916

Steak Diane

Flambé cooking was popular in the Edwardian era, it is a method of cooking that involves the use of alcohol, and exploits the property of this substance to burn at a low temperature.

Spirit or fortified wine is added to the pan; it slowly begins to vaporize, then is ignited.

The process removes most of the alcohol leaving behind a distinctive concentrated flavour. Brandy is commonly used and if cooking fish I like to use Pernod, Rum in Creole cookery and so on.

Flaming is usually carried out at the end of cooking as a piece of restaurant showmanship.

When Prince Charles & Lady Diana were married I was appearing on Good Morning America in Los Angeles, the host was Cindy Garvey and Marvin Hamlisch provided the music.

The Steak Diane that I cooked was a huge success and I have demonstrated this dish to many audiences over the years, it has a unique flavour!

SERVES TWO

2 x 150gr (6oz) fillet steaks
25gr (1oz) butter
Dessert spoon olive oil
Teaspoon Dijon mustard
1 shallot, finely chopped
50gr (2oz) mushrooms, sliced
point garlic
peppermill
dash Tabasco
dash Worcestershire sauce
good sprig chopped parsley
pinch fine herbs (optional)
measure of brandy
125ml (¼pt) double cream



Prepare steaks by placing between two sheets of polythene paper. With the aid of a mallet or rolling pin, bat the steaks until they are thin.

Chop the shallot. Finely slice the mushroom caps. Chop the parsley.

Ensure all ingredients are to hand before you commence the cooking of your steaks.

Put oil and butter into a pan and smear mustard over the steaks.

Add the shallots and mushrooms to the pan and cook for a few minutes without colouring.

Add a little finely chopped garlic, as much as will sit on the point of a knife.

Place the steaks in the pan and cook as required.

Add a dash of Worcestershire and Tabasco sauce and a sprinkling of fine herbs.

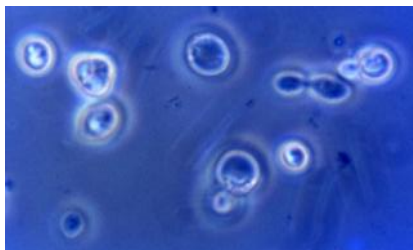
Tilt the pan, add the brandy and flambé. Pour in the cream and shake the pan, stirring until the sauce coats the back of the spoon.

Sprinkle with chopped parsley and serve.

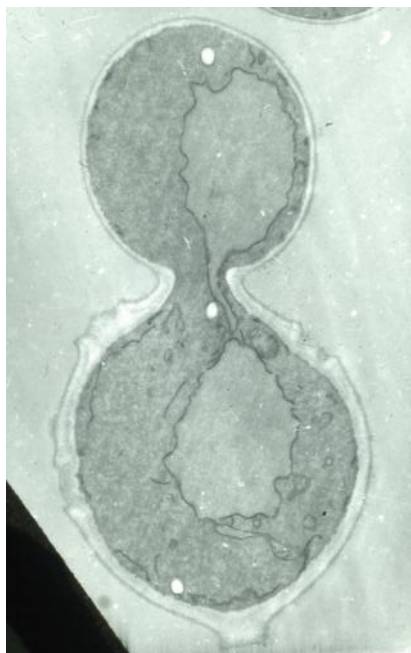
Patrick Trodden

The Answers Lie in the Yeasts

Photos 1 & 2



Phase contrast photo of a Sauternes yeast showing stages of budding. An ascus from sexual reproduction has three of its four ascospores visible.



Electron micrograph of a section through a budding mother cell (note its own birth scar at its base and three bud scars). The central vacuole is obvious but the nucleus and chromosomes are not visible.

By Dr Bernard Lamb

Jt is wine yeasts which actually make wine, turning sugary, acid grape juice (the must) into wine. They do much more than convert fermentable sugars – sucrose, glucose and fructose – into ethyl alcohol and carbon dioxide gas. These brilliant chemical factories catalyse reactions using enzymes inside the cells, on their membranes and excreted into the surrounds. They convert precursor compounds from grapes into many flavour and aroma components, making hundreds of desirable products in the finished wine, often in extremely small amounts but having appreciable effects on wine quality.

Many bacteria, wild yeasts, moulds and other fungi relish the nutrient-rich juice, so the winemaker has to control the competition between organisms to favour the wine yeast, the single-celled fungus *Saccharomyces* (meaning sugar fungus) *cerevisiae* (waxy, from the colony appearance on solid media). What were considered as separate wine yeast species, such as *Saccharomyces ellipsoideus*, *S. bayanus*, *S. rosei* and *S. oviformis*, are now considered varieties of *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*, with *ellipsoideus* being the most frequent.

The cells are ovoid, about 5 µm in diameter and 5 to 9 µm long, so 5,000 yeast cells side by side would occupy about one inch. They divide asexually by budding (see photos 1 and 2), with the daughter bud growing as large as the mother cell before separating. Doubling time is about 4 to 8 hours in must but much faster in lab culture. If starved, cells can go into the sexual cycle, producing four tough ascospores which can survive unfavourable conditions. The normal vegetative cells have 16 pairs of chromosomes with about 6,100 genes (humans, 23 pairs, 25,000 genes); the genome was sequenced in 1996.

Most wineries use cultivated yeasts. Wineries using 'wild' yeasts are usually using ones which have been through the winery many times, with 'natural oenological selection' for the right properties. A good wine yeast can produce 8 to 15% alcohol, work at a pH of 2.9 to 3.7, give a

good flavour and bouquet, and must not autolyse (break down) rapidly as that can give off-flavours. It must resist the sulphur dioxide used by the winemaker to keep down bacteria, moulds and bad yeasts, and should settle out well at the end of fermentation.

Active dried yeasts are rehydrated in water at 35 to 40°C and used at about 25 grams per 100 litres. One wants initial fast growth of the wine yeast to outgrow competing micro-organisms, and yeast grows much faster with oxygen than without, although with oxygen it produces water and carbon dioxide from sugars, only making alcohol once the oxygen is used up.

As nutrients, yeasts need sugars, available nitrogen (from grape amino acids and added inorganic sources such as diammonium phosphate), phosphate, magnesium, potassium, trace elements and vitamins, especially biotin, pantothenic acid (B₅) and thiamine (B₁). These should be present in sufficient amounts from good ripe grapes, but deficiencies can affect wine quality and cause 'stuck' fermentations. During fermentation, yeasts can reach concentrations equivalent to more than 100,000 million cells in the volume of one 75 cl wine bottle. At the start of a malolactic fermentation (converting malic acid to the less tart lactic acid), there are about one million lactic acid bacteria per millilitre, rising rapidly.

The several hundred different cultivated wine yeasts have quite different properties as regards to alcohol tolerance, aroma- and flavour-production, optimum fermentation conditions, etc. Some resist 100 ppm sulphur dioxide, others only 25. Some are 'killer strains', producing toxins which kill sensitive yeasts, but others are immune.

In New Zealand, a winemaker showed me boxes of different wine yeasts, saying: "For Sauvignon blanc, we use that one for tropical fruit characters and that one for grassy/herbaceous characters. We want complexity, so different vats have different yeasts, and we make a blend." A winemaker from Adelaide Hills, Australia, said that he could tell that his competitors all use the same cultivated yeast for Sauvignon blanc as their wines smell so similar; he uses wild yeasts and gets a different aroma profile.

Wild yeasts are less reliable than cultivated ones, and different ones could predominate in different years. Cultivated ones were initially produced by isolating single cells from grapes and wineries, growing up and testing the resulting colonies. In the 1990s there was more focused breeding, with crossing and obtaining mutants. There is now genetic engineering but by 2010 only two genetically manipulated strains had been approved for use in the USA. One is ML01, which has been given genes from the malolactic fermentation bacterium, so that the yeast can do the malolactic fermentation itself during the alcoholic fermentation.

Unless the must is sterilised, wild yeasts often start fermentation even if cultivated ones are used. For example, white wine fermentations are often started by yeasts *Kloeckera* and *Torulopsis*. These produce alcohol but are inhibited by about 4% alcohol (and sulphur dioxide if added), then *Saccharomyces* takes over.

For bottles of still wine with residual sugar, one has to stop refermentation, e.g., by sterile filtration (0.45 µm pores) into sterile bottles, or Pasteurisation (heating to 55 to 60°C, although that can affect fine flavours: Blue Nun had 5 minutes at 59°C). Chemicals such as potassium sorbate plus sulphur dioxide may be used. High sugar and/or high alcohol levels also inhibit fermentation. Where one wants refermentation in bottle for a sparkling wine which is already nutrient-depleted, dry and about 10% alcohol, one adds sugar, yeast nutrients such as diammonium phosphate, and a special yeast which can cope with those conditions.

It is important to select yeasts which do not produce off-flavours such as volatile acidity (ethyl acetate), acetaldehyde or certain organic sulphur compounds or hydrogen sulphide (bad egg smell). Such chemicals occur normally in wines and are no problem in very small amounts.

Increasingly, young wines are being left on the lees for longer than before. A white Burgundy might be left on the lees (consisting of dead yeasts, grape fragments, tartrates, etc.) for months, perhaps with stirring (*bâtonnage*), while sparkling wines may be left several years in yeast contact in the bottle (photos 3 and 4). Yeast autolysis contributes nutrients to remaining live yeasts, and secondary flavours and aromas, including fruity esters, and adds to 'mouthfeel'. Some wines even have yeast autolysis products added to them, or yeast cell walls.

Consumers expect star-bright wines, so all yeasts have to be removed by settling, filtration, or fining with agents such as egg white, casein, bentonite, gelatine or silicic acid. Even when all micro-organisms are removed, chemical reactions continue in wine, for example, fruity esters forming between various organic acids and various alcohols, or being lost by hydrolysis. As with fermentation by yeasts, what happens on storage is strongly influenced by temperature, oxidation/reduction status and acidity.

Wine yeasts are far more important than most drinkers think. They do not get the respect they deserve.



Roederer Crystal champagne after the secondary fermentation in bottle. The yeast deposit looks pink and has not yet been shaken down into the neck.



Castellblanch Cava, Penedes. Bottles neck-down in freezing solution after *remuage* and before automated disgorging to get rid of the yeast.

Dispatches From the Fairest Cape

By Martin Fine

Solms
Delta

I suppose we can thank King Louis XIV of France, who, in his regal wisdom, set off a chain of events in 1685. You see Louis's grandfather, King Henry IV, a much wiser and tolerant king, by issuing the Edict of Nantes in 1598, granted religious freedom throughout France. Urged by Rome, Louis, in 1685, revoked the Edict which resulted in thousands of Protestants, not to mention Jews, having to flee France.

Many fled to Holland and it was here that the Dutch East India Company, the *Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* or VOC, saw an opportunity. These canny Dutch offered the Calvinist Protestants – we shall now refer to them as Huguenots – free passage to begin a new life at the Cape Station (not train).

So in 1688, 176 Huguenots arrived and were given a large valley – Oliphantshoek – Elephants Corner, to settle. Yes, elephants were really there in those days. Over the years, more Huguenots arrived bringing with them the knowledge of viticulture. The valley soon became known as *Le Coin Français* and eventually Franschhoek, now the gourmet capital of Africa! All thanks to good old King Louis XIV of France. Not that anyone speaks French in the valley.

Today, the population of Franschhoek numbers some 13,969 persons – another baby was born last Monday. The seasoned traveller of course knows there are more gourmet establishments and hectares of vineyards per resident than anywhere on the planet.

My peregrinations around Franschhoek permit my palate to encounter many exciting tastes and flavours but each time I gravitate to one very special place Solms Delta and, unlike the rest, it does not even have a French sounding name!

Through their wine, cuisine, music and museum, Solms-Delta's mission is to embrace and celebrate South Africa. Their range of wines celebrates a partnership between Mark Solms and British philanthropist Richard Astor and the estate's historically disadvantaged residents, who each control one third of the modern-day Delta estate.

From the profits, the farm residents enjoy new, refurbished and comfortable homes, and social programmes that have greatly improved their health, education and general quality of life.

The estate's **Museum van de Caab** houses a treasury of artefacts unearthed at the estate and is a living testament to all who lived and worked there over the centuries; the musical heritage programme - **Music van de Caab** preserves and celebrates the joyous, resilient and defiant musical traditions of the Cape winelands.

But let's get down to the issue at stake – genuine Cape Cuisine.

Anyone for Cape *snoek* velouté, *vinkel* curry scented fishcake croutons, tumeric *bokkom bruinsalie*, mayo roasted apricots and a green peppercorn *Gemoedsrus* sauce; Braised venison with *gestoofde rooikool*, *witwortel* and *soetpatat* emulsion rounded off with traditional *melkert*, served with *koeksister* and vanilla ice-cream? If so, visit **Fyndraai Restaurant** situated on the Solms-Delta Wine Estate and discover what this untranslatable word actually means.

The cuisine, like its adventurous wines and atmospheric farmstead, lives up to the Solms-Delta claim of being proudly *Hiervandaan* ('from this place'). From the glass floor affording a view of the archaeological substructure of a 1740 wine cellar to the innovative menu uniting European, Asian and African flavours in a fusion of tradition and creativity.

Afrikaner boerekos, with its strong 'Cape Malay' (slave) influences, are blended with ingredients favoured by the Khoi nomads who lived in the Franschhoek Valley thousands of years ago. All appetisingly plated for maximum eye and taste appeal. Guided wine farm tours expose visitors to more than award-winning wines and superb food. Led primarily by farm residents, the tours offer rare personal insight into the vineyards, farm workers' lives, and the cultural heritage of Solms-Delta and the surrounding Cape Winelands.





No visit to Franschhoek is complete without a visit to the Huguenot's memorial, completed in 1945. The three high arches symbolizes the Holy Trinity, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. On top of the arches is the sun of righteousness and above that, the cross of their Christian faith. The central female figure personifies religious freedom with a bible in her one hand and broken chain in the other.

The estate offers nine innovative wines in two ranges, Solms-Delta and Solms-Astor, the former with varying quantities of desiccated (vine clamped and dried) grapes to create wines with different intensities and distinctive styles.

In keeping with the estate's rich heritage, all the wines have names which commemorate historical links; the latter - fun, accessible and price-friendly wines were inspired by the estate's involvement in reviving the traditional folk music of the Cape.

The wines reflect Richard Astor's love of music and his dislike of pomposity. Their simpler style is achieved with the use of undesiccated grapes.

Solms-Delta... so much more than a wine estate. If you're interested in more information about Solms Delta contact www.solms-delta.co.za orders@solms-delta.co.za

"But what about the Food," I hear you say. "This magazine is about gastronomie, not history and architecture." "Doucement, I am in a French mood and, as we all know, good food cannot be rushed. The last time I told you all about *Struthio Camelus* – the largest bird in the world – ostrich – in case you have forgotten. This time it is a very special South African dish – waterblommetjie. "What?" I hear you mumble!

Waterblommetjies are wild lilies which grow in Cape ponds. Outside of SA they are available frozen or canned.

INGREDIENTS:

800g - 1 kg stewing lamb
1 chopped onion & 4 cloves crushed garlic
200 ml red wine
200 ml lamb or beef stock
500g baby potatoes
500g fresh or 1 tin of waterblommetjies
Seasoning to taste – lemon juice, cayenne, coriander, salt.
Watercress to garnish

METHOD:

Soak fresh waterblommetjies in salted water for at least 1-hour. Wash well.
Lightly flour the lamb and brown in olive oil.
Add onion, garlic and seasonings. Do not over cook. Transfer to casserole dish.
Add wine, stock, lemon juice & potatoes, simmer then remove potatoes.
Cook for 1-hour in hot oven.
Add potatoes cook for additional ½-hour and top up wine & stock if necessary.
Add watercress mix in, return to oven for 10-minutes.
Serve with your choice of fresh vegetables. Open a bottle of Solms Delta Africana Shiraz wine and enjoy!



Well, it's time to sign off from the Fairest Cape in all the world. The ship carrying this dispatch sails with the tide. Please feel free to contact me – **Martin Fine at:**

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SEVEN WINES FOR SEVEN DAYS

Jan Edwards talks us
through seven
Wines of Mallorca



Biodynamic Viticulture at Jaume Mesquida's Vineyard

Sangria and beer were the typical drinks of 1970s' holidaymakers on the Spanish island of Mallorca. Mass tourism was at its peak and package holidays brought sun-starved northern Europeans to soak up the sun . . . and cheap booze. Four decades on, the tourist offering here has broadened to suit a wider audience. Yet something that's increasingly attracting discerning visitors was available when the Romans were in occupation: wine.

A Mallorcan wine boom began in the 18th century and, after a brief decline in the early 19th, production surged when phylloxera hit French vineyards: in 1891, almost 50 million litres of Mallorcan wine were shipped to France and mainland Spain. Then Mallorca suffered the dreaded phylloxera; vines were uprooted and many replaced by almond trees.

Throughout the 20th century, vineyards were gradually re-planted and, in the past couple of decades, even more land has been restored to viniculture; wine quality has also improved substantially. Today, there are almost 60 bodegas here (about half are members of the *Associació Petits Cellers Illes Balears*) and around 300 different wines produced. Some 60% of production is consumed locally, but the export market is growing - boosted by the increasing number of international awards for Mallorcan wines.

The island's oldest existing winery, Ribas, was founded in 1711. Two years later, Junipero Serra was born in Petra. He grew up to become the Franciscan missionary who established the first missions in California, taking vines from the island with him - so some of the Napa Valley's first vineyards literally had Mallorcan roots.

There are two protected wine producing areas: the Binissalem DO (Designation of Origin) covers five municipalities in Mallorca and was the first to be awarded this geographic mark of quality wines. The main local grape varieties grown here are Manto Negro and Callet (red), and Moll and Prensal (aka Prensal) Blanc (white). Red wines have a high alcohol content (14% is not unusual), are full-bodied and characterful; whites tend to be delicate, fruity and distinctive.

The Pla i Llevant DO stretches from Capdepera in the northeast to Campos in the southeast. Alongside traditional Mallorcan grape varieties, others - including Macabeo, Parellada, Syrah, Chardonnay, Tempranillo, Merlot and Monastrel - have been introduced.

The wines I've proposed here are my personal choices; they're all wines of great quality and interest, from enthusiastic producers. If you visit Mallorca, I hope that seeking them out in restaurants, or from the bodega, will enrich your stay on this beautiful island.

All prices quoted are per bottle, purchased direct from the bodega, and include 18% IVA (VAT). Check individual winery opening hours before visiting; websites are not always up-to-date.

Original Muscat 2010 - Miquel Oliver (Pla i Llevant DO) - 13% Vol

An unusual Spanish Muscatel - and the first *dry* Muscatel to be sold in Spain. In the glass, it's pale yellow and bright with greenish tones. The bouquet has potent varietal aromas but veers towards the delicate. In the mouth, it's fresh, dry, balanced and smooth - almost like chewing a really ripe good Muscatel grape.

Slip a bottle into your suitcase to enjoy back at home; it will keep well for the next two to three years - if you can resist drinking it before then. **Price: €8.10**



Pilar Oliver

Award-winning Miquel Oliver bodega, in the small town of Petra, celebrates its centenary next year, with the founder's great-granddaughter Pilar Oliver and husband Jaume at the helm. This was Mallorca's first winery to use stainless steel tanks. A winery tour (advance booking recommended), includes the cellar, built 1865 and the best-preserved of its age on Mallorca.

While in Petra, it's worth seeing the birthplace of Junipero Serra - the missionary who took Mallorcan vines to California - and the small private museum dedicated to him.

Tel (0034) 971 56 11 17 www.miqueloliver.com

Rosat de Rosa 2010 - Jaume Mesquida (Pla i Llevant DO) - 12.5%

A biodynamic gourmet wine produced in the year of Jaume Mesquida's first certified organic harvest and made from equal parts of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. It's a delicious full-bodied rosé, which bursts with life and has a lasting finish - ideal for drinking at any time of day and a very good accompaniment to summer dishes. **Price: €9.85**

Founded in 1945, Jaume Mesquida, in the heart of Porreres, was radical in being Mallorca's first winery to plant Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah and Chardonnay vines. It's run by fourth generation siblings, Jaume and Bàrbara Mesquida Mora, who introduced biodynamic viticulture after the harvest of 2007. They're passionate about creating healthy, fertile soil and flavourful crops. Future plans include the creation of a fully biodynamic 21st century farm, with fruit trees growing among the vines. The winery shop is open on weekdays and Saturday mornings. There's a daily tour of the winery at 11.00 hrs (except Sundays); cost per person is €6, including the tasting of two wines.

Tel (0034) 971 64 71 06 www.jaumemesquida.com

Son Prim Blanc de Merlot 2010 (Vi de la Terra) - 13 %

Son Prim's most original wine: a white, made from Merlot grapes - pressed quickly and smoothly to avoid the must taking on the colour of the skins. It has the palest of pink hues, fruity aromas - with hints of melon and apricot - and a good flavour and balance of acidity and structure. A delightful summer wine with a smooth finish. **Price: €8.73**

When antique furniture restorer Jaume Llabrés decided to spend more time working outdoors, he set about restoring the Son Prim estate vineyards that had long been in his wine-making family. He replanted vines in 1993 and, in 2003, built a new winery. Jaume avoids mineral fertilizers and uses organic matter only, every couple of years, to boost the condition of the soil. The award-winning Son Prim is the only Mallorcan winery to receive a recommendation for all its red wines in the *Guía Peñín de los Vinos de España 2011*. The winery is open weekdays to the public for visits and purchases.

Tel (0034) 971 87 27 58 www.sonprim.com

ss-Ric Gormand 2005 (Vi de la Terra) - 13.5%

An original wine containing at least 70% Mallorcan Callet (from old vines), giving the wine citrus, but at the same time sweet, aromas; the other grape is organic Cabernet Sauvignon. Described as the most Mediterranean of Son Sureda Ric's wines, they're aged in French and Caucasian oak, then in the bottle. The wine is analysed independently (*Estación Enológica de Haro, La Rioja*) to guarantee absence of pesticide residues. An exquisite wine to drink with sophisticated cuisine. **Price: €12.50**

Family-owned Son Sureda Ric is an authentic 18th century Mallorcan rural estate, just north of Manacor. Director and oenologist Javier Jara is the oldest son, a trained biochemist with a Master of Science in Ecological Agriculture. A member of the *Associació Petits Cellers Illes Balears*, Son Sureda Ric produces only limited quantities of their four red wines. Javier speaks good English and makes an informed, genial host on a guided visit (by appointment). Do have a look at the small chapel if you go; a service is still held here every August 15th (The Virgin of the Assumption).

Tel (0034) 609 77 70 78 www.sonsuredaric.com

Angel Negre 2009 (Vi de la Terra) - 14 %

This is only the second vintage of this dry red wine, made from local Manto Negro (55%), Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon grapes, hand-harvested from the Sa Basseta estate vineyards. Ruby red in colour, it has intense aromas of red berries, liquorice, spices and toasty notes - from six months' ageing in French and American oak barrels.

The tannins give good structure and balance, making this an easy-drinking wine with a seductive finish. It complements Mediterranean cuisine, such as pasta and rice dishes, a great partner for one of Mallorca's star traditional dishes: roast suckling pig. **Price: €7.08**

Andrés Gelabert is the knowledgeable young owner of Bodegas Angel, open since 2008, in the island's central wine-producing region. Born in Mallorca, he grew up in southern California, studied at Texas University, and gained experience in the wine and restaurant business. At heart a Mallorcan, he returned to the island and created Bodegas Angel on the Sa Basseta estate, with an impressive new-build winery (styled like an old manor house), surrounded by vines - some of them more than 55 years old.

Andrés is always happy to spend time chatting about wines to interested visitors. The shop is open Monday to Friday; guided visits should be arranged a few days in advance. Tel (0034) 971 62 16 38 www.bodegasangel.com





Castell Miquel Shiraz 'Stairway to Heaven' 2007 (Vi de la Terra) - 14.5%

An award-winning powerful Shiraz with opulent aromas of ripe plums, blackberries and dark cherries, with balsamic notes. A luscious characterful fruity wine with good tannin structure and long finish. Enjoy it with poultry's darker meat, game or strong cheeses. It's also a good partner for bitter chocolate. **Price: €17.20**

Castell Miquel is a winery with a dramatic location in the Tramuntana mountains. Its German owner (the wonderfully named Dr Michael Popp) is a chemist who set out to create original wines, full of health-giving properties. The vines grow in the fertile soil of the estate's rocky terraces (the inspiration for the name 'Stairway to Heaven'); wines are aged in Hungarian oak barrels. Castell Miquel uses 'Vino Lok' glass bottle stoppers.

The winery is open to visitors weekday afternoons (April to October). Tel: 0034 971 51 06 98 www.castellmiquel.com

Macià Batle Reserva Privada (Binissalem DO) 2007 - 14.5%

A blend of Manto Negro, Callet and Cabernet Sauvignon, the Privada Reserva is deep red with medium-high intensity and good 'legs'. Its bouquet is complex, with detectable notes of balsamic, spiced cinnamon, vanilla and ripe red fruit. The wine has an intense finish with a structure and body that will enable it to develop well over a few years. **Price: €15.00**

Macià Batle has a 150-year-heritage of wine-making, and vineyards tended by the grandfather of current bodega director, Ramon Servalls i Batle, are still in use. Their smart winery in Santa Maria del Camí includes hi-tech equipment, a spacious tasting room and a function room.

Art plays a role in Macià Batle's wines: an internationally-renowned artist is chosen to design the label artwork for each vintage of the Reserva Privada, and the originals are exhibited at the bodega.

Macià Batle is open all day during the week.

Tel (0034) 971 14 00 14 www.maciabatle.com

THE WINE ROUTE

The informative book and map, 'Wine Route' (ISBN 978-84-935664-3-2), has details of wineries open to visitors, local gastronomy, places of interest, markets, festivals and hotels in the Binissalem DO (the towns of Binissalem, Santa Maria del Camí, Santa Eugènia, Consell and Sencelles).

www.binissalemdo.com

Jan Edwards is a former BBC local radio presenter who moved to rural Mallorca in 2004. A freelance writer, she's the main contributor to, and assistant editor of, abcMallorca magazine, published in English, German and Spanish www.abc-mallorca.com



GRAPE HARVEST FESTIVAL

The last week of September is given over to a celebration of the grape harvest, held in the town of Binissalem. The programme for the *Festa des Verman* includes a procession of themed floats, mass al fresco dining (on the traditional pasta dish *fideus des vermar*), folk dancing, grape-treading contests, exuberant grape-fights, and rather more civilised wine tastings. The locals - from babes-in-arms to great-grannies - dress in traditional Mallorcan costume and throw themselves heartily into the celebrations.



POLLENÇA WINE FAIR

Mallorca's largest annual Wine Fair (*Fira del Vi*) showcases the Balearic Islands's wines. Held in the atmospheric cloisters of Santo Domingo in Pollença, since 2004, it attracts large numbers of wine enthusiasts and professionals. This year some 42 bodegas were due to exhibit, offering information and free tastings. The weekend *Fira del Vi* is usually held one or two weeks after Easter. Early Saturday afternoon is best if you want time to talk to wine producers; later, the local youngsters flock in to take advantage of the freely flowing wine. Five euros buys you entrance, a tasting glass, unlimited tastings, and a booklet with full details of the exhibiting bodegas and their wines.



Mandarins on the Menu

by

Alan F Harrison



Court officials queuing to advise Louis IV in the 1660s.

If we take the term *mandarin* to mean a powerful high-ranking official, especially in the Civil Service, there have been hundreds throughout history.

In the context of the opening picture, the seventy-two year reign of Louis XIV was marked by an opulent extravagance demonstrated by the construction of his palace at Versailles in 1682. Prior to its construction, Louis kept an eye on the aristocracy by requiring that they accompany him wherever he may go. When the king travelled, he did so at the head of a great lumbering retinue of hundreds of lesser nobility - all of whom needed to be fed and entertained at each stop.

Time to talk about *Béchamel*. A savoury white sauce seems incongruous.

We have seen use of Larousse Gastronomique before in this series and my 1961 edition has served us well. Its main editor, Montagné, asks "Was béchamel sauce .. really invented by Marquis Louis de Béchamel?". Montagné concludes that it is likely that Louis de B did not invent it. The more-recently renowned Alan Davidson, in his Oxford Companion to Food, quotes another writer who said that "Béchamel has inspired more than its fair share of ... piffle. .. we can only point to [its] appearance during the reign of Louis IV.". Louis de Béchamel was head steward to Louis IV but that sounds unimportant in modern interpretation. Then, he would have had a smaller lumbering retinue to manage the royal household while he advised Louis on high cultural projects. He lived from 1630 to 1703. Add cheese to 'his' sauce and you have Sauce Mornay. The name comes from Philippe de Mornay (1549—1623. He doesn't rank as a mandarin, however, as he was among the *monarchomaques* or *king-killers*.



More important than Louis de Béchamel was Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619 – 1683) who was a French politician who served as the Controller General of Finances of France from 1665 to 1683 under Louis IV's rule. His relentless hard work and thrift made him an esteemed minister. He achieved a reputation for his work of improving the state of French manufacturing and bringing the economy back from the brink of bankruptcy. Consommé Colbert is garnished with finely-cut spring vegetables, and poached eggs. Apricots Colbert are poached in syrup, filled with creamed rice to replace the stone, coated with breadcrumbs and fried. Apricot sauce accompanies. White-fish of many types are deep-fried and served with Colbert Sauce. Concentrated chicken stock is mixed with butter and chopped tarragon. There's also Artichoke Fritters Colbert. His menu association ought to have gone beyond chicken. He is thought to have said "The art of taxation consists in so plucking the goose as to obtain the largest amount of feathers with the least possible amount of hissing"

Moving forward down the Louis-line, we find Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord (1754 - 1838) who was a French diplomat. He worked successfully advising Louis XVI, through the French Revolution and then under Napoleon I, Louis XVIII, Charles X, and Louis-Philippe. Known since the turn of the 19th century simply as Talleyrand, he remains a figure that divides opinion. Many regard him as one of the most versatile, skilled and influential diplomats in European history, and others believe that he was a self-aggrandising traitor, betraying in turn, the Ancien Régime, the French Revolution, Napoleon, and the Restoration.

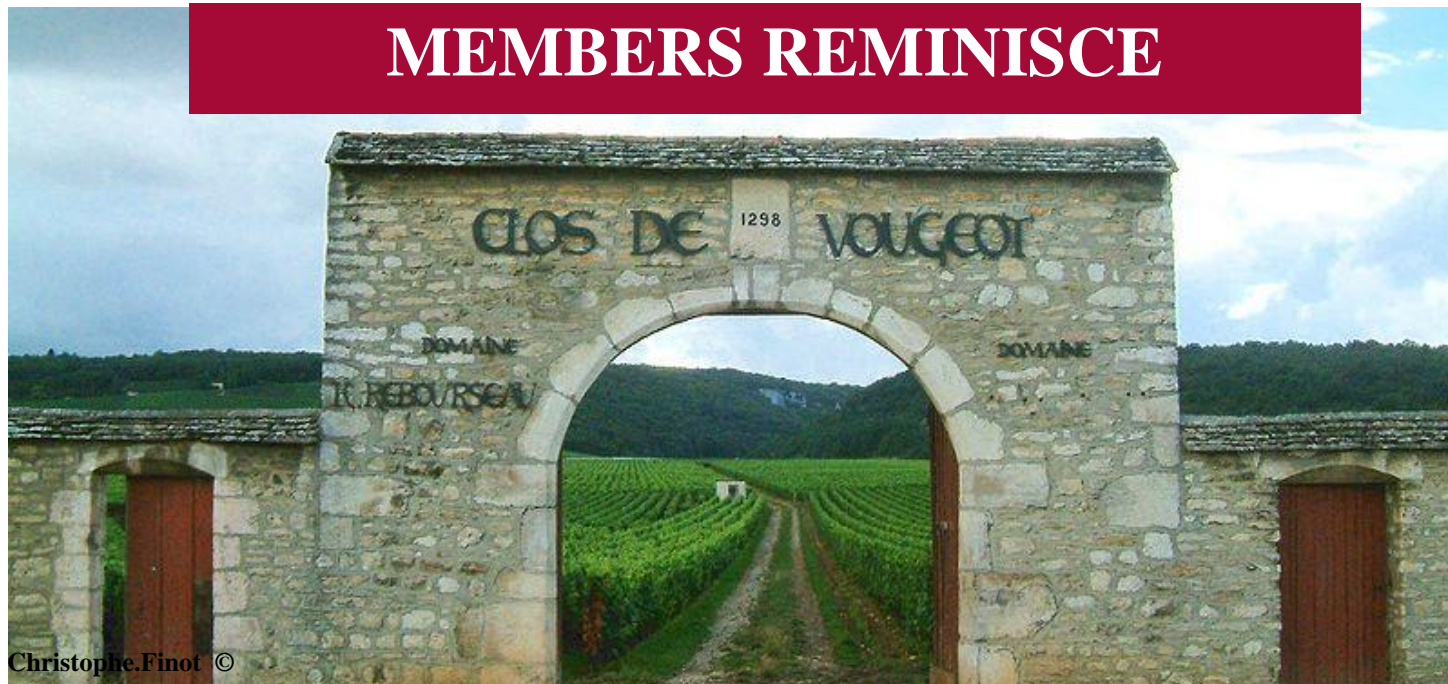
There is no doubt, however, relating to the menu-monuments to the man. Early in the Répertoire de la Cuisine, we learn that Sweetbreads or Chicken Talleyrand are served with macaroni, cheese, truffles and foie gras. Sole and similar fish Talleyrand are served with spaghetti, truffles, foie gras and white wine sauce. Veal cutlets, fillet steak, chicken supreme, boiling fowl and loin of veal are all served with his garnish. Périgord in his name has ensured truffles feature within it. That area of France is where to find them.

Talleyrand would have known Cambacérès who was born in Montpellier into a family of the legal nobility in 1753 and died in 1824. In 1794, he became a member of the Committee of Public Safety after the Reign of Terror had ended. He worked on much of the legislation of the revolutionary period. During 1795, he was also employed as a diplomat, and negotiated peace with Spain. Pudding Soufflé Cambacérès is creamed rice covered with kirsch meringue mixed with caramelised nuts and baked in an oven until brown. The more-complicated Salmon-trout Cambacérès is spiked with truffles and filled with a fish stuffing. It is then braised. At service, it is drained of liquid, covered with white wine sauce and garnished with stoned olives, lightly fried roe and decorated with sliced truffles.



Readers may like to explore, glass in hand, our regular contributor Alan Harrison's newest section of his Gastronomy website. He has kindly included André Simon's charming little book on How to Enjoy Wine. A Wine Primer is equally charming and Alan has extracted André's thoughts on connoisseurship for members to consider. There's a vast amount on wine descriptions on another page of the website. Just put www.enjoydrink.co.uk into your top browser.

MEMBERS REMINISCE



A Celebration at Chateau Du Clos De Vougeot by Roger Austin

The high opening prices of Burgundy in recent years, particularly this year, make it difficult to believe that in the 1930's, albeit a time of depression, that the sales of the wines was so poor the one grower sold his Richebourg for carafe wine in Lyon.

Our Society was founded in 1933 as a result of the depressed wine sales which had caused the house of Pommery to disperse with the services of our founder, André Simon, as their English agent. As an established wine writer he planned to publish a wine magazine but was advised by friends that there would be insufficient support, or for a restaurant which had also been mooted, so he formed our Society which evolved at a dinner in October of that year.

In the following year the growers of the Clos de Vougeot were minded to form the *Confrerie du Chevaliers du Tastevin* in order to drink their wines, which were not selling, at dinner with their friends. It became apparent that money could be made by hosting dinners in the magnificent Chateau and the *Confrerie* grew, as did their banquets.

After the second world war Burgundy remained relatively inexpensive and at that time the wines were often imported in cask and bottled by the merchants. The first Richebourg that I tasted in 1963 was bottled by John Lovibond of Greenwich and Pommard 'Les Pezerolles' by John Harvey & Sons. In 1965 the 1959 Richebourg of Liger-Belair cost 27/6 in old money (£1.37)! Domaine bottled wines were available but were, of course relatively much more expensive.

My first near contact with such a banquet at the Chateau was at Chenove, a village at the north end of *le route des grand crus*,

where at the hotel, a party in evening dress were embussing for an intronisation there. Later I stayed in Nuits St Georges, whose *confrerie* pre dates that of the Clos de Vougeot, at the Chateau de Loisy. The family de Loisy-Loquin were at one time prominent brand owners of *Cremant de Bourgogne* and own and rent vines in the Clos de Vougeot. The cellars of the chateau extend under the road and nearby buildings. Some years ago the Comtesse sold them to Guy Faiveley. The sight of the great area of casks of Faiveley wines is very impressive.

Not being involved in the wine trade other than as a consumer (we are important to the trade) it seemed that the chance of attending a banquet there was remote and that I would need to content myself with the video presentation of one that one sees as part of the visit there. However in 2004 Lay & Wheeler of Colchester celebrated their one hundred and fifty years with a traditional banquet there, offering clients the opportunity to attend, to be followed by a large growers tasting at the Hospice of Beaune the following day, something not to be missed.

The courtyard of the stone built medieval Chateau on a warm sunlit evening had an almost mystical atmosphere. The monks in their habits being replaced by a gathering of restrained laity in black and white but with their ladies in their finery, outside the purview of the original inhabitants. There was an air of anticipation in this foregathering across which flowed the rasping but mellifluous tones of the corps of French hunting horns in formal hunting dress and caps. They faced away from their audience in an alcove so that the bells of their horns which faced backwards gave maximum volume to them.

Once inside 'the great stony room' as Hugh Johnson described it, the menu was presented.

The 'tastevin' wines are those selected as being worthy of the meritorious label of the *Confrerie*.

ESCRITEAU

PREMIERE ASSIETTE

Le Persille de Marcassin aux Asperges

Chablis 1998 Tastevin

DEUXIEME ASSIETTE

La Couronne de Sandre Excellence

Morey-Saint Denis 1er cru "Monts Luisant" 1994

DORURE

Les Sot-l'y-Laisse de Vollaile au Jus de Truffes

Savigny-les Beaune 1999 Tastevin

ISSUE DE TABLE

Les Bons Fromages de Bourgogne

Vougeot 1er Cru "Clos de La Perrier" 1999

Tastevin

BOUTEHORS

Les Fruits Rouges Glace en Tastevin

Les Petit Fours

Cremant de Bourgogne Brut Rose

Le Café Noir et Chaud



from Bordeaux reflected that on his journey he had thought how good the slopes would look if they were covered with Cabernet and Merlot!

Australia was represented by Stephen Henschel from the Adelaide hills area. Apart from the speakers many of the most famous growers in Burgundy who were present were named and stood to great applause.

The evening drew to its close in a serene and dignified way and we strolled gently and replete, out through the stony corridors admiring the wonderful flood lit roof timbers as we went, out again into the courtyard where the horns were even yet playing but now a quiet night serenade to send us happy and reflectively on our way.

Four years later I attended our equally impressive seventy-fifth anniversary at Claridges and these two evenings stand out as the summit of perfection of what fine wine and cuisine can achieve.

Many of us will not be extant for the celebration of our Centenary but surely an interim event along similar lines in this wonderfully evocative building would find great support from our members on both sides of the Atlantic.

Roger Austin, Leicester Branch Chairman

LUNCH WITH ANDRÉ SIMON, 1954

by Richard Grieve

By chance, I came across a description of a splendid 'fine wine' lunch given by André Simon in the summer 1954 for an impressive company of guests. The details are recorded by Barbara Skelton in her memoirs, "Tears before Bedtime" and "Weep no More", published by Hamish Hamilton.

André's invitees included Maurice Bowra, the classical scholar, academic and legendary wit, who was for over 30 years the Warden of Wadham College, Oxford. In 1954 he was also the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University. He was noted, amongst many things, for, "sharp satires on his friends, and sharper still on his enemies", as quoted by Hugh Lloyd-Jones in "Maurice Bowra - A Celebration". With Bowra came Cyril Connolly, the literary critic and writer, and Founder/Editor of 'Horizon' magazine - himself no stranger to witty, erudite and caustic repartee. There too, of course, was Barbara Skelton, a controversial figure in London literary circles and, at that time, Cyril Connolly's wife. Prior to marriage "she lived, sometimes simultaneously, with a series of adoring admirers, raising blood pressures in the process, and leaving behind her a trail of destruction", says Jeremy Lewis in "Cyril Connolly - A Life", published by Jonathan Cape, adding that she was, "affectionate, waspish, disconcertingly detached - an alarming and formidable figure with a nimble wit, - an extremely funny and ruthlessly observant writer with a gift for the lethal deflationary epithet". So André Simon must have hosted a very lively gathering!

What a meal that was! The impressive menu card listed the wines first. It seems clear the food (or 'Fare' as André preferred to call it) was chosen to fit with the wines and not vice versa (most commendably in my view!). Moët et Chandon 1943 and Amontillado La Riva Guadeloupe 1937 opened the proceedings, paired respectively with Melon and then Kidney and Mushroom Soup. Vin Nature de la Champagne Bressault (blanc de blancs) was accompanied by a Paté Maison, would that work? I ask myself. Then the really serious wine moment arrived. Out came Chateau Cheval Blanc 1934, Chateau Léoville Poyferré 1924 and Chateau Margaux 1890 - all in Magnum, and matched by Roast Saddle of Lamb and the Cheeses. The Dessert is nameless - perhaps it was just a bowl of fruit, or perhaps things were becoming hazy by this stage! If so, the party would have been rallied by a 1913 Hennessy, Landed 1914, Bottled 1941 to finish off, with the coffee.

How's that for a light lunch, I wish I had been there!

Whilst it's noticeable how much plainer the 'Fare' was than the wines, this was not unusual for André. The IWFS website, in the 'History' section, says of André, "His position was always one of moderation and simplification. Although he was brought up in a period of long elaborate meals, he eschewed the proliferation of complex dishes, preferring a restrained sequence of wines to accompany a limited number of courses". Hugh Johnson, in "Working with André" (IWFS website) similarly described one meal when André had august visitors as, "an example of his creed of simplicity, not always followed in the Society's banquets. We ate a roast chicken and drank Chateau Lafite".

Richard Grieve is a member of Manchester and London Branches.

Tim Gittins Twittering on About Leeds

Why bother with a new branch? Why Leeds when there's an existing West Yorkshire branch? Why do we need new members anyway? Most existing members could be forgiven for asking at least one of these questions. When asked directly my varied responses were punctuated with references to new markets and lifestyle, blogging and Facebook. But the real reasons stem from an IWFS strategic exercise that took place a few years ago, asking the then membership about the direction of the IWFS. It was about survival.

A couple of years later, the timing was about right when I took on the EAC 'Marketing and PR' brief. Development in the new website was underway, a carefully planned response to the challenge that an ageing membership profile presents to our future. Translated, it meant we needed to recruit new, predominantly younger, members to shield the Society from a natural decline.

So I had a classic marketing model to follow. I understood who we needed to find, how and where to find them and what message to communicate.

It was fairly easy to define the 'target market' and locate them – probably professional, thirtyish, some disposable income and are at that moment in time when learning about and experiencing 'good food, good wine in great company' has become a social aspiration. We probably all know someone who fits the bill.

But these are people who are bombarded with calls on their time; their work/life balance is harder than ever to get right; and then they have so many leisure choices. "Why do I need to join the IWFS" is the critical question.

André Simon understood the answer. To Elizabeth David he had " - - - a profound influence upon the English attitude to food and wine in the 20th century". But when he conquered America during the 1930's for the then Wine and Food Society, it was as a skilled writer and communicator. He knew his mission "to spread the gospel of gastronomy" demanded a fresh approach, in a modern context for cultured people whose lifestyle nevertheless differed from the Old World. He knew how to change the basic message for a different audience.

So with the agreement of the EAC, and with the help and support of my West Yorkshire branch colleagues, Leeds became our New World experiment. This is where we get down to the fundamentals. What is it that will appeal to prospective members? They have a plethora of information available, so many wines to choose from and countless places to eat. The range and quality of what's on offer is unprecedented.

Too much choice, that's the problem. Factor in the need for greater responsibility in food production and distribution, and a growing interest in the benefits of organic and biodynamic processes in winemaking. So our message is to help members learn and experience the supply chain from farmyard and vineyard to table, what works and perhaps why, in ways they couldn't do or afford on their own. Our answer is education, with social overtones.

So for our Leeds 'launch' event we set out with a fundamental educational objective – to introduce the pleasures of matching wine and food. Finding a neutral affordable venue where we could bring in our own wines was not easy, but we settled on the historic city centre Leeds Club. We elicited the support of chef Stephanie Moon and wine critic Christine Austin, two well-known and respected players in the food and wine world in Yorkshire. With their generous help we devised a canapé tasting menu based on locally sourced food, donated by the suppliers, and chose two wines to match each food item.

The communications campaign was a mix of the conventional approach, spreading the message by word of mouth through friends of friends, with a marketing 'promotion'.

An introductory flyer was printed and distributed to local independent wine merchants and a couple of the better restaurants in Leeds. We had a small piece in the Yorkshire Post. All directed interest to the IWFS website pages we had set up about the launch event.

The investment paid off – unsolicited enquiries started coming in. "I got a tweet about your Leeds event" was one response. I think I understood.

There were 80 people at the launch, including about 20 existing members. Stephanie and Christine were there to circulate and add gravitas. Some of the food suppliers came to chat about their food. We got people talking, discussing the merits of each wine, did it complement the food, was it too overpowering?

So what of the 60 targets? To date 15 have joined – 25%. We are working on a forward programme to attract the others by reflecting their interests - finding the most convenient times, affordable locations and themes that will continue the Leeds initiative to the point where it can stand alone as an independent branch.

I can't help looking forward and backwards at the same time. How to grow, stay true to the traditional values of the IWFS, but to evolve in a contemporary style.

The following two quotes were from an era when wine was a luxury. Now it's commonplace on the dinner tables of many households. But look at the relevance.

Elizabeth David again, "The feeling of our time is for simpler food, simply presented; not that this is necessarily easier to achieve than haute cuisine; it demands less time and expense but if anything a more genuine feeling for cookery and a truer taste."

And from André Simon's co-founder of the original Wine and Food Society, A J Symons. "With restrictions, frustration and difficulties all round, food is first class news. We'll tell people how to make the most of what they can afford and how to do it." That was in 1933.

Perhaps the message for us is that it's back to basics, but using every technological means available to spread the word.

Facebook page, anybody?

Tim Gittins thanking Christine Austin & Stephanie Moon



New blood for the IWFS in Leeds



around the branches - Capital



Verveine Fishmarket Restaurant, Milford on Sea

When Stacey Crouch and David Wykes bought Monks the fishmongers, in Milford on Sea, three years ago small village shops all over the UK were closing weekly. They were not sure if they had done the right thing. The shop was on the decline and in the major supermarket chains wet fish counters were becoming more prolific. Both Stacey and David had a firm grounding in the hotel and restaurant trade and were determined to turn the business around by opening a restaurant. After a long struggle with the local authorities their dream came true on 12th February 2010 and today there is another gem, hidden behind the fish shop, a tastefully decorated bright modern restaurant - Verveine (verbena) Fishmarket Restaurant.

We invited the Wessex branch to join us for our lunch in March. We arrived at 11.30am to be greeted with coffee and a slice of lemon cake, then were given a talk about the fish and shown how to recognise the individual varieties. Stacey had ordered several large specimen fish to add a wow factor to the display. We all then filled our shopping bags and moved through to the restaurant for Prosecco and Canapés.

David, who has trained in Michelin star restaurants throughout France and the UK had put together an eclectic menu to satisfy the meat lovers as well as the fish enthusiasts amongst us. I had ordered the terrine of local venison with wild mushroom, pickled vegetables and coffee jelly but when I saw the other starter of home-smoked organic Scottish salmon, aged parmesan custard and confit tomatoes it looked so good I was allowed to change my mind at the last minute. The dish arrived under a glass dome and when the lid was raised a waft of smoke escaped, (see 2nd food photo on left). Very spectacular and the flavours lived up to the presentation. It was superb. The venison was also excellent with all the individual flavours complimenting the terrine beautifully.

My main course of slow cooked local duck with pan fried tiger prawns, textures of parsnip and marjoram jus was another hit. There were interesting reactions to the dish, some were eating the meat and fish separately while others, myself included, rose to the challenge and mixed duck and prawns with the sauces in the same mouthful - I must say it worked very well. I have had turbot served with oxtail before and never again! The other main course of roast fillet of Pollock with herb parpedelle, baby spinach, trompette and chive jus looked good. The fillet was thick with large juicy flakes perfectly cooked and the flavours went well. The only complaint, one member asked for more sauce and some thought it was under seasoned. Sadly another case of chefs trying to please customers who have been indoctrinated by the governments anti salt czars.

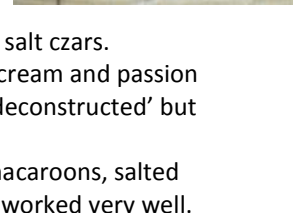
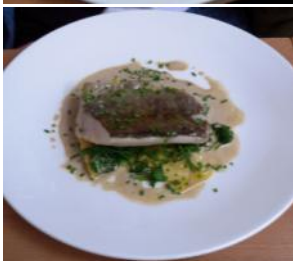
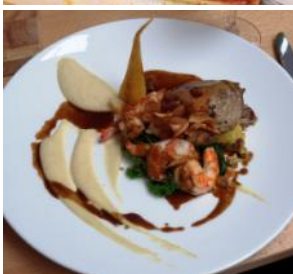
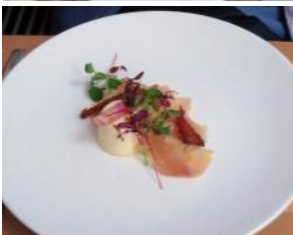
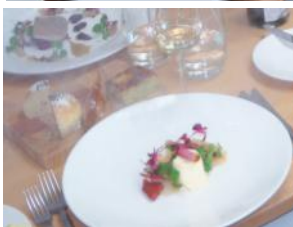
Desserts were a 'Verveine' Tiramisu, a Madagascan vanilla brulee with pistachio ice cream and passion fruit Madeleines or cheese. My tiramisu was delicious, served as it often is these days 'deconstructed' but with all the right flavours. The brulee was also pronounced superb.

Good coffee was accompanied by an interesting selection of petit fours. Chocolate macaroons, salted chocolate fudge and intriguingly a truffle flavoured lightly with morels which amazingly worked very well.

A delicious basket of artisan breads was served throughout the meal and we tasted each others wines. A good Viognier was on offer, a Pinot Grigio went well with the smoked salmon and a Beaujolais Villages was just the right weight for the duck dish.

If you are ever in the area Verveine is well worth a visit but go soon because when they become well known it will be a job to get a table

Pam Brunning, Chairman



around the branches - Berkshire

Iconic & New Generation Australian Winemakers - A tasting by Kate Dowdeswell of Awin Barratt Siegel.

A Few Facts:

- Land mass of Australia is roughly equal to that of the USA at 7.7m sq Km.
- Population of Australia is roughly equal to that of Sri Lanka at 22 million.
- Land planted to vines is nearly the same as in Bordeaux at 160,000 hectares.
- It is the 6th largest producer of wine.
- It is the 4th largest exporter of wine after France, Spain and Italy.
- Australian wine exports have rocketed from Aus\$9.6m in 1984 to Aus\$3Bn in 2009 and rates just behind mining.
- There are 2300 wineries in Australia, 94% of which are owned by 5 very big companies: Hardy, Fosters(Rosemount/Penfolds), Casella (Yellowtail), Australian Vintage (McGuigan) and Pernod/Ricard (Jacobs Creek).
- In the UK 21% of the wine sold is Australian. This success has been, in part, due to the simple labelling approach taken by Australian winemakers.

Kate Dowdeswell has visited the branch before and knows that we appreciate interesting wines. First up was **Fermoy Estate, Yallingup Semillon Sauvignon Blanc 2009**. A blend of 52% Semillon and 48% Sauvignon Blanc from the Margaret River where they benefit from the cool Indian Ocean westerly breezes. Annual temperature fluctuations here are limited to 7 degrees making it a warm and healthy environment for vines and no spring frosts. Winemaker Liz Dawson winters in Bordeaux and her wine styles reflect this. The nose was light & dry with a very rich body and lots of acid to give balance. This wine activates all the taste buds and would be

good with food. The **Phillip Shaw, Architect Chardonnay 2008** is a cool climate chardonnay from the Orange state. Phillip Shaw was the winemaker for Rosemount but left in 1998 to plant his own vines in 1998/99. He was voted International Winemaker of the year twice. A very light nose with pale yellow colour and no oak. Very Chablis like. Next up was the **Fermoy State, Yallingup Cabernet Sauvignon Merlot 2007** with 70% Cabernet Sauvignon and 30% Merlot (Left Bank blend). Here, where the vines are on flat land, cover crops are grown between the rows on purpose to steal water and nutrients from the vines which would otherwise not be stressed. The nose had a little earth but in the mouth there was good fruit with enough bite and longggggggg.....! By contrast the **Phillip Shaw, No 17 Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon 2008** has 55% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Franc and 20% Cabernet Sauvignon (Right Bank blend) and is aged in French oak for one year: this wine could age. A lot of attention is given in the vineyard using shoot rubbing, green harvesting and canopy pruning to manage the grape harvest and ripening. At 900 metres high, this is definitely cool climate wine. Light pencil shavings (from the Cabernet Franc) on the nose but dry and fruity in the mouth. The wine retains a great freshness in the long finish. Excellent! On a different note the **Campbells of Rutherglen, Bobbie Burns Durif 2007** uses the Durif grape (also called Petite Syrah), a Peloursin/Syrah crossing, which is more resistant to downy mildew than Merlot. A very approachable wine with a porty nose but which is soft and fruity with length. The winemaker Colin Campbell uses rotary fermenters which keep the skins in contact with the juice for longer, delivering greater extraction for his **Campbells of Rutherglen, Bobbie Burns Shiraz 2008**. The wine is matured for 12 months in a mixture of French and American oak barrels. Smooth and well made, but with an attractive edge - perhaps a trace of eucalyptus? This wine attracted a high score. However **David Franz, Georgie's Walk Cabernet Sauvignon 2004** was the pick of the evening. David Franz Lehmann, to give him his full name (he cannot use the Lehmann name since his father's business was sold to the Hess Group) has been around wine for ever. Georgie's walk is named after his daughter who, when very young, demanded to be walked to a pig sty on their farm to play, past the vineyard which produces this wine. No technology was used in the production of this wine. The winery is corrugated iron in true garagiste fashion and techniques are those from 20 years ago, including hand plunging. Still, it seems to work very well! American oak is used because its more open grain structure produces a slightly sweeter flavour. The colour is black: nose, liquorice. This is very easy drinking for such a big wine. Very full, balance great and long with a hint of spice on the side - one for the cellar! The final wine was **Campbells of Rutherglen, Rutherglen Muscat NV** made from the Muscat, a Petit Grain Rouge grape variety and is their entry level sweet wine. In 2010 Parker gave their top "Merchant Prince" sweet wine 100 points! The Rutherglen Muscat NV is an attractive dark gold wine with a full and fruity nose. Dry and full in the mouth with a hint of Pedro Ximenez type flavours.

This evening Charlotte had prepared a wonderful supper of boned shoulder of lamb stuffed with spinach, pine nuts and olives, using re-useable silicon bands to bind the meat and stuffing together. This was accompanied by butternut squash roasted with feta cheese, breadcrumbs & butter (Sophie Grigson recipe) and petit pois à la Française. Pudding was a Chocolate roulade with new season rhubarb.

An excellent tasting given by a very knowledgeable and professional presenter. It took us out of the ordinary in Australian wines into some superb and unusual wines made by both young and established winemakers. At least 3 of these wines will find their way in to the branch cellar for the future appreciation of Berkshire Branch members.

Chris Graham



around the branches - Manchester

A Cooperative Evening

The Manchester Branch was entertained and educated by a tutored wine tasting arranged and presented by Paul Bastard (sic) who since 1993 has been the Head Wine Buyer for the Cooperative. He presented ten wines covering eight different countries and ten different grape varieties. A Devonian by birth he now lives in the Altrincham area. This presents difficulties in following his childhood love affair with Torquay United whose every match he attends.

The Cooperative is the UK's mostly widely-spread supermarket with 3000 stores from the Shetland Islands to Cornwall and has a range of more than 450 wines in its portfolio. They are great believers and supporters of Fairtrade wines, more so than any other supermarket.

We started with a Muscadet, A.C. Côtes de Grand-Lieu Sur Lie 2009 (Dom. des Herbauges) which not only had the traditional qualities of such a wine but also a very long finish and, at its Spring Offer price of £4.99 was a considerable bargain. Passing through good examples of a Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc and a Californian un-oaked Viognier we reached a Montagny 1^{re} Cru 2008 white burgundy made by the renowned Nicolas Potel which was not only delicious but a snip at £9 - again on special offer for Easter. Mid-way we enjoyed a 2010 rosé from Boschendal in South Africa made of the more usual Bordeaux blend grapes which would be a great accompaniment for food. The reds kicked off with a Blackburn & James Merlot (with a 10% blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot) from Paso Robles, California; a substantial wine with no jammyness but with good acidity and ripe tannins. Italy gave us a Ricossa Barbera d'Asti 2007 from Piedmont. This had all the black cherry notes and good acidity of the varietal but at a bargain price of £4.99 (and even at the usual price of £6.25). Hardly pausing we passed through and enjoyed a Fairtrade Organic Malbec from the Famantina Valley in Argentina before reaching another highlight. This was Muriel Rioja Reserva 2004 (with some 2005, an equally good vintage). It was a super example of a red Rioja. A Reserva at £4.99 hardly seemed possible but it most certainly was. The tasting concluded with a Shiraz from the Clare Valley in Australia which, although rather alcoholic (typical of the grape in a hot climate), had good fruit and acidity.

By this time we were all hungry and enjoyed a substantial cold buffet (provided by Cheshire Smokehouse - <http://www.cheshiresmokehouse.co.uk> - featuring fresh poached salmon, salamis, cooked meats and a wonderful selection of salads before a choice of desserts and cheese. In spite of a ten-wine tasting there were no shortage of takers for the New Zealand Pinot Gris and Chilean Pinot Noir (both from the Cooperative) which were very good accompaniments for our meal.

Finding venues for such events always presents a challenge. Our choice was Bowdon Cricket Hockey & Squash Club where we met in the pavilion with large windows giving fine views across the extensive grounds on a warm and sunny evening. We were very fortunate in that the event was arranged by Chris Redman assisted by Bob Lloyd both of whom have long-standing connections with the Club.

David Chapman - Branch Chairman



A Date for Your Diary - Manchester Branch Diamond Jubilee

This year the branch is 60 years young. To celebrate a weekend break in the Lake District is being planned staying at the Lindeth Howe Hotel in Bowness-on-Windermere, Cumbria www.lindeth-howe.co.uk from 11th to 13th November.

Arrival will be on the Friday afternoon when tea, scones, jam and cream will be served. There will be a four course set dinner preceded by an apéritif with canapés. On Saturday there will a chance to enjoy walks or a boat sail on the lake or visiting any of the numerous attractions or retail therapy. Bowness itself is within walking distance.

A champagne and canapé reception will be followed by a five course Gala Dinner. Both dinners will include appropriate wines. The hotel was once owned by Beatrix Potter of Peter Rabbit fame. Another home of hers (now a National Trust property) can be found within walking distance of the ferry terminal on the opposite side of the lake from Bowness. Further information can be found on the web site in due course.

There are beautiful views across the lake from the hotel which is an elevated position.



around the branches - Northern Dales



President's Evening & AGM

On 26th March twenty four members gathered at the magnificent Biddick Hall for the President's evening and branch AGM.

The 18th C Biddick Hall is the former home of the Lambton Family and is set in beautiful grounds in Lambton Park near Chester-le-Street in County Durham. The grounds were seen at their best, carpeted in golden daffodils.

Chef Anthony Brown had created a delicious menu for the evening which more than lived up to expectations



Aperitif with Seasonal Canapés
Crémant de Bourgogne, Louis Bouillot Grande Reserve

Salt Baked Lemon Sole, Lightly Spiced Beetroot, Fennel
and Carrot Salad, Citrus Dressing
Domaine de Villargeau Coteaux du Giennois, 2009

Roast Loin of Lambton Roe Deer, Spiced Carrot Puree,
Fondant Potato, Buttered Spring Greens
Mont Tauch L'Exception Fitou, 2006

Buttermilk Panna Cotta, Passion fruit, Fresh Doughnuts
Muscat de Beaumes de Venise

Tea or Coffee with Petit Fours



On arrival we gathered in the grand drawing room where we enjoyed a refreshing aperitif, Cremant de Bourgogne; a chardonnay/pinot noir with some tasty depth and a good balance of acidity. The aperitif was accompanied by a selection of delightful canapés including wood pigeon shot on the estate. Following this, President Ros Wilson chaired the AGM. It's clear that the Branch is in good shape. Ros recapped the 7 events held in the past year and outlined those already planned for the coming year. There are 33 members and finances are sound. Ros was re-elected President for the coming year. Following a vote of thanks for Ros's hard work over the past year the members moved through to the Garden Room for dinner.

The original plan for the first course had been to serve brill, but when the chef went to the market he found that the catch had been poor and there was no local brill. He therefore selected delicately flavoured lemon sole in its place. The classic gooseberry nose of the Sauvignon Blanc, accompanying the fish, led into a palate bursting with flavours of lime and nettle.

The deer for the main course had been culled on the estate especially for the event. It had been cooked to perfection. 'Melt in the mouth' was the description most people used. The accompanying vegetables complimented the meat perfectly. The full bodied L'Exception Fitou, a mix of Carignon, Grenache and Syrah with its distinctive hint of spice and intense complexity complemented the richness of the venison.

Probably the best Panna Cotta I've tasted' was a frequent comment when it came to the pudding! The little doughnuts were also wonderful and to everyone's delight a small bowl of extra doughnuts was placed on each table. A delicate and refreshing glass of Muscat de Beaumes de Venise was enjoyed with dessert. Tea, coffee and delicious home made truffles and other Petit Fours were then served to complete the evening.

After dinner, Ros introduced Chef Anthony Brown to the members and thanked him for an excellent dinner. Then Anthony, an up and coming star of the kitchens of north east England, talked to the group about the estate and how the meal had been prepared and cooked.

Members then had the opportunity to view and admire some of the magnificent rooms and stunning paintings of the Hall. There was unanimous agreement that next year's President's Evening will once again be held at Biddick Hall.

Glen Wilson



around the branches - Surrey Hills



Lunch at Drakes in Ripley

Steve Drake started his cooking career at the Ritz hotel in the early nineties and went on to work for some of the country's leading chefs including Nico Ladenis and Marco Pierre White. In 2001 he won the Roux Scholarship professional cookery competition, which enabled him to spend time with the renowned French chef Marc Veyrat in Annecy.

In 2003 he was awarded his first Michelin Star, and in 2004, with his wife Sereina, he opened his own restaurant, Drake's, in Ripley, just off the A3 a few miles north east of Guildford. A year to the day of opening, a Michelin star was

achieved as well as 3 AA Rosettes and newcomer of the year in the Good Food Guide.

Since then, he has earned a reputation for some of the best food in the area. In addition to the full evening menu, he has been offering very good value high quality lunches, and his restaurant has usually been full at lunchtime, even during the recession. This April, twenty members of the Surrey Hills Branch decided to put his lunches to the test.

It was a beautiful spring day, and we started with a glass of wine and canapés on the lawn. The canapés were thin wafers of meringue, flavoured with curry and topped with chicken liver parfait. Then we settled down in the restaurant, where we were presented with a bowl of assorted home-baked breads and an amuse-bouche of pea and ginger veloute with a champagne and grapefruit foam. This was followed by a starter of either belly and cheek of pork, with caramelised pineapple and anchovy, or lemon sole with spring onion, black garlic, sweet corn puree and a lemongrass foam. For the main course, we had a choice of duck, with leeks, liquorice and pear, or sea bream with sea radish, cucumber, and a cauliflower and piccalilli sauce. Not an easy choice to make; both were beautifully cooked and presented, as the photographs demonstrate. Interestingly the duck breast was skewered on a piece of liquorice root.

For dessert there was a carrot cake, with a lime sauce, coconut ice cream and mint. It was light and delicious. A selection of British and French artisan cheese was offered as an alternative. Finally we had a selection of home-made chocolates and petit fours with generous supplies of coffee.

A Chardonnay and a Syrah from Domaine Rafale in the Languedoc (both 2008), were served throughout the meal, and we were able to choose which would best complement each dish.

The service was attentive throughout and everything was done exactly as we asked. Many of us will be going back before long.

Alan Shepherd



around the branches - Devonshire



The Orange Tree, Torquay

We started the year off with a New Year's Party at the local Golf Club. Whilst it is not exactly a gourmet event the food is very good and the wine flows. It has proved so popular with our members it has now become an annual event as we are always made to feel most welcome and it is nice to be near home this time of the year when the weather can be inclement.

Even in our micro climate of Torquay we very occasionally find snow and icy conditions cause problems. With some of our members recovering from broken bones we looked for another local destination and chose to revisit the Orange Tree, very near the town centre in Torquay. We were not disappointed to find the standard provided by the Bavarian proprietor/chef, Bernd Wold and front of house, by his wife Sharon, was just as good as we had experienced a year ago, even though they are now parents of a six month old baby who was asleep upstairs.

Thirty seven members enjoyed a warm welcome from Sharon and were soon imbibing the aperitif, Spanish Cava Castel d'Olerdola, honeyed with a hint of spice. This was enjoyed with a plentiful supply of most appealing canapés of diverse colours and flavours.

Our first course, was partnered with a 2009 Montelciego Rioja Blanco, an interesting wine made from the viura grape from 15 year old vines, full of flavours of citrus and white peach. We had the choice of Cumin Spiced Tomato & Red Lentil Soup served with coriander Crème Fraiche, which I am told was a treat for the taste buds or, as I chose, a Pan-seared fillet of Sea Bream served with Wasabi Cucumber Salad with a ginger and soy sauce. The fish was cooked perfectly and the whole dish was pure delight.

The main course was a choice of Rump of Lamb, oven roasted and marinated in garden herbs accompanied by red wine shallot confit and rosemary jus – as excellent as it sounds. The meat was as tender as I have ever experienced. The alternative was Chicken Saltimbocca cooked with Prosciutto Ham and Sage, served with creamed wild mushrooms and Madeira sauce, which one member said sat very well with the chicken and she had never tasted better! The appearance of both dishes was very attractive. The wine enjoyed with these dishes was South African 2008 La Petit Ferme 'Maison Rouge' Franschoek a delightful, skilfully fruity blended wine by Denby Young whose belief is 'providing the discerning palate with a House red wine that delivers far beyond expectations. It had a dense earthy black/red berry nose, spicy on the palate well structured with soft tannins. It was very drinkable indeed.

The Trio of Orange Dessert was Crème Brulee flavoured with Vanilla Bean and 'Amaretto', Iced Raspberry Parfait with Almond Meringue and dark Chocolate Brownie with Passion fruit Granache and Clotted Cream - what can one say – naughty but nice!

The alternative was a Selection of Devon & Cornish Cheese served with 'Devon Chutney, Oatmeal & Water Biscuits.

A superb fudge was served with the coffee.

Our branch organisers Geeta & Gordon Lloyd produced menus which depicted an Orange Tree with the apt comment 'Orange is the happiest colour' (a comment made by the late Frank Sinatra) and it was the happiest of evenings with tasty food, beautifully served by very pleasant and efficient staff. Nothing was too much trouble and they cheerfully provided special dietary alternatives for those who needed them.

Cynthia Head



around the branches - Cape Town

The 2011 Chairman's Dinner

When Chef Christophe Dehosse and I first planned the 2011 Chairman's event as a Truffle Dinner to emulate the extravaganza he hosted in the heady days of Au Jardin Restaurant at The Vineyard Hotel, we didn't anticipate a very poor European truffle season. Our menu called for 36g per person, that's R800 pp truffle cost, before we even started! Alas, for another day...

Christophe – long a friend of the Society who prepared the Au Jardin Gala Dinner for Harold Zeh's 1999 Regional Festival, as well as the closing Gala Dinner of Graham Blackshaw's 2009 International Festival – trained in classical French kitchens where he started washing potatoes as a teenager. He laments the fusion and foams of modern menus, and is a great admirer of Auguste Escoffier, that 'king of chefs and chef of kings'. He thus proposed a classic repast in the style of the grand dining rooms of Escoffier's day, to which I added modern vinous touches.

After travel from local lodgings or by coach to Stellenbosch in the Cape Winelands, we whet the appetite with Axe Hill Dry White Port, a sherry-like libation drawn from a solera system commenced by late member Tony Mossop in 2003. This was the first bottling from cask in 2006.

A soup would have been *de rigueur* in Escoffier's day and Chef prepared a delicate Crème la vallièr garniture de coquille Saint Jacques (*Celery cream with scallop garnish*) to which I added a cool-climate 2009 chardonnay from Julien Schaal, my personal wine of 2010 which I discovered at the John Platter 2011 Five Star panel tasting.

The dish of the night, a scintillating Vol-au-vent de caille et foie gras, epinard à la crème et duxelles de champignons (*Puff pastry casing with quail and foie gras, garnished with creamed spinach and mushroom puree*) followed, and Oak Valley's 2006 pinot noir had been maturing in our branch cellar just waiting for such a pairing.

Past Cellarmaster Eugene Mori's wise decision to put De Toren 2003 Fusion V into the cellar some years back rewarded us all as Dehosse impressed with Selle de veau Roties Talleyrand garniture à la Bourgeoise, pommes de terre anna (*Roast saddle of veal with truffle, potatoes galette, and stewed peas, carrot, baby onion and butter lettuce*).

'Peach Melba?!' I could hear some members groan; recalling those sticky bowls junior school friends' mothers seemed to specialize in. It is indeed a classic, invented by Escoffier at the Savoy Hotel London in 1892 to honour Australian soprano Dame Nellie Melba, who was singing Wagner's *Lohengrin* at Covent Garden at the time. Chef's rendition was light, a foil for the rare Villiera Reserve Millennium Brut Rose 2000 to accompany it. This *Méthode Cap Classique* was created by South Africa's foremost bubbly producer in 2000 with the intention to offer pleasure ten years on. After laying *sur lie* until being disgorged in 2009, it was perfect from magnum on the night.

Finally good coffee and Axe Hill Cape Vintage Port 2003 cheered us farewell.

David Swingle, Chairman.



Wine Tasting Evening Rejuvenates East Anglia Foodies

At the AGM of the East Anglia Foodies in November 2010 a new Committee was elected, and after their first meeting it was agreed that a membership drive was necessary. To this end several events were discussed and pencilled into the diary.

The first of the events took place in February at Brasted's Restaurant, Eastern Daily Press Norfolk Restaurant of the Year 2010, and took the form of a Wine Tasting accompanied by a fabulous Charcuterie and Cheese selection. Eighty people attended this extremely successful event, which took the form of a blind tasting of three whites and three reds, supplied by Bijou Bottles of Hoveton.

There was much discussion, slurping and scratching of heads about the wines, which all had very different characteristics but were finally revealed to have been produced from just two separate grape varieties Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir. Everyone present was pleasantly surprised at how different the same grapes can taste when grown in different countries.

The wines, chosen by Jerome Lambert of Bijou Bottles, were Henri de Richemer Sauvignon Blanc 2010 (France £6.95); Nostros Reserve Sauvignon Blanc 2010 (Chile £6.50); Ara Sauvignon Blanc 2009 (New Zealand £7.95); Las Manitos Pinot Noir 2009 (Argentina £6.50); Nostros Reserve Pinot Noir 2010 (Chile £7.50); La Boussole Pinot Noir 2008 (Ardèche France £9.50).

Nobody guessed the provenance of all six wines but Nick Mills, Chairman and co-owner of Brasted's Restaurant, presented a bottle of champagne to Annie Edwards who claimed to have the highest number of correct answers!

The Committee are delighted with the start made to 2011, and we hope to build on this solid foundation throughout the year.

Anne Templeman, Secretary www.eafoodies.co.uk



around the branches - St James's



Harry and Ari and the eye of a Pink Partridge

The St James's branch members who are familiar with the Harry Potter stories may well have thought they were off to Hogwarts Academy when they went to dine at Pearl Liang in May. It was necessary to get to the Paddington rail terminus, walk up platform eight and make a walk along a winding canal until they came across a Roman forum. Happily however we did not have to find platform nine-and-a-half and leap through a solid brick wall, nor did we need our wands. The Hogwarts Express had already left.

Thirty-six members and friends all found this delightful new (two years old), and much-praised Chinese restaurant situated in a new development of offices, shops and a splendid Roman marble amphitheatre adjacent to Little Venice in Paddington Basin. A long way from the heady venues of Mayfair and Park Lane to which we are beginning to get accustomed, we were nevertheless greeted with traditional Chinese warmth and lots of *Veuve A Devaux Oeil de Perdix Rose champagne (£18)* which had been sourced by Ari Sofianos; a wine whose blush Gregory Bowden later referred to as like the eye of a pink partridge!

The restaurant décor is sophisticated, modern, and entirely Chinese, with bamboo and water features, pink walls with flower painting throughout. It is the brainchild of Humphrey Lee, previously of the Mandarin Kitchen in Queensway, a joint venture with Head Chef Paul Ngo. Humphrey clearly wants to challenge the Royal China chain for supremacy in Chinese London and on this showing and the excellence of his dim sum, as my dinner companion commented, has matched the competition dumpling for dumpling. Prawn and chive, scallop, pork, and a vegetarian option were soon swinging around the circular table; brought to vibrant life by a touch of wasabi and followed by the traditional barbecued duck with pancakes and spring onions, all accompanied by one of Humphrey's own wines, a chilled sauvignon blanc from the *Chilian Alianza estate 2009 (£18)*. The series of main dishes, including baked lobster, were notable especially for the range of sauces including soya and wine, Abalone Oyster and ginger and mandarin.

However, the absolute highlight of the evening came at the end with an intense liquid dessert comprising mango and grapefruit with tapioca, complemented by a pudding wine with exquisite aromas of passion fruit and apricot - *Chateau Jolys Cuvée Jean Jurançon Moelleux 2008 (£13.49 ½ bottle)* a perfect choice to end a fine occasion. This is a beautiful wine, medium to full-bodied, from near Pau in the French Pyrenees, where the local grapes, Manseng and Courbu give up a fragrance, leaving a sun-baked after-taste; a rare wine indeed and a very good alternative to the mortgage-busting Sauternes these days. A cup of green tea to finish.

It was time to leave, to resist the temptation to give an oration in the manner of Plato in the splendid amphitheatre outside Pearl Liang. One felt that the departing members would have appreciated a short sermon on the beauties of the pink-eye partridge! Instead one went off to seek platform nine-and-a-half and board the Hogwarts Express for home.

Derek Hawes



City Gazing at Galvin at Windows



St James's branch was very fortunate to have a wonderful dinner at Galvin at Windows prepared for us by Head Chef André Garrett MCA. At the top of the Park Lane Hilton this restaurant is at a location known for the superb views across Hyde Park and much of London.

However of course we were much more interested in the wine and food. Ari Sofianos, Chris Worthington and Andrew Brodie bravely soldiered through a test lunch matching the wines on offer with the proposed dishes. A very interesting procedure, but certainly not relaxing,

as a heated discussion on the best matches ensued. Fortunately, agreement came and we finished knowing that all would be well. I think the staff breathed a sigh of relief, though they were very helpful, we certainly worked them hard.

On the night we gathered in the bar for canapés and Nyetimber 2005, we were then seated at 3 tables in the extended balcony area. The restaurant is very popular and it felt nicely alive, with most tables taken.

We were treated splendidly, individual menus showing the variations for those that had to opt out of some dishes and detailed cooking notes taken for everyone. I think the staff really enjoyed serving to our high standards and seeing our appreciation thereof, it was a truly memorable event. We will be back.

Andrew Brodie

Canapés
Nyetimber Classic Cuvée Brut, 2005
-
Scottish scallops 'Juste tiède', vanilla, lime & caviar
Vouvray, Domaine Champalou, 2009
Risotto of wild mushrooms, pickled walnut & pecorino emulsion
Limoux, Chardonnay, Haute-Vallée, Toques et Clochers, 2008
Loin & shoulder of wild venison, red cabbage,
smoked pomme purée, watercress & sauce Grand Veneur
Malbec, Chakana, Estate Selection, Mendoza, 2008
-
Fleur du Maquis, candied walnuts & endive salad
Cheverny, Domaine Du Salvard, 2009
-
Manjari chocolate ganache, hazelnut & salted caramel
Maury, Jean-Marc Lafage, 2007
-
Coffee & petits fours



Mat Follas at The Wild Garlic Beaminster

It may sound as if I do nothing more than sit in front of a TV watching cookery programmes; but there are an awful lot of celebrity chefs around who all welcome the cash and publicity that appearing in the homes of the public gives them. But probably the best true competition for non-professionals is Masterchef. In the UK the current format is in its 7th year although versions of it have been around since the 90s. We

now also have 'Celebrity Masterchef', 'Junior Masterchef' and versions in Australia and the USA, and probably other countries.

In the BBC UK version competitors have to compete through 6 weeks of heats, a week of gruelling semi-finals and a week of finals whilst sticking to the 'day job'. But if they win through and satisfy judges John Torode and Gregg Wallace; what happens next. Most make money through book deals or acting as consultants. Only a few are brave enough (or stupid enough?) to open their own restaurant.

In 2009 the winner was Mat Follas who is probably remembered for his appearance and for foraging and catching great ingredients. I first visited 'The Wild Garlic' in Beaminster, Dorset in 2009, not long after it had opened. I was impressed by the originality, presentation and flavour of Mat's food, as well as the size of the kitchen. Mat cooks for 30 covers in a space less than half the size I use to cook for two!

I live over 200 miles from Dorset and therefore do not eat there frequently. My wife and I had been holidaying in East Devon and enjoying some local restaurants including the massively impressive 'Mason's Arms' in Knowstone, near Exmoor. What appears to be a simple 14th Century pub hides a Michelin starred chef.

We decided to stop off and see some friends on the way back north and invited them to dine at Mat's restaurant. When I phoned to make the booking we were told that on that particular day they would not be serving their usual menu but would be running a 'Wine tasting evening' with a Master of Wine. That sounded even better, the menu sounded interesting, I booked.

The restaurant was full. We were told that James Handford MW would talk for a few minutes before each course was served. "With just a short introduction to each wine, the aim was to explore the art of food and wine matching, as well as encourage some lively discussion". Unfortunately there had not been much discussion between Master Chef and Master of Wine before the event. The first course was Clams, Foie Gras Puree & Air dried tomatoes in oil served together on a plate. James presented 3 wines; one for the clams, one for the Foie Gras and one for the tomato! The fish course was hake, flavoured with lemon grass, galangal and coriander. It was superb. We had been encouraged to save some of the clam wine and compare it with a new fish wine.

The main course venison was served with smoked mash, sous-vide lamb lollipops, wild garlic and red cabbage. Again we were served different wines to compliment different elements in the dish as opposed to a recommendation of one wine that would work with the whole course. I expected the meat to be good and was not disappointed. I asked about the smoked mash as Mat came round the tables. Was it smoked potatoes that were then mashed or was the smoky element added at the mashing time. He would not reveal his secrets but it was lovely.

The dessert was Bitter Chocolate fondant, lavender shortbread and citrus granite; and now the wheels fell of the wagon! Mat can cook in his tiny kitchen for a full house because his front of house staff staggers the service. The MW wanted everyone served together so that he could discuss the dessert wines. There were not enough tins or space for over 30 soufflés to be cooked together. One half of the room, my half had to wait an additional 20 mins by which time some had already finished their wine.

To sum up, we had a good time. The food was excellent and the noise levels increased with the number of wines. The whole evening including wines and coffee was only £45 per person. I will return when Mat is cooking his normal fare. The restaurant style may not win Michelin stars but it is original, tasty and excellent. I may well go and listen to James in another setting. But I will avoid another clash between Master Chef and Master of Wine.

Ron Barker

EAC AWAYDAYS

A Yorkshire Experience 11th/12th October 2011

Swinton Park, Masham, North Yorkshire, HG4 4JH

This exclusive luxury castle hotel is the ancestral home of the Cunliffe-Lister family. It is set in 200 acres of park-land, lakes and gardens and combines the traditional warmth of a family home with the modern comforts of a contemporary hotel with bedrooms that are all individually furnished and en suite.


Highly rated in both the Good Hotel Guide and Good Food Guide, the executive chef Simon Crannage has won numerous awards with his emphasis on seasonal produce, locally sourced, often from the estate. Members who have previously visited Swinton Park are unanimous in recommending it.

We will meet on Tuesday evening for a reception and aperitif prior to a Black Tie dinner in a private room with wines specially selected to match the superb quality of the food.

On Wednesday a full breakfast service will be available until 10am and you will then have the opportunity to indulge in a light hearted educational experience before we disperse.

The cost for members sharing a double room will be £175 each thus £350 per couple. There are no single rooms therefore, the cost of single occupancy of a double room will be £250. The price includes, reception, the specially chosen menu, all wines, the overnight stay, full breakfast and gratuities. Also our educational item next morning.

The EAC very much look forward to seeing you at this very special event. There are a limited number of bedrooms so you are advised to book early.



To book please send your name, address, phone number and email details to the EAC Treasurer - Jim Muir, The Old School House, Llanhennock, Monmouthshire, NP18 1LT, UK before 31st July 2011 enclosing a cheque for the full amount payable to IWFS-EAC.

There will be no refunds after 31st August unless the places can be filled. If you wish to pay by credit card please contact Jim Muir: 44 (0)1633 420 278, email muir112@btinternet.com (a 3% handling charge will apply).

We have obtained a discounted rate for B&B for stays immediately prior and post the event. If you wish to stay extra nights at a double room rate for B&B of £150 per night please contact:

Hannah Hinchcliffe or Rebecca Barker at the Events Section, Swinton Park on +44 (0)1765 680900

hannah@swintonpark.com or rebecca@swintonpark.com

Please pay the hotel direct for all charges incurred for these extra nights.