

Food & Wine



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BART A MODERN DAY SPICE TRAIL



THE COMPANY THAT CATERS
FOR THE COUNTRY

Lebanese Flavours



CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Dear Members

I have recently attended 2 special celebratory events that were not organised by IW&FS but which reminded me of my history in wine and food.

I attended a Memorial luncheon for David Scatchard who died in 2009. David started importing fruit from Spain into Liverpool and was persuaded to also bring in some sherry. From there he developed into one of Liverpool's best wine merchants and an international authority on Spanish wines. Many years later when he wished to expand his business into Southport and I, as Chair of licensing, turned down his application, he complained about me to the Police saying 'I taught the b***er to drink'. Not strictly true as I was a member of CAMRA (the real ale group fighting against Red Barrel) before I moved to Liverpool, but it was David that showed me that countries other than France could make super wines. And it was David who taught me to appreciate, sitting in his office above the shop, a fine fino sherry (or several) before lunch.

Later that week I attended the 20th anniversary of Paul Heathcote opening his restaurant in Longridge. For the three years that I edited this magazine Paul contributed the food and recipe items.

Paul was born near Bolton in Lancashire and was a student of Bolton Technical College. His early career spanned stints in Switzerland, Sharrow Bay Hotel in the Lake District, The Connaught in Mayfair, and Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons under Raymond Blanc.

Paul returned to the North West and opened his own restaurant doors on July 13th 1990 - Friday the 13th! Within 9 days a fire ripped through the kitchen, two days later with enormous help from friends and no sleep he re-opened. A year & half later the restaurant was awarded its first Michelin and Egon Ronay stars followed by a second star in 1994 along with Egon's Chef of the Year award.

At the Anniversary dinner Paul spoke of the power of the food critics. Soon after Longridge opened it was reviewed very positively by Matthew Fort. Paul reckoned that that one article (and the fact that other 'scribblers' followed to see what the fuss was all about) kept his restaurant full for 4 years. In the early days he also formed a 'Wine Club' where members could try different wines with his food. That was when I first truly appreciated food & wine matching. That group still exists and meets monthly at Longridge. Eight of them are IW&FS members.

In June 2007, Liverpool John Moore's University awarded Paul an Honorary Fellowship in recognition of his contribution to catering and in 2009 the Queen awarded him an MBE.

My wish is that IW&FS provide members with both enjoyment and education. We are built on a branch structure but we want to provide members with more than they can get from just attending branch meetings. Our Festivals and other inter branch events are designed so that members can meet up with others with similar interests. When the new website is live (and that should be soon) we need branches to populate their pages with details of their events so that members of other branches can apply to attend. We are also selling places at individual dinners on next year's Merseyside Festival so that members who do not attend the whole Festival can enjoy meeting members from around the world. Because they are at prestigious locations and involve top quality food and wines they are expensive. But the EAC still intends to run Great Weekends, Awaydays and other events that will be less costly. I also hope to centralise information on wine trips so that members from different branches can combine for a food & wine based holiday.

We will soon be launching a new monograph for members. Beverley Blanning MW has written about Biodynamics in wine production. It is a subject that raises many arguments with discussions on whether a wine will taste differently if opened on a different day; to say nothing of the benefits of burying a cow horn in the vineyard! This publication contains all the arguments; for and against, scientific and otherwise; and should be a valuable addition to your information base. In line with our strategy it will be available, free of charge to members, on the website. Members will be able to print off copies for themselves. But we will have some printed copies available to send to members for a small fee.

The 2009 accounts presented at the ABRM in Broadway have been audited and a copy is being sent to each branch.

Ron Barker

CONTRIBUTORS



Matthew Shaw started in retail with Waitrose. He then moved on to sell biscuits, cheesecakes, coin mechanisms, mouthwash and medicines before landing his dream job at Bart. Today Matthew is Chief Executive having taken over from his father in 2009.

He is quoted as saying, when asked what he would like his final meal to be, 'Lobster caught in our pot, with home-made garlic mayonnaise and a slice of sour dough, washed down with a glass of Sauvignon Blanc



Nada Saleh was born in Beirut. She speaks English, Arabic and French. She has lived in London for the past 33 years, where she became a trained Nutritionist in 1987. Two of her books have been short listed for the prestigious André Simon Award. As well as being a cook book author, she regularly gives demonstrations at Books for Cooks. She has advised major food chains, and has frequently participated in radio and TV programmes, including BBC Radio, MBC and Al-Jazeera.



The story of a multinational conglomerate that feeds the UK and much of the world.



Food & Wine

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Editorial

September is here again, how the years pass, at least in 2010 we can say we did get summer in the UK, albeit short. We enjoyed some alfresco dining and those men that delight in showing off their cooking skills had a chance to man the BBQ. I must admit I am very thankful that my other half is happy to let me get on with the cooking indoors and I don't have to make polite noises about chicken that tastes of a bonfire, burnt on the outside and red raw in the middle.

We have a spicy issue this time. I went to Bristol to interview Matthew Shaw MD of Bart Spices, a company with whom I have long been intrigued. Nada Saleh, a young lady from the Lebanon, who is a St James's branch member, has a feature on her latest book with some Lebanese recipes and we look at the 'King of Fruits' - the mango.

For some time I have been trying to get behind the scenes with one of our big foodservice companies. They control such a large part of our catering industry that I felt it was time members understood something about their vast enterprises. Starting on page ten you will find an intriguing insight into a company who supply a quarter of all the UK's catering needs and also a vast proportion worldwide.

Our 'around the branches' pages have increased once again with some interesting events being held throughout the region. Please remember to ask your reporters to give members opinions on the dishes and the wines. We want to know if the restaurant is worth visiting or the wine worth trying, it makes reading the reports so much more appealing. Talking of trying wines, some members are reaching an age where they are not thinking about buying more wines but drinking up all those old bottles they have had laying around for years. You will see we have a report from our chairman, his branch held a tasting of some old wines that one of their members kindly donated. Much care was taken decanting them but the bottles received a mixed reception, some of the older ones going down the sink. Helsinki also has been opening some more mature vintages, once again with mixed results. They didn't decant theirs but they seemed to think that where they went wrong was not opening them a while beforehand to let them breathe. In 1998, when attending a London tasting dinner of fifteen year old first and second growth clarets, we were horrified to find they had not been decanted. As for opening anything over twenty years old to breathe - surely it could be fatal - these older wines are so ethereal they can rapidly fade in the glass. Shortly we are to open some 1970 clarets which will be an interesting exercise. At least we know they have been cellared at a constant 50° for the last 35 years, this is another aspect to consider when opening old wines. I find this a fascinating subject and would like to cover it in depth in the next issue. Feedback from members on their experiences would be much appreciated and if one of our wine experts has the time to write an article on the subject I am sure members would find it very useful.

These are very exciting times, in the next issue you will learn all about our wonderful new website and be able to fully appreciate how much it will enhance your membership.

The next time I sit down to write my editorial Christmas will be only six week away! Meanwhile, I hope you enjoy some good dining experiences in the 'Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness, For Summer has o'er-brimm'd their clammy cells'. *John Keats.*

Pam Brunning

Important Notice - When you receive the December issue of Food & Wine please make sure you keep the white address sheet from the packaging. You will need your membership details, that appear above your address, to log on to the new Society website.

Dear Members

The past few months have seen a period of both contraction and expansion at the International Secretariat (IS).

In June the IS moved into a smaller office at the In & Out as the existing agreement was up for review. This means that members can still enjoy the benefits of Affiliate Membership of this central London club and the IS maintains a base, although more compact, in London from which to operate. The new office is on the fourth floor, just by the lift and above the function rooms. Members continue to be welcome at the IS and can also collect their merchandise orders from there. Please just let me know beforehand when you are in the area.

The area of expansion and investment is aimed directly at you the members. The IS has made an initial return to publishing and commissioned a new monograph, *Biodynamics in Wine* by Beverley Blanning MW (see Ron Barker's column also), to add to the existing library of titles. Council hopes that members will welcome this move and the new title that covers a controversial and thought provoking topic. The ethos of biodynamics is becoming more relevant in today's world and could have a greater impact on the wines we drink in the future. The concept of seeking sustainability and working with our natural resources is an idea that many agree with.

However the spiritual and metaphysical aspects of biodynamics leads to scepticism and derision in a number of camps.

I began reading, I must admit, slightly unconvinced. I attended a tasting of biodynamic wines in 2009 and while I enjoyed a number of the wines I remember thinking that some were rather "loose" and seemed to lack cohesion. Having read Beverley's fresh and balanced overview of this topic has now left me wanting to find out, and taste, more. I understand and appreciate far more the commitment that goes into making these wines. The bringing of life back to the earth and vines together with producing wines with character has become more appealing. One of Beverley's points, that no-one has ever demonstrated that biodynamics doesn't work, makes me more open-minded. I hope you will enjoy it too – even if you reach a different conclusion.

The new monograph will be available free to members via the website in October (release date to be confirmed). Hard copies of all monographs are available from the IS, although stocks are limited. If you would like to receive a copy of any of the following, plus the new monograph, then please let me know (a small fee to cover the cost of p&p maybe requested).

Barolo; Chablis; Growers' Champagne; Traditional French Cheeses; Chianti Classico; Icewine; The Science of Taste; Tokaji; Truffles; Visiting Vineyards; A Dissertation on Wine Waiters, Wine and Health.

Andrea Warren

LANNICE SNYMAN - 1948 - 2010

It was with much sadness and many fond memories that the members of the Cape Town branch mourned the passing of Lannice Snyman in May this year. Lannice was a long-time member and generous servant of the Society, and all who attended the Cape Town Festival in February 2009 will recall her colourful presentation of South African cuisine at the opening function.

Lannice was South Africa's First Lady of Food, the person who single-handedly gave South African cuisine an identity. There has not been another as influential in supporting, raising awareness of and publicising the South African restaurant scene, as prolifically successful in publishing a range of beautiful yet easily accessible cookbooks, or as singular in researching, documenting and celebrating what she termed 'The undiscovered culinary wealth of Southern Africa'.

She embraced every aspect of the food world, being involved in writing, publishing, television, radio, food styling and, ultimately, becoming the most respected restaurant reviewer and judge in the country, and Regional Chairman for the San Pellegrino World's 50 Best Restaurants Awards. But it is perhaps for her writing and publishing that she will be best remembered, this recognised through her Galliova Award for Best Food Writer in South Africa and the three titles that have garnered World Gourmand Cookbook of the Year Awards: *Posh Nosh*, *Vin de Constance* and the recent sequel to *Rainbow Cuisine*, *Tortoises & Tumbleweeds*. Her books are her legacy and she will always be alive on our shelves.

As important as food was to her, it only had meaning and pleasure with family and friends. Lannice worked, cooked, holidayed – and partied – with her husband Mike and daughters Courtenay and Tamsin, a strong Snyman family unit that always generously opened its doors to their many friends.

While a public persona, Lannice preferred privacy in her battle with cancer. But, true to style, she entered the unknown turmoil of illness as only Lannice could: with fore-thought, vigour, unbridled optimism, and unstinting courage. She knew no half measures.

Countless condolences have highlighted – with great fondness – how beautiful, warm and gracious Lannice was, how amazing, vibrant and dynamic; flamboyant, friendly and funny; wonderful, generous and sincere; optimistic, adventurous and inspirational; loyal, faithful and loving. One could go on... Above all, Lannice was a grand woman of stature, ethical integrity and breath-taking courage. She made everybody she touched feel special. A truly great individual.

Graham Blackshaw, Cape Town 2009 Festival Chairman

David Swingler, Chairman, Cape Town Branch

RECIPE WITH A STORY TO TELL

On a recent cruise along the Danube, we visited Vienna, Bratislava and Budapest and enjoyed some wonderful and inventive food served by an excellent female chef, a very round Scottish lady who one would not wish to tussle with. Several dishes caught my interest so I noted them down and asked the Scottish lady about them. This wonderful pudding was served while on our cruise through Vienna and I can highly recommend it, but not to those of you on a diet! It is very easy to make and the ingredients will be in your store cupboard.

AUSTRIAN CHOCOLATE BREAD PUDDING

Ingredients

3 tbsp black seedless raisins
3 tbsp dark rum
3 tbsp butter
5 - 6 slices of stale white bread or small pieces of challah
1 apple - peeled, cored and sliced finely
3 tbsp very light soft brown sugar
½ tsp each of allspice and ground nutmeg
2 beaten egg yolks
200g of semisweet chocolate cut into small pieces
125ml whole milk + 125ml double cream
2 tbsp double cream to melt with chocolate
2 tbsp roasted sliced almonds for topping

Preheat oven to 375F

Soak raisins and thinly sliced apples in rum for at least 6 hours.

Melt chocolate and 2 tbsp double cream in microwave on low.

Mix the ½ cup double cream, milk, sugar and spices into the beaten yolks and then add to the melted chocolate making sure that the chocolate is well dissolved.

Cut off bread crusts, butter liberally and cut into small pieces. Line a well greased 8" ovenproof dish with a layer of bread, then add the well drained fruit and finish with a layer of bread. Pour over the milk and egg mixture. Sprinkle the rum and roasted almonds flakes over the top.

Place in oven for approx. 30 - 35 minutes until brown. Serve while warm, with crème fraîche.

It can also be served with fresh cream or ice cream and should serve 8!!

Val Brookfield-Bishop



MERSEYSIDE FESTIVAL - 14TH - 18TH JUNE 2011



Although places at the festival were sold out some time ago and we have a waiting list of members from around the world, a number of the venues selected for individual events are able to accommodate extra members. These events are not inexpensive but will give members the opportunity of meeting fellow international colleagues. Places will be allocated on receipt of payment in full. The menus and wines have not yet been finalised. To register interest please contact the Festival Chair, Val Brookfield by e mail: karnak.fvb@btinternet.com or letter to - Tan-Y-Clogwyn, Waterloo Road, Llangernyw, Abergele, LL22 8RH. Please advise any dietary requirements.

Wednesday 15th June 2011 Black tie reception and dinner with fine Bordeaux wines at Knowsley Hall, historic home of the Earls of Derby - £175 per person

Thursday 16th June 2011 Lunchtime Tapas and Sherry tasting on the River Dee, starting from the landing stage in Chester - £60 per person.

Thursday 16th June 2011 Reception and Liverpool themed dinner with Iberian wines at the Isla Gladstone Conservatory in Stanley Park, Anfield, Liverpool - £90 per person

Saturday 18th June 2011 Final Festival Black Tie reception and dinner with a menu designed by Michelin starred chef Simon Radley and matching wines at the Chester Grosvenor Hotel - £165 per person

It is also possible that there may be a few places available on the post festival extension to the Lake District. Price £1,500.00* per person for 5 days/4 nights from 19th June 2011. Coach transport during the tour.

*All prices based on two adults sharing a twin/double room (£500 single room supplement)

- + 4-nights at the luxury Holbeck Ghyll Hotel
- + 2 evening meals in Holbeck Ghyll's Michelin Star restaurant with wine
- + Evening meal with wine at L'Enclume
- + Lunch with wine at Sharrow Bay + Full day tour of the Lake District with guide
- + Group entrance to World of Beatrix Potter & Ruskin Museum
- + Cruise on Lake Windermere
- + Full-day Mountain Goat High Adventure tour





Saffron Strands

BART®



Turmeric

Your Editor visits Bart Spices of Bristol and talks to Chief Executive Matthew Shaw

A recorded myth claims that the gods drank sesame wine on the night before they created the earth. This Assyrian myth represents our first historical evidence of an ancient spice trade.

What precisely is meant by a spice?

In terms of a modern definition, a spice is obtained from the dried fruiting body of a plant. Thus it can be the whole fruit as in cubeb pepper, allspice berries and cumin. Or it is the kernel or seed of the fruit as in nutmeg, fenugreek seeds or nigella seeds. In contrast, herbs are the vegetative parts of a plant - the stems and leaves. These include lemongrass stems and thyme and oregano leaves. One exception to this rule is the Kas-turi Methi, which are the dried leaves of fenugreek, which is generally considered as a spice.

In addition there are the roots and bark of plants in their dried form, these are also considered as spices. Thus turmeric and wasabi are spices, both are derived from roots, as is cinnamon which is a bark.

the environmental health regulations is nothing like my romantic image.

In ancient times a spice seems to have been defined as anything that bore a strong aroma. Thus herbs, spices and incense could all come under the label 'spice'. Perhaps the most important aspect of an ancient 'spice' was that it should not be perishable and could be transported for many months with little loss of pungency.



The economically important Silk Road (red) and spice trade routes (blue) were blocked by the Ottoman Empire in 1453 with the fall of the Byzantine Empire. This spurred exploration and motivated the discovery of a sea route around Africa thus triggering the Age of Discovery.

I have been intrigued by Bart Spices for many years. I remember once seeing a film of their massive warehouse alongside the docks in Bristol. Hessian sacks of exotic spices from all corners of the world were piled high. Bundles of cinnamon, bags of nutmeg, boxes of vanilla beans, a plethora of goodies of all different hues waiting to be ground, bagged, boxed or put into jars. You could almost smell the heady aromas of the mysterious spices just watching the film. When I visited the factory this year I asked about visiting the warehouse but was assured by Marketing Manager Kelly Field that there was nothing to see, just piles of cardboard boxes. These days the raw materials are all sterilised and sealed in boxes at source. Ah well, take off the rose tinted spectacles and join the real world, of course Barts in the 21st century, with all

According to the all knowing 'Mr Google', "The spice trade is a commercial activity of ancient origin which involves the merchandising of spices, incense, herbs, drugs and opium."

Well I am not sure about the drugs and opium but Bart Spices certainly qualify as modern day spice traders. The company, formed in 1965 by Mr & Mrs Reg Bartlam, originally supplied empty glass jars to the local cookware trade before seeing the opportunity to fill their jars with the numerous exotic spices that arrived at Bristol docks from all parts of the globe. Today's Chief Executive Matthew Shaw is the son of Edward Shaw, the retiring chairman and one of the company's first employees. In May, only days after our interview, Matthew, with the backing of Langholm Capital, who own Tyrrells Potato Chips, headed a management buy-out of the company.



Blade Mace



Cardamom



Curry Leaves

Barts, under the management of Edward and now Matthew Shaw has become the second largest spice company in the UK. They employ 130 people, and retail over 650 products. They have an extensive variety of air dried and freeze dried herbs and spices which range from basic mixed herbs to more unusual condiments such as Asafoetida, also known as Hing, a resinous gum extracted from plants of the Giant Fennel family. The speckled cream powder has a strong garlic/onion smell when raw, but loses its pungency when cooked, leaving a smoother flavour reminiscent of leeks. Due to the strong unpleasant smell when raw it is also referred to as Devils Dung.



Kaffir Lime Leaves

You will find Bart spice in many different guises. The Hanbury range of cooking salts were introduced in the 1980's and pioneered at a cooking school in Norfolk where wet French sea salt was mixed with herbs and spices to let the flavours infuse before the students used them. These salts became so popular that Barts took them on board and today they market a full range in tins and kilner jars.

The names Veeraswamy, Blue Elephant and Las Iguanas are all synonymous with the company. The Veeraswamy restaurant opened in London in 1926. It is the oldest Indian restaurant in Britain and they have worked with Barts for many years developing a range of authentic curry pastes, pickles and chutneys. Blue Elephant are known for their high quality products including curry pastes which have been developed from original Royal Thai cuisine recipes by chefs in Thailand. A more recent alliance has been that with the Las Iguanas chain of Latin restaurants. Barts trialled a new chilli sauce at their Bristol restaurant and it became so popular that they are now producing it for the whole chain along with several Latin condiments.

Bart Delicatessen is a range of organic products from around the world. The business is very proud of the fact that they were the first company to supply a Fairtrade spice to the supermarkets, with the launch of their Fairtrade Vanilla Pods in November 2005. This was followed by Fairtrade Ground Ginger, Cinnamon Sticks and Turmeric in March 2006. They continue to add to their growing range of Fairtrade products absorbing all the growers Fairtrade costs in a commitment to offer a better deal to producers in developing countries. Their catalogue also includes a Fairtrade sugar range.

An assortment of 'Pastes' is a recent innovation, these are small jars of herb or spice pastes. The majority are produced using fresh herbs and spices made into a paste with an infusion of sunflower oil. The flavours come through much fresher than the freeze dried herbs and they are an excellent way of adding flavour to stir-fry's, marinades and dressings.

Crop failures around the world can be a nightmare for the company. The saffron crop was a disaster in Spain this year so this now has to be sourced from Iran.

Baking products are another line for this cosmopolitan firm. Finest St Vincent arrowroot and baking powder have been part of their range for many years. With the recent resurgence of home baking they have added more baking products including a range of fancy sugars. Then come the crispy crumbs and meat rubs, the list is endless. Everything you can think of to enhance your cooking repertoire.

The company now supplies the majority of Waitrose dried herbs and spices and also a range to Tesco. All the raw materials arrive by boat, from as far apart as Peru in the west to China in the east, thus cutting the companies carbon emissions to a minimum. Matthew told me of the many environmental changes they have made at the Bristol plant since 2003. They have reduced their energy consumption by installing more efficient machinery, including a new compressor system and 3 new shrink wrapping machines. The new equipment is smaller, more reliable, and has lower running costs. Matthew pointed out that distribution counted for a large proportion of their carbon emissions as they distribute products nationally to a range of outlets. In 2007 they consolidated 3 storage facilities into one Distribution Centre. The company benefited from reduced logistics costs, with less shunting of goods from one centre to the other and greater coordination of stock movements overall. The new facility and operations also meant fuel consumption and carbon emissions were reduced significantly, with the added benefit to the city of less vehicle movements on Bristol roads. The company has significantly increased its recycling rates in recent times and is proud of its involvement in the support of many local charities around the city.

I am very indebted to Matthew Shaw and Kelly Field, who design all the packaging and advertising literature, for showing me round and giving me an insight into a British company that is making a marked effect on the home cooking scene and giving us many new and exotic flavours to try in our own kitchens.



Star Anis



Fennel Seeds



Nutmeg



Juniper Berries



Cinnamon

Recipes from Bart Spices

Moroccan Chicken with Lemon & Olives

Serves 6

Heat 2 tbsp olive oil in a heavy based casserole dish. Add 2 sliced onions and cook gently for 10 minutes until soft, then remove them and set aside. Add 6 chicken joints (breast or legs) to the casserole and cook, turning, until browned on all sides. Stir in 1 tsp Bart Ground Cumin, 1 tsp Bart Ground Paprika, 1 tsp Bart Fairtrade Organic Ground Ginger, large pinch of Bart Saffron and 1 Bart Fairtrade Cinnamon Stick. Cook for 1 minute, then return the onions to the casserole and add 1 tsp Bart Garlic in Sunflower Oil. Pour in 250ml chicken stock, season with salt & pepper and bring to the boil. Cover and cook in a preheated oven at 180C/ Gas 4 for 45-50 minutes. Cut 2 preserved lemons in half, remove and discard the pulp, then cut the peel into quarters and add to the casserole with 55g pitted green olives, 3 tsp Bart Coriander in Sunflower Oil & 2 tsp Bart Harissa Paste. Cook for a further 10-15 minutes until the chicken is cooked. Remove the cinnamon stick and serve with couscous and a selection of vegetables.



Massaman Beef Curry

Serves 4

Peel 350g small new potatoes and cook in boiling water until tender. Drain and cut in half. Heat 2 tbsp oil in a wok and cook 1 chopped onion until soft. Add 350g beef strips and stir-fry until browned. Stir in 6 tsp Bart Massaman Paste and add 400ml Bart Coconut Milk. Simmer gently for 10 minutes until the beef is cooked. Stir in the potatoes and cook for a few more minutes until they are heated through.



Berberé Beef Kebabs

Serves 4

In a bowl mix together 2 tbsp lemon juice, 2 tbsp olive oil, 1-2 tsp Bart Berberé seasoning and a crushed garlic clove. Cut 500g lean beef into 4 cm cubes and add to the bowl. Mix together thoroughly then chill for 2 hours. Thread the cubes of beef onto 4 skewers, adding a few Bart Bay Leaves at intervals. Grill or barbeque, turning from time to time for 10 minutes or until cooked to your liking. Serve in pitta bread with salad.



Visit:

www.bartspices.com for many more interesting recipes:

Foot Note

Saving the environment with curry

Curry spices could play a critical role in the battle to prevent global warming, by reducing the vast quantity of greenhouse gases emitted by ruminants such as cows and sheep. Based on lab research, a team at Newcastle University concludes that adding the spices coriander and turmeric to the animals' diet could reduce the amount of methane produced in their stomachs by up to 40%. The spices are believed to kill off the "bad" gut bacteria that create the gas. Methane emissions, most of which come from livestock, are thought to be responsible for about one-fifth of the atmospheric warming caused by human activity.

Reproduced from 'The Week' 31st July 2010

Did Cooking Make us Human?

By Katie Wilkins

Human beings have to eat to survive. It goes without saying that anyone who joins a wine and food society believes that the necessity of eating and drinking should be made as enjoyable as possible.

In his book 'Catching Fire: How cooking made us human', Richard Wrangham takes this much further. Mr Wrangham, a biological anthropologist at Harvard University, is a champion of the significance of cooking in human evolutionary history. He argues that cooking was the main reason that humans evolved differently from apes. "Cooking", Wrangham writes, "increased the value of our food. It changed our bodies, our brains, our use of time and our social lives. Meat eating has been an important factor in human evolution and nutrition but it has had less impact on our bodies than cooked diets. Even vegetarians thrive on cooked diets. We are cooks more than carnivores."

He explains his beliefs about food value by describing many case studies which show that raw foods can't properly sustain the human body for longer than a month. Unlike other animals, human beings can't extract enough energy from non-cooked foods to survive in the long term. "When our ancestors first obtained extra calories by cooking their food", he says, "they and their descendants passed on more genes than others of their species who ate raw food."

Who, then, were the first cooks? Probably *Homo erectus*. Whereas meat eating may explain the origins of our genus *Homo*, the astounding brain-and-behaviour flowering that came along with *Homo erectus* cannot be tied to meat eating. Their jaws and teeth are poorly adapted for eating the tough raw meat of game animals. Something else must have been going on and, Wrangham argues, that something else was acquiring energy from cooked foods.

Wrangham also introduces the concept of the 'chewing time budget'. Raw food diets require a lot of chewing. If you cook food, and therefore have to spend less time chewing it, you have more time available for hunting, social interaction and other things such as tool making.

"Although the breakthrough of using fire at all would have been the biggest culinary leap", he notes, "the subsequent discovery of better ways to prepare food would have led to continual increases in digestive efficiency, leaving more energy for brain growth."

Thinking of culinary leaps, it's interesting to speculate what our ancestors would make of some of the recent developments in food technology. In his book 'A Day at elBulli: An insight into the ideas, methods and creativity of Ferran Adria', Sr Adria describes the long and painstaking creative process that went into the development of his extraordinary dishes. The use of liquid nitrogen, foam and freeze drying, to name but a few of his techniques, would be beyond the imagination of the first cooks, but result in dishes such as 'Thaw 2005', 'Carrot-LYO foam with hazelnut foam -air and Cordoba spices' and 'Tandoori chicken wings with borage shoots, oyster cream and frothy mato cheese'.

I wonder if Ferran Adria's creations, or those of Heston Blumenthal or the many other culinary geniuses practising today, continue to increase our brain power.

I like to think so.





First for Foodservice

The Company That Caters for the Country

Many members will remember some of the disgusting food produced in hotels, restaurants and catering establishments around the country in the 60's 70's and even 80's. I think all will admit that things have slowly changed in the catering trade over the last two decades. I would like to think that is due to the plethora of catering colleges turning out better qualified youngsters but there is one other factor that has made a tremendous difference in the last ten years - some would argue whether it is for better or worse, that is 'foodservice' - the vast commercial catering industry - in general and '3663' in particular.

Travelling the width and breadth of the country you can't have failed to have spotted one of their 1,000 refrigerated lorries with its distinctive logo or one of the 39 refrigerated warehouses alongside the motorways. If you eat outside your own home you will have eaten a meal supplied by 3663. This colossus of a company supplies a quarter of all Britain's catering needs, a fact very few people realise.

Why '3663' - very simple - it spells "food" on your telephone keypad. The company is officially the largest participant in a mushrooming industry called "foodservice". It supplies pubs, canteens, schools, hospitals, prisons and any other outlets from which people buy or are served cooked meals. Amongst their 10,000 products there are high quality raw materials destined for some of the top restaurants in the country and at the other end of the scale anything that can be microwaved or deep-fried and served as food. The company has over 30,000 customers that run 50,000 outlets - that is a staggering 20% of the commercial kitchens in the country. The firm, which employs 6,800 people is owned by the international Bidvest Group, they turned over £1.5bn last year and made a profit of £50m.

I decided it was about time members learnt a little more about this hydra headed monster that effects all our lives even if we didn't realise it. I asked them a few questions:

1 How long have you been established?

11 years – 3663 was established in 1999

2 Do you supply supermarkets with your products?

No. 3663 is not a consumer-facing company. We work with the foodservice sector to support and supply operators with advice, services such as menu planning, nutritional information and products - whether locally sourced fresh produce, meal solutions, wine, dry goods or catering equipment.

3 Do you consider you have an image problem?

No, quite the contrary - we continuously work with our customers to ensure that we deliver the highest level of service to them and that our products meet their specific needs. With consumer tastes and trends continually evolving, it is very important to maintain a very close working relationship.

4 Food-lovers are very sceptical of freezer to microwave ready meals that have been supplied to the average pub for some years. Why don't you publicize to the general public that you also supply a range of top quality products that would grace (and do) any Michelin star restaurant?

3663 does not sell to the general public but to the foodservice sector and as such, our communications are aimed at them – keeping them informed of consumer trends and product development. What is important to note is that the face of the trade has changed.

Yes, you do have some pubs that perhaps have limited space or skilled kitchen staff and therefore depend on products that only need final preparation and finishing. We offer them a range of quality products that meet this need and have a product development team working very closely with customers to understand their requirements. Our Whites range for example uses only the finest quality natural ingredients specially selected by the 3663 development chefs. The dishes are easy to prepare, which is a real advantage for kitchens whose staff have varying skill levels.

We also have customers who need locally sourced or ethically accredited products that serve their market. Again we are able to meet requirements and offer advice on how to highlight these items in the best way possible on menus.

5 Why are you so covert about your firm and your products when your portfolio contains such luminaries as the Queen and Michael Caines?

We are not covert at all – our customers and the industry are well aware of 3663, its products and credentials. We ensure that we maintain very close working relationships with our customers and we also lead industry discussion on a number of topics including sustainability.

3663 also cooperates with a number of groups, forums and governing bodies to ensure that we lead and show the way forward for other foodservice providers. A good example of this would be our work with the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to reduce the salt levels in products. Virtually all of our own brand products now meet recommended guidelines, ahead of deadlines set by the FSA and we are able to offer advice to customers on this and other nutritional topics. →

6 Do you seek to protect the reputation of the chefs that are using your products?

No, our first port of call is our customer, the chef. It is about spending our time and resource where it matters most: developing products that meet customer needs.

I think the best way to explain it would be an analogy: pharmaceutical companies spend their time developing products that meet a specific consumer need, for example a new anti-biotic. Once it is developed and has passed all the necessary quality and performance tests, it is marketed to the doctor. The benefits are clearly communicated and the result it delivers. As a consumer the general public are not targeted with marketing but receive all the benefit because our products meet their needs.

7 Do you use plain vans to deliver to the more upmarket establishments?

No. All vehicles carry clear 3663 branding.

8 Michel Roux rated your Casterbridge beef as “some of the finest fillet I’ve ever tasted” why don’t you inform the dining public that you are supplying our catering outlets with high quality products?

The general public does not walk into an outlet asking for 3663 products. They dine out for the experience. They have the general understanding that an outlet, much like a supermarket, sources products from a number of suppliers.

9 In the Society it is the form at a lunch or dinner to invite the chef out after the meal to show our appreciation. Members quite often ask how a dish has been made and sometimes even for the recipe of a dessert. I have noticed more often recently that this is causing the chef great embarrassment and often the reply is ‘Ah that is a trade secret’. There is a great improvement in the quality of desserts served in many restaurants and at large functions. Is this indicative of the fact that you are producing some quality dishes and supplying even top class restaurants that have no pastry chefs?

You would have to ask the chef that question. But yes, quality remains key to our product offers and our chef development team excels at creating superior meal items that deliver on taste and presentation.

10 Do you have a problem convincing chefs that your products can be as good, if not better, than a lot of them can produce with limited means or staff in their own small kitchens?

No, the Whites range is the perfect example of products that we have specifically developed to help kitchens with varying staff skill levels.

11 Members eat out regularly and we have noticed recently, in two separate restaurants that we have been served the same raspberry sorbet which is obviously one of yours (or Brakes). How often do you change your products and add new ones?

New products are developed and added to our lists on a monthly basis. Our customers select the products they order based on customer trends and consumer demand in their outlet.

12 Have you found there is now better acceptance of your ‘boil in the bag’ techniques since the restaurant trade now uses the aphorism ‘sous vide’ ?

We don’t monitor products based on packaging or preparation, customer requirements drive demand.

13 Can you give me some details of the amount of work that goes into the research and development of a particular dish? (I would imagine the answer to this question could make an article in itself).

It is indeed an intricate process but in brief: A new product can come about in a number of ways. A need can be identified by the sales or chef development teams based on conversations and work with customers. Industry or consumer trends can highlight the requirement for product development while market data can also lead to new product development.

Focus areas vary from changing flavour profiles to dishes for specific meal occasions and a brief is formulated and circulated to a selection of suppliers who then respond with their interpretation on the brief. Our Quality Assurance team is involved in every step of the process to ensure that the highest standards are adhered to.

14 Do you hold training sessions for your customers to better understand the best way to serve your dishes? We have noticed excellent dishes spoilt by poor presentation.

Yes, as part of the value that we add to our customers, we ensure that our teams are fully trained to be able to share the latest information and tips for business success. Last year we spent a lot of time training the sales team on the opportunity that Christmas presents and through demonstrations, tastings and video training they were able to share this information with customers and recommend the best dishes and menu solutions to attract consumers.

Prawn & crab bisque



‘Whites’ tartlet



‘Whites’ root vegetable



Culine Scottish salmon



Our business contact with customers can be through the sales team or chef team. Our chef team predominantly work with national accounts (companies with businesses all over the country) to create new products and do training.

The sales team interacts more closely with independent accounts (smaller businesses) and therefore also need the training as described earlier. But a business isn't limited to only these two points of contact.

We have a dedicated **Advice Centre** that can assist them with a variety of questions from presentation of dishes to nutritional information.

The pricelist is also a good source of inspiration with visuals that show how a dish can be finished.

15 You have been criticised by the food press of 'blanketing the country with your products thus removing all individuality from regional cuisine'. How do you respond to these accusations?

Our credentials stand very firmly in the work we've done in terms of offering locally sourced products and being able to deliver food with strong provenance where a customer requires it. We champion local sourcing in the foodservice sector and have regional product lists that are made available to customers and we constantly review and update our locally sourced products to ensure that they meet customer and consumer demand.

We focus on meeting customer demand and because of our national distribution network we are able to offer local products with provenance that customers want as part of their menus. Take the humble Cumberland sausage and how widely it is used now. Our service allows smaller, independent customers to place products with provenance on their menus.

16 With the current emphasis on 'local' produce do you source your ingredients as ethically as possible?

In 2005, 3663 was the first national distributor to champion local products from local people through its local sourcing initiative, offering local and regional ranges from Britain's recognised food regions.

17 You now supply a large proportion of the schools and hospitals market with ready meals. Since the Turkey Twizzlers debate do you receive any guidelines from Food Standards Agency (FSA) as to what is acceptable as healthy meals

It may be worth it for you to visit <http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/> to gain full insight into the standards that are set for school meals.

Since 3663 began trading, we have led the way in foodservice, driving the healthy eating message across the industry. We have been working with the FSA to reduce the salt, sugar and fat content of our products.

Our 'Positive Steps' campaign is an ongoing drive to meet and influence the growing demand from consumers for healthy options. It runs alongside our work to reach the FSA's targets and so far, we've reformulated our own brand products - reducing either salt, fat, saturates, sugar, hydrogenated vegetable oil (HVO's), monosodium glutamate and some artificial colours. All without impacting the taste and quality of the products.

Our aim is to ensure all our products are as nutritious as possible while keeping the taste and flavours that consumers are used to.

Working with branded suppliers 3663 also helps bring products to market that are healthier and free from artificial flavourings, colourings, preservatives and HVOs. For example, working with Green Gourmet, a specialist in education catering, to develop a range of products that meet the school food standard.

18 A relative newcomer to the ready meals market UK Foodhall Ltd is concentrating on supplying schools etc with all UK sourced meat. Is this a threat to your business or will you contemplate going down the same route?

3663 leads the way in foodservice and it is gratifying to see that other foodservice suppliers follow in our footsteps. For a number of years now we have been supplying products under assurance schemes such as Red Tractor and Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), and local meats that hold Protected Geographical Indication status.

19 Do you operate overseas

No, but 3663 is part of the Bidvest Group. Bidvest is the world's largest food service distributor outside the US and already holds leading food service businesses throughout the world. →

Aberdeen angus steak



Chicken with haggis



Gianduja



Caramello crunch



3663 has stirred up much debate in the catering world over the last few years. The late Egon Ronay, for example, said that he would not have any outlet selling such dishes in his guides, describing it as "cheating". He did admit though that many high-end ready-meals can be impossible to spot.

During an interview for The Independent, Joe Warwick, the editor of Restaurant magazine, pointed out that 3663 is servicing an industry with a big skills-shortage, "The restaurant industry has expanded hugely in the last decade, and there simply aren't enough chefs capable of cooking fresh food. 3663 is a business, they're providing a service and there's no deception involved in it: they are just filling a gap in the market. So we shouldn't knock them."

Fred Barnes, the recently retired, chief executive of 3663, was quoted as saying, "You're naive to think somebody's rolling out pastry and making you a steak and kidney pie for £2.50 or something. If you want to go to a gastro-pub and move up the price scale, then more will be made on-site, but the products we sell are all good products at a good price. Sure, some are boil-in-the-bag. If the chef just snips it and throws it on a plate then that might be a giveaway. But if they present it properly it's just a cooking technique like anything else. The further up the market you go, the more work goes into food. We are catering for everyone."

Michael Caines of Gidleigh Park told The Independent, "People ask why I use such a big firm, rather than local suppliers for everything. But a lot of the basic ingredients I buy from 3663 are as good as any. I mean, does it matter where you get sugar or flour from? They are also good at specialist things, always talking to us about what we want, and try very hard to include top-quality stuff in their ranges. For instance there's a particular brand of butter I like to use, and when they learned about it they went out and sourced it for me straight away."

Their pictures show the tempting array of dishes that the company trains its customers to present. The question is, do you welcome their involvement in the UK food scene, do you vilify them for killing individual initiative in our pubs and restaurants or do you think they have their place in the mammoth market of 'foodservice'?

Would you know if you were eating one of their products? ◆

Peanut buffet



Chocolate muffin



Now in his eighth decade Derek Hawes experiences his first glass of Chateau Petrus

From the moment the deep brownish venerable red cascaded into an eighteenth century crystal goblet it was an assault on the senses worthy of a Keats or a Byron. Venerable? Not really; at ten years old it was hardly out of nappies, but it made no difference, it zinged quality instantly. The preliminaries had been equally awesome, the cork drawn with the solemnity worthy of an archbishop; the pouring enwrapped in pure white linen napkin, and I, entranced and respectful in the presence of such nobility, knew my place.

It must have been like this when Marc Antony first saw Cleopatra and the spacemen stepped onto the moon. But here am I, long on my own journey to Byzantium, I too, thought 'this is no country for old men!'

How does one describe the onslaught on all of one's senses, confronted by the very best of wines? All of you is immediately engaged; the eye catches the light glinting on candle-lit crystal, tinged with red, the nose seeks the long-bottled flavours enfolding you in an aromatic wrap, the ear still hearing the soft liquid settling in your glass – all sending you into a reverie of romantic connotations. There was syncopation, there was rhythm, grave, profound, unforgettable – or is that my heart?

And then there was the taste.

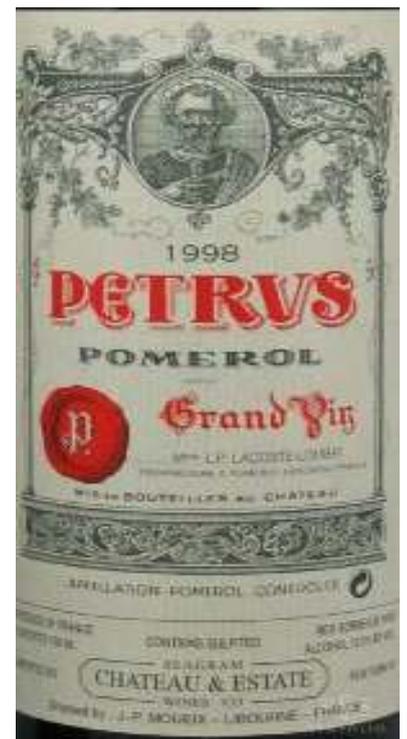
It was the blues, it was Miles Davis reminding you of the past and of passing things.

For someone in their eighth decade, long having yearned to taste Petrus, one's mind went walk-about; one thought of the scent tangled in the hair of she with whom you danced down the Bois, the trees like monstrous pagodas against the night all those years ago; and, floating in the lagoon, hearing the songs of the gondoliers on a chill Venetian night. There was regret and sorrow for dead friends, the smile that disturbed the dance, the painted fan against a summer eve, the stars brilliant as sequins on an archangel's floating cloak.

The characters from a Michael Arlen novel parade before the mind's eye, loving and betraying in the Ritz in 1922 and all we need now is the beloved Mitsuko to float onto the stage like a butterfly and play a Mozart sonata whilst we finish the bottle.

For one who will never see seventy again nor, probably, another bottle of Chateau Petrus, who will certainly never again eat salted almonds in the scented streets of Biarritz with the masts of yachts drawn ebony-black against the pale blue night, this, you may say, was a moment worth waiting for.

Derek Hawes



MANGOS - 'THE KING OF FRUIT'

MANGIFERA INDICA - THE COMMON MANGO

BY PAM BRUNNING

Do you know your Keitts from your Haden or your Alphonso from your Palmer and as for Tommy Atkins have you ever tasted his mildly sweet flavour and firm fibrous flesh?

Today there are over 1,000 different varieties of mangos throughout the world. It is alleged that more mangos are eaten fresh than any other fruit.

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations the top five mango producing countries in the world are India, China, Thailand, Pakistan and Mexico, in descending order.

Hundreds of cultivars exist and multiple cultivars are often grown together to improve cross pollination. Chaunsa a flavoursome variety common in Pakistan and Tommy Atkins are two that dominate the world export trade. The latter is popular because it has a good shelf life and is easily transported although it lacks flavour of many other varieties and is more fibrous than many.

There are over 20 million metric tons of mangos grown throughout the tropical and subtropical world. India exports very little as most are consumed within the country. Mexico and China compete for second place, followed by Pakistan and Indonesia. Thailand, Nigeria, Brazil, Philippines and Haiti follow in order.

The mango originated in Southeast Asia where it has been grown for over 4,000 years. Mango trees are evergreens and require hot, dry periods to set and produce a good crop. They fruit four to six years after planting and can grow to sixty feet tall.

The word 'mango' is said to derived from the Tamil word 'mangkay' or 'man-gay' and when the Portuguese traders settled in Western India they adopted the name as 'manga'. Mangos originated in East India, Burma and the Andaman Islands bordering the Bay of Bengal. Around the 5th century B.C., Buddhist monks are believed to have introduced the mango to Malaysia and eastern Asia and the fruit is prominent in Buddhist legend. The ubiquitous Persian traders took the mango to the middle east and Africa and the Portuguese brought it to Brazil and the West Indies. It was not until the 1830's Mango cultivars arrived in Florida and they arrived in California as late as the 1880's.

The Mango tree plays a sacred role in Indian life, it is a symbol of love. In the Hindu culture hanging fresh mango leaves by the front door during the Hindu New Year is considered to be a blessing to the house. Mango leaves are used at weddings to ensure the couple bear plenty of male children and the birth is celebrated by hanging mango leaves outside the house.

A Hindu legend tells of a mango tree growing from the ashes of the sun princess, who had been incinerated by an evil sorceress. The Emperor fell in love with the mango flower and when the mango ripened and fell to the ground, the beautiful sun princess emerged. Thus, the mango has become the symbol of love and a basket of mangos is considered a gesture of friendship.

The mango is a member of the Anacardiaceae family. Other distant relatives include the cashew, pistachio, Jamaica plum, poison ivy and poison oak. This could account for the fact that parts of the mango can be highly poisonous. It is not advised to burn mango wood, leaves or debris as the toxic fumes given off can cause serious irritation to eyes and lungs. The leaves are poisonous and can kill cattle and other grazing livestock. Care must be taken when harvesting as dermatitis can result from contact with the resinous latex sap that drips from the stem end when



KEITT



HADEN



ALPHONSO



TOMMY ATKINS



PALMER



A Mango Fork

mangos are picked. Mango skin is not considered edible by some as, when the aftertaste hits you, it is easy to understand why people refer to the flavour as "turpentine mouth". People who react to poison ivy/oak/sumac should not eat the skin as it can produce the same type of allergic reactions, skin lesions, swollen lips and tongue. It is the same chemical, urushiol which causes dermatitis that is found in the related poisonous plants.

Mangos are known as a comfort food, they really can make you feel better. They are rich in vitamins, minerals and anti-oxidants but best of all they have stomach soothing properties similar to papain found in papayas. These comforting enzymes act as a digestive aid and can give a feeling of contentment after eating a luscious mango. It is said they can become addictive.

Haden was the first superior mango cultivar selected and named in Florida and the Tommy Atkin is a Haden seedling. It has become the most extensively planted export mango in the New World and it is the benchmark of the commercial mango industry. It's colour, disease resistance, and storage qualities appeal to merchants and consumers worldwide. In the U.S. the fruit ripens in June and July. The Haden is one of the most common mangos available in the U.K. and is often used for cooking in casseroles and stews while still green and under ripe.

The ripeness of a mango can be determined by either smelling or squeezing gently. A ripe mango, when at room temperature, will have a full, fruity aroma emitting from the stem end. They are ready to eat when slightly soft to the touch and yielding to gentle pressure, like a ripe peach. The best flavoured fruit have a yellow tinge when ripe, but they may be red, yellow, green, orange or any combination. Ripe fruit will keep for one to two weeks at an ideal storage temperature of 55° F. The best way to ripen a mango is at room temperature and to accelerate the process it can be placed in a paper bag overnight. Some people put an apple, with the mango, in the bag to create more natural ethylene gas which further decreases the ripening time.

The mango, both in its green and ripe form is a very good tenderizing agent due to the enzyme papain, It is therefore ideal to include in any marinade and in India they use a sour mango powder containing ground up green mangos called Amchur, both as a seasoning and tenderizing aid.

A mango a day is an excellent health regime. An average sized mango can contain up to 40% of your daily fibre requirement, they are an excellent source of vitamins A and C, as well as a good supply of potassium and they also contain beta carotene. Rich in anti-oxidants, it is maintained throughout the world that the mango is the perfect fruit, truly 'The King of Fruit'.

Green Tea & Mango Sorbet

This exotic sorbet is delicious served on its own or accompanying a dessert. It is also refreshing as a palate cleanser.

Serves 3/4 for a dessert or 8 as a tasting course

Ingredients:

80ml water

7g green tea

35g sugar

1 ripe mango

1 tablespoon lemon juice



Combine water and tea leaves in a saucepan. Bring just to a boil, remove from heat and let steep 5 minutes. Strain, discarding the leaves. Do not press leaves to extract liquid as this will make the liquid bitter. Return tea to clean saucepan, add sugar and heat gently until sugar dissolves, try not to boil. Remove from heat and cool about 30 minutes. Cut the mango fruit from the pit as shown, add to the tea with the lemon juice and liquidise or puree with a hand blender until smooth. Freeze for about 2 hours, pulse again then return to freezer. Return to freezer for another 3 hours then serve. It can be frozen for up to two months. Soften for 10 minutes before serving. This is best done by scraping with a strong spoon.

How To Carve Your Mango

Slice the unpeeled mango from stem end to bottom end parallel to the flat seed on either side. You'll have two large slices with the majority of the meat. The remaining thin slice of meat surrounding the seed can then be carefully pared away from the seed.



Discard the Seed



Cut lines lengthways without puncturing the skin



Cut Lines Crossways



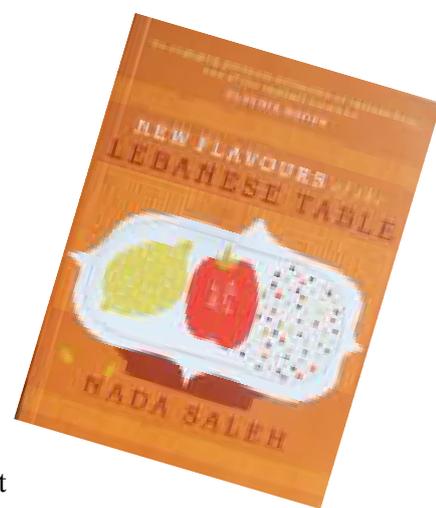
Turning Inside-out



The Result



Nada Saleh's 'New Flavours of the Lebanese Table'



Writing about myself and my book, seemed at the beginning a little difficult but as I held my pen, sipping my Lebanese coffee, memories started coming back.

To the sound of bombs, I had left the Lebanon in the mid 70's, after my mother had urged me to go to a more peaceful country in order to continue my education. I eventually surrendered to her demand.

She suppressed her feelings and bent her head down to prevent me from seeing her tears. I remember when she looked up, she told me to be careful. I stretched my arms and we hugged for long. Not knowing if I would see her again, caused me a lot of pain.

We never thought that our lives would change and each member of my family would end up scattered all over the world.

The airport in Lebanon was closed due to the ever escalating civil war (1975-1990). The way out, was not as easy as we had anticipated.

A driver known to my family drove me at dawn, taking what was known as a safe route. I looked back towards my mother, waving goodbye, kept looking until her face faded away.

We had to go through the Bekaa Valley, where nestled the many vineyards of Lebanon, heading to Damascus, to obtain my visa and leave for London.

Once in London, looking back at all those years I spent with my parents, missing home, nostalgic memories came alive. The smells of mother's stews and vivid images of her, sprinkling cinnamon over hot vermicelli rice. Recalling how in mid-summer we climbed the fig tree in our garden in Beirut, to pick the ripe ones that ooze honey for us to eat early morning for breakfast.

There were other happy moments mixed with the pleasure of the table. When on horseback we rode from Beirut up to Al-Sakhra (the Rock) a famous restaurant that served a fantastically tasty and unforgettable mezze (appetizers) such as hummous with pine nuts and diced lamb, fresh tasting, succulent Fattouche (Bread Salad) so much enjoyed while sipping arak (aniseed alcoholic drink).

Nostalgia made me begin my journey into the culinary world, food healed the wounds and I felt the need to share the food that had been shared with me.

The Lebanese love their food, their mezze, has become famous worldwide. However there is much more than that to its kitchen. Many hearty dishes and stews haven't travelled yet enough, like Laban Ummoh (diced lamb meat cooked in yogurt and sprinkled with garlic and mint), or Kafta baked in the oven with potatoes or even Upside down Aubergine and so on.

Through time, the Lebanese cuisine has been shaped by geography, religion, culture and customs. The climate and altitude also has affected what is grown and eaten in mountain villages, seashore and the cities.

Each region has their own speciality, to name but a few, the Hummous Beiruty (hummous with chilli, garlic, parsley topped with brown beans) to the Sfiha (savory meat pastry) from Baalbeck and the sweet Siniora (a dough of flour and butter) from Sidon.

Many influences also have made their mark, from Arabic, to Ottoman to French, in turn, the Lebanese diaspora greatly influenced the cuisine of the countries they fled to.

As a general rule, vegetables, grains and pulses form the basis of the Lebanese diet. These are invariably combined with what the season and the land offers.

Tastes and preparation differ from one region to the other. As an example, Kibbeh (minced meat mixed with burg-hol, onions and spices) the traditional dish of the country could be prepared with goat meat in the North while, in the capital Beirut, it uses lamb. Travelling South, the same dish would have another flavour because of the different spices used.

I prepare Kibbeh at home when friends are around. It was amongst the first recipes I tested for my book in my kitchen. The Lebanese diet is deemed as being one among the healthiest cuisines in the world. Opposite are three simple Lebanese recipes that may seduce you into cooking.

The first is a soup for the fall months ahead, from the rich repertoire of Lebanese vegetarian dishes.

These recipes are taken from Nada Saleh's '**New Flavours of the Lebanese Table**', published by Ebury Press, Random House Group at £12.

Creamy Lentil Soup – Crema Shorba Al-Adas

225g (8oz) brown lentils, picked over and rinsed
1 small onion, roughly chopped
1 carrot
1 medium potato, peeled
2 Lebanese wholemeal breads cut into 2.5 cm (1 in) squares
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
Pinch of freshly ground black pepper
1 teaspoon salt or to taste
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil (optional)
Large handful of parsley, finely chopped to garnish

Preheat the oven. Place the lentils in a pan with 1.2 litres (2 pints) water and bring to the boil over high heat. Add the onion, carrot and potato. Reduce the heat to medium-low, cover and simmer for 25-30 minutes or until the lentils are soft.

Meanwhile, spread the bread squares out on a baking tray and bake in the oven until they are golden and crunchy. Turn the heat off and leave the bread in the oven for 10 minutes or more before removing them.

Place the lentils and their liquid in a blender and blend until creamy. Return them to the same pan, and add the cinnamon, pepper and salt.

Stir well, cover and simmer for 5 minutes.

Serve hot garnished with parsley, with the bread squares placed over the soup. If desired, toss the squares in 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil just before serving.

This is one of the stews I grew up eating, simple and economical.

Courgettes, Mince and Mint – Mtabaket Al-Koussa

500g (1 lb 1 oz) courgettes
½ -1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
450 g (1lb) lamb mince
2 large garlic cloves, finely minced
1 large red tomato, peeled and coarsely chopped
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon dried mint

If the courgettes are long, halve them and then slice each half lengthwise into quarters. Heat the oil in a medium-size pan over medium high heat and add the meat. Sauté, stirring occasionally, until browned, about 5 minutes. Stir in the garlic then add the tomato and courgette. Add 250 ml (8 fl oz) water, sprinkle with the salt and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat to low, cover and simmer for about 30 minutes. Sprinkle with the mint and swirl the pan. Serve rice or coarse burghol or Vermicelli rice.

Pastry with Meat and Sumac - Sfiha bi-lahmeh

Sfiha bi-lahmeh is much liked by Lebanese and the way it is prepared in south Lebanon and Baalbeck is famous. However, every region has its own version and shape, and the filling is different from one household to another. Sumac or pomegranate syrup may be added. The same goes for pine nuts. I like to add pomegranate seeds when the fruit is in season. The dough is lovely and can be used as a base for any other filling and even to make Lebanese breads (pittas).

Makes 8 - 10

225g (8oz) organic all-purpose white flour, plus extra for dusting
Good pinch of salt
1 teaspoon sugar
1 teaspoon easy-blend yeast
150 ml (¼ pint) warm water or as necessary
½ tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
1 teaspoon butter

For the filling:

250 - 250g (8-9 oz) lamb mince
1 medium-size onion
1 teaspoon salt
2 small-medium tomatoes, peeled, deseeded and finely chopped
Pinch of ground cinnamon, pinch of allspice and a good pinch of freshly ground black pepper
¼ - 1 tablespoon sumac
30 g (1 oz) pine nuts

Sift the flour into a mixing bowl and sprinkle with the salt, sugar and yeast. Gradually add the warm water. A sticky dough will form at first. Turn it onto a lightly floured working surface. Knead for about 4 minutes, add the oil and keep kneading, adding more water if the dough is stiff, for about 10 minutes. Form the dough into a ball. Oil your hands and coat the ball all over. Place in a deep bowl, cover with a clean cloth and leave for 2 hours to rise in a warm draught-free place.

Meanwhile, place the mince in a bowl, grate the onion over it and sprinkle with the salt. Mix in the salt and add the tomatoes, cinnamon, allspice, pepper, sumac and pine nuts. Mix thoroughly and refrigerate for just under 2 hours, then remove the meat from the fridge.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/Gas Mark 6 and grease a baking tray with clarified butter. Punch down the dough and roll it under the palm of your hand to make it into a ball. Oil your hands again and divide the dough into 8—10 equal portions. Roll the portions into small balls and place them on the baking tray. Spread them out with your fingers to form rounded-rectangular shapes and spread with equal amounts of the meat mixture. Again with your fingers, press and spread out the meat and dough.

Bake for about 15-20 minutes or until browned. If you wish to brown the meat further, place under a hot grill for 1-2 minutes. Be careful it doesn't burn.





Readers' Letters



ONCE UPON A TIME.....

It does not seem so long ago when restaurants were delighted to be approached by a Branch of the IWFS, in order to arrange an event at their establishment. It seems that in some areas, this appreciation has fallen by the wayside and we are mistaken for, quote, 'The Wine and Food Society' from wherever the Branch is located.

As you are all aware, the IWFS 2011 Festival is being held in Merseyside and one of our committee members approached a locally renowned establishment, Nunsmere Hall, Cheshire. We made it clear from the start that we were considering the hotel as a possible venue for one of the Festival meals. We decided to hold a Branch lunch, where members could enjoy their hospitality and acclaimed high standard of service and cuisine. The management were made fully aware of the expectations of the members and friends who attended and obviously promised that they would use this opportunity of presenting an excellent event and were delighted to be considered for the Festival.

The unanimous decision to exclude the establishment of Nunsmere Hall, was based upon, poor service, mis-matched crockery, absence of any floral displays, tarnished cutlery, unclean wine and water glasses, crumpled table linen and absence of condiments on the tables, over cooked food which was poorly presented and a general feeling of chaos from very young inexperienced serving staff and management which appeared to be out of control.

**Val Brookfield-Bishop
Merseyside and Mid.Cheshire Branch.**

I decided that, before publishing Val Brookfield-Bishop's letter, I should let the hotel comment so I sent it to the General Manager. He rang me and said he was there at the time of the event but did not wish to comment. He said I could go ahead and publish but he wished people would confront him, on the day, instead of going away and complaining afterwards. His whole attitude seemed to be that he didn't particularly care!

I tried to get hold of Liam Walshe the Director of the Prima Hotels Group, of which Nunsmere Hall is part, but he didn't reply to my e mails.

Editor

Dear Editor

As an independent member, I enjoy the Branch and other events through the pages of our magazine. Due to old age infirmity, participation is no longer open to me. It would enhance my membership if there were letters from others apart from those who write in with descriptions of the events. Other perspectives would be welcome.

The same applies to the reviews. Please write to say that you agree or otherwise with what was written about a specific restaurant. After all, owners, chefs, menus etc change with the passing of time and new perspectives will help future diners. They, too, could write an updated review, of course.

Finally, when is the new website to be available? The existing site is so run down. I'm looking forward to the improvement, it is the only other way I can enjoy membership of our Society.

John W Wells

This is a weird but interesting fact!

Cna yuo raed tihs? fi yuo cna raed tihs, yuo hvae a sgtrane mnid too
Olny 55 plepoe out of 100 can.

i cdnuolt blveiee taht I cluod aulacly uesdnatnrd waht I was rdanieg. The phaonmneal pweor of the hmuan mnid, aoccdrnig to a rscheearch at Cmabrigde Uinervtisy, it dseno't mtaetr in waht oerdr the ltteres in a wrod are, the olny iproamtnt tihng is taht the frsit and lsat ltteer be in the rghit plcae. The rset can be a taotl mses and you can sitll raed it whotuit a pboerlm. Tihs is bcuseae the huamn mnid deos not raed ervey lteter by istlef, but the wrod as a wlohe. Azanmig huh? yaeh and I awlyas tghuhot slpeling was ipmorantt!

Right, we have now established that 55% of members can read Food & Wine - yes? Now all we need to do is apologise to the 45% who have problems and assure them we do our best.

Editor

Collectanea - solina

Apples or Pears

If you are a female pensioner and are pear shaped you could be in trouble. A study, conducted by scientists in Chicago and published in The Journal of the American Geriatric Society, is the first to link obesity and body shape to brain power. According to researchers the more a female pensioner weighs the worse her memory. For those that are pear shaped, with fat on the hips the memory loss is more than those that are apple shaped with weight on the middle. I bet the scientists were all male!



The Best Before Scandal

In the UK 1.3 million unopened yogurt pots are dumped every day, along with 440,000 ready meals, 5,500 whole chickens, 4.4 million apples, 5.1 million potatoes and 1.6 million bananas. Figures from *The Daily Telegraph waste reduction body WRAP*. I wonder just how many of those apples and potatoes were bad? Very few I would imagine.



Free Water!

Revised Guidance issued under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 – March 2010.

The s.182 Guidance has been revised to take account of:

The new mandatory conditions commencing on 6 April, which impose a duty on those who manage licensed premises and clubs to prohibit irresponsible promotions and prohibit one person from dispensing alcohol directly into the mouth of another; **they also require those who manage licensed premises and clubs to provide free tap water to customers on request.** I am not sure about the first mandatory condition, I don't think it will affect members but the second is worth remembering. Some London restaurants have been known to charge for tap water.



19thC Curry

'Britain's first curry house has been honoured by a blue plaque. The Hindostanee Coffee House is thought to have opened at 34, George Street, London W1, in 1810, but it had closed by 1833, having proved ahead of its time: 140 years later, there were still only six curry restaurants in Britain.'

The Week - 3rd July 2010

Excellent investment advice - Buy wine

If you are a higher-rate taxpayer and want to avoid tax on your investments, buying wine is a pretty good option, says Nathaniel Litmann in The Schmidt Report. As long as the wine you buy is considered a wasting asset (i.e. has a useful life of 50 years or less), it won't attract either income or capital-gains tax when sold for a profit, provided the seller is not judged to be engaged in trade. The reason for this is that "HMRC is reluctant to classify private sellers as traders as it will mean that all associated costs and losses will have to be taken into consideration thus reducing the short-term tax take".

As an investment, "wine has much to recommend it". The greatest producers can only make a finite quantity and as supply diminishes, prices rise. The safest and most secure investments are French wine from the leading 30 chateaux. "Over the medium to long term a well-balanced wine portfolio should offer returns of 10%-12% year - better than the FTSE 100." And if any bottles don't rise in value, you can always drink them.

Source Money Week

Bordeaux Bonanza

Even as a tax break it might be a bit expensive investing in the 2009 Bordeaux vintage. It is one of the finest vintages in recent years and some are declaring the best in living memory. Some vineyards are selling for upwards of £13,000 a case with Latour a fraction under that at £11,400 but Lafite-Rothschild is on sale at £13,500 a case while Le Pin a small vineyard in Pomerol is on sale for £18,000 a case. What happened to the recession?

No More Glowing Sheep

Lamb lovers will be pleased to know that Scottish sheep have finally been declared radioactive free, 24 years after the Chernobyl disaster. Until now they have had to undergo stringent tests before they could be moved or slaughtered.



Frozen Dilemma

"The fridge and the freezer are not merely physical locations but mental ones as well. When we put stuff in the fridge, it's a problem delayed. When we put stuff in the freezer, it's a problem infinitely put on hold."

Caitlin Moran - The Times Magazine



Provisional EAC 'Awayday' at Victoria Falls - 22nd March to 25th March 2011

This event, to be organised by our African branches, will include a Zambezi Sundowner Cruise, a Black tie dinner on the Royal Livingstone Steam Train and free time to enjoy the Falls. The event will clearly be expensive but it will be a golden opportunity to visit the Falls with IW&FS members and meet up with fellow members from our African branches. Please contact Ron Barker to obtain further details and register your interest - ronbarker@hotmail.co.uk Tel: 0151-929-2991



The Mole Inn

Toot Baldon

Oxfordshire OX49 9 NG

Tel: +44 (0)1865 340 001

www.moleinntootbaldon.co.uk

The Mole Inn at Toot Baldon near Oxford is in an out-of-the-way place but worth seeking out for an enjoyable meal when visiting Oxford. The first word of the village name suggests that there are sharp bends on pleasant but narrow roads en route from the highway — toot-toot!

The Inn has been run by Gary and Jenny Witchalls for several years and they're making a good job of it. Gary has cooked at the British Embassy in Washington, been Group Executive Chef for Compass Catering and was Chef Director of the Butlers Wharf Chef School in London. Jenny, too, worked for Compass Catering as an Area Manager and that was where they met. They have a silent business partner known as 'Moley' in his youth which is why the Mole Inn is so named. The Inn has achieved various awards including the Michelin Bib Gourmand on a regular basis.

We were staying nearby in July and popped in one lunchtime, on a very hot weekday, to see what the dinner menu was like. The place was full to bursting. Two evenings later we were tucking into ballotine of smoked salmon, cream cheese with a wasabi and watercress dressing. For those unacquainted with wasabi, it's the Japanese relative of our home-spun horseradish. It grows near mountain streams, takes two years to reach maturity and is very perishable. The last factor makes it expensive to wrench it from its growing patch for immediate flight.

Moving on to the main course, *seared sea bass, potato gnocchi, basil, sun-blush tomatoes, clams and bacon* appealed. Then, *Open Beef Wellington* caught our attention in two respects. Beef Wellington had been mentioned in the June issue of Food & Wine (and in March — Ed). We pondered upon the word "open" as it is normally *wrapped* in pastry. Emma, who was our waitress, told us that the pastry part of Wellington is like a square vol au vent so that it can be presented individually and à la carte. She recommended *haricots verts* with almonds as the vegetable and we drank more of the wine while we waited. A compromise decision had resulted in a Pouilly Fuisse Domain Corsin 2006 from the Mâconnais sub-region of Burgundy which we hoped would be a good friend to both our fish and meat main courses. Banana fritters presented more of a challenge.

Let's look at the meal in more detail.



This ubiquitous smoked salmon and cream cheese starter takes on a welcome new life with the wasabi and watercress dressing so start experimenting.



Seared sea bass, potato gnocchi, basil, sun-blush tomatoes, clams and bacon. Perhaps the only incongruous ingredient is the bacon. Not everyone likes it with fish and we hadn't come across this combination before. However, 'it worked' as the saying goes.



Open Beef Wellington as presented. Let's see what's under the meat.



Close-up showing the pastry and duxelles [finely chopped mushroom] under the seared beef. Restaurants of ill-repute offer, for example, steak and kidney pie but when it arrives, the triangle of pastry was only introduced to the meat as it left the hotplate. We wondered whether a square vol au vent would work with Beef Wellington. It worked well in this 'case'.



The banana fritters were served with iced banana parfait, soft caramel and the garnish was a crisp caramel snap. There was too much sweetness with the soft caramel as well and it could have been replaced with a spoonful of raspberry mousse. This would have given variety in taste and colour. As you see, there's a lot of khaki! However, the fritters were enjoyable. We said earlier that banana fritters presented a challenge to the wine and it was more than a challenge to save some. However, we had made sure that a spoonful was left to test the theory. When the fritters arrived we wished we'd saved more.

With £7.45 for aperitifs and £32.50 for the wine our bill came to £98.25 without service. This was an evening to remember and a place to return to. We'll be back! Toot, toot!



The Old Mill Restaurant and Hotel
Mill Street
Shipston-on-Stour
Warwickshire
CV36 4AW
Tel: +44 (0)1608 661421

Now I know we are mad, 180 miles round trip for lunch!

Where shall we go for lunch today? We have done most of the restaurants locally, if they are rough we don't go back, if they are good we go back frequently and know the menus off by heart. Most places don't change their menu often enough - I wanted to try something different. OK he said we will try Ashley James at The Old Mill, it's only just up the M40.

An hour and a half later we were pulling into a very crowded car park in front of The Old Mill Hotel. Oh dear, we should of booked by the look of this car park. Walking in it was very quiet, reception was empty, the dining room on our left was beautifully laid up but, empty, the bar on the right was empty, eventually a young lady appeared. 'A table for two for lunch?' we asked hesitantly. 'Yes no problem.' Where is everyone we asked commenting on all the cars outside? 'Oh that's a public car park not ours.' End of mystery.

We were offered the Light Menu which is served from 12pm to 9pm Tuesday to Saturday. We started with a delicious, fresh tasting, Pea Velouté with truffle cream served with homemade breads. No salt on the table - Mr James, actually it is Mr Paynton, James is his middle name - knows his stuff, the velouté was perfectly seasoned as was the rest of our meal.

My rare beef salad, horseradish mousse, pickled smijis and watercress salad, with a port reduction was beautifully presented - a work of art in fact. I can only say the flavours were bright, fresh and tangy, all could be tasted individually but they melded together to create a beef salad extraordinaire. Very fine potato crisps added a texture dimension against the creamy horseradish mousse and the tender beef.

Himself's Chicken Caesar salad with parmesan foam came with crisp wafers of thin toast and crispy bacon and some top quality anchovies. Once again a good mix of flavours and textures with the creamy dressing.

After this success we couldn't resist puds. I had the Pud of the Day - a butterscotch bavarois accompanied by a cider granita and an apple doughnut. Lovely flavours and contrasting textures - delicious. Other puds on the menu were:

Chocolate marquis, burnt orange syrup, with a sesame tuille.

Iced banana & lime parfait, with dark chocolate sorbet.

Set rhubarb and custard crumble with rhubarb sorbet.

All at £5.95 or 'Choose three from above £5.95' - what a super idea.

Himself of course had the very generous portion of each - I did help him out in the interests of research! All were of the same standard as the rest of the meal - great. The wine list is short but well chosen and very reasonably priced with low mark-ups.

Lunches are served in the bar area which has been refurbished as has the rest of The Old Mill since flooding three years ago. Ashley's artist's eye showed through not only in the presentation of the food but also in the décor. He has not dressed the place down in 'olde worlde' pub style with scrubbed tables and random odd old chairs as most would have done. One bar is decorated all white with gold and black ormolu furniture and the smaller bar is furnished in the same style. Some might say it is a bit OTT but it gives the place class. Not the sort of place you would find the obligatory local propping up the bar. The restaurant and conservatory are in similar style. We will definitely be back for dinner but will need the accommodation to be finished first.

Evidently evening trade is good but there was only one other family lunching and they were foreign, obviously the locals are not into quality dining at lunch time.

Our bill for three courses on the 'Light Menu' including two glasses of Prosecco, one glass of Pinot Grigio, one glass Vinamar red and a sweet wine was £61.15. I left £6 cash as a tip for the excellent service- see below.



Did you know?

When giving a £10 tip on a card in a restaurant did you realise that the breakdown is-
 £1.49 VAT

£0.20 Credit card commission (might well be higher)

£1.06 Employer National Insurance (based on £8.31 left after the deductions above)

£0.91 Employee NI

£1.66 Income tax at 20%

Net to employee £4.68

I now always give gratuities in cash even for branch functions - it is perfectly legal.

MERSEYSIDE AND MID-CHESHIRE VISIT TO NEW ZEALAND Part 2 SOUTH ISLAND



Cloudy Bay Vineyard



Our first day in the south island included tastings at four vineyards. We made a surprise visit to Alan Scott's Vineyard where we enjoyed an excellent Sauvignon Blanc, with extra mineral content and a well balanced Chardonnay, with lovely fruit and a "long" finish.

Across the road to Cloudy Bay, this is a new winery and chais and a very professional tasting was arranged in the barrel room. Besides their well known wines there were some new ones: a 2008 Pinot Gris, an excellent 2007 Pinot Noir and a really special 2005 Riesling.

Lunch was taken at Hunter's Vineyard, where we met the owner, Jane Hunter, who is "Wine Woman of the Year". This vineyard has been winning awards since the 1980's for its Sauvignon Blanc. The terroir is particularly demanding, with poor soil, well drained and with average summer temperatures of 24 degrees. This produces elegant, balanced wines, which consistently outperform others in the area. The 2007 Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Riesling were exceptional and the 2008 Pinot Gris was very good.

The final tasting of the day was at Forrest's. We were shown around by the owner Bridget Forrest and she treated us to an excellent tasting, which included such delightful names as Tattybogler Otago Pinot Noir 2007! A beautiful, classic Riesling is produced most years, as is the Pinot Gris, which is full of character. The 2008 Pinot Noir is already drinkable and developing in complexity. They make a sparkling Pinot Noir, which is a rarity in the modern world, and the excellent John

Forrest Collection Syrah 2006 has won several medals.

South via Christchurch and Dunedin to Queenstown where we visited Gibbston Valley. This Otago area vineyard is famous for its Pinot noir. The 2006 has already won three gold medals and was the best Pinot Noir we tasted in New Zealand. They also make really good Chardonnay and Pinot Gris.

During the trip we dined in many excellent restaurants. Two of which were The Spinnaker, on the beautiful Waikara Marina near Picton, and The Fyffe Country Inn, at Kaikoura. We enjoyed an outstanding lunch at Morelea Farm, near Farlie, where Angie and Stan Taylor showed us around their farm and gave us a sheep shearing demonstration. This was followed by a farmhouse meal, which consisted of home produced beef and lamb, home grown vegetables, finished off with a delicious Kiwi Pavlova.

The farewell dinner was a degustation meal at Gantley's in Queenstown, which is regarded as New Zealand's premier restaurant. It is set in an historic building built in 1863 as a wayside inn. The Cuisine is based on New Zealand's best produce prepared with passion and flair with an international influence. We tasted a trio of salmon, spicy fig and beetroot tart, lemon lime sorbet, confit of duck leg, New Zealand Rack of Lamb, all finished off with a scrumptious Time for Chocolate dessert. Gantley's has the most awarded wine list in New Zealand and it showcases the best of the country's wines. We tasted 2009 Saint Clair Wairau Reserve Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc, 2005 Gibbston Valley Central Otago Pinot Noir, 2008 Lowburn Ferry Central Otago Pinot Noir, 2006 Pegasus bay Waipara Merlot/Cabernet and 2009 Clearview "Sea Red". Owners, Brent Rands, Sommelier, and Jared Aldridge, Head Chef, provided us with a wonderful dining experience to conclude a memorable trip.



Lunch at Morelea Farm

All agreed that the Merseyside and Mid-Cheshire trip to New Zealand was an outstanding gastronomic holiday experience with spectacular scenery ranging from volcanic geysers in the North Island to glaciers and fjords in the South Island. If you have never been on one of Val Bishop's holidays, you don't know what you are missing!

*Angela Britland
and Paul Bishop*

around the branches - Members Entertain at Home



Heddi and Bengt Böckman

MALMÖ - A SWEDISH BBQ - A FAMILY AFFAIR With Three Generations

Our branch is certainly neither the biggest and probably not the smallest in the Society but all of our events are attended by most of our members. This was again the case when 35 out of our 40 members entered a coach for this season's last event. A BBQ to which we were generously invited by Heddi and Bengt Böckman at their lovely place on the countryside. The weather was unfortunately far from ideal for outdoor activities so to escape from showers and wind we were fortunate enough that there was room for all of us in their spacious dining room.

Heddi, author of two cookery books, with a third to come, was of course responsible for the food. Bengt who is an artist and has illustrated her books as well as today's menu card choose the wines, partly from their own cellar. This resulted in the following delicious meal cooked and served directly from the grill by the whole family.

MENU

Scallops wrapped in Parma ham
Macon-Village, Coupe Perraton 2007, George Duboeuf

Salmon filled with herbs, grilled asparagus
Soave Monte Cerliani 2006, Tenuta Sant'Antonio

Boned rooster leg alla diavolo, bell pepper filled with zucchini
Vino nobile di Montepulciano Riserva 2006, Az. Agr. Crociani

Flank steak marinated in herbs and red wine, gratin of Jerusalem artichokes and potatoes
Vacqueyras 2007, Gabriel Meffre
Barbaresco Riserva 1999, Vecchia Storia

Side dishes: Two sauces Morocco style, fruit salsa, tsatsiki, guacamole,
Home made bread

Tiramisú
Marsala Rubino dolce, Cantine Pellegrino



Right - Daughter Filippa Fribing-Böckman
Son Pontus Böckman
His daughter Frida Böckman



The cooking was amazing taking into consideration that the fireplace was an iron grid placed over a charcoal bed directly on the ground and not one of those monster grills widely advertised at this time of the year. The starter, a luxury version of jumping devils was absolutely perfect and the fat round and rich Macon-Village went well with it. The salmon had spent one and a half hour directly on the charcoal heavily wrapped in wet newspapers and the delicious result was in very good company with a classic Soave. The two tender meat dishes were matched with a slightly roasted Montepulciano with its cherry tones, a more forward and tannic Barbaresco and a Vacqueyras, tougher and spicy with a lot of red fruit and high alcohol.

Society past Chairman Nils Sternby enjoying a joke with Bengt '& another'



The finishing Tiramisú was flavoured with Marsala and made the choice of wine easy and of course a perfect match. All wines served were robust in style and stood up well to the char-grilled dishes. Indeed in all a good start of the season.

Rolf Fransson

around the branches - Members Entertain at Home

SUSSEX BRANCH VISIT THE GRIFFIN FAMILY



On a warm Saturday evening in June, the Sussex branch had the good fortune to again be invited to Jill and David Griffin's lovely house, comprising converted barns, in Rudgwick. This year the weather was kind to us and, prior to the meal, we were able to stroll around their beautiful gardens and admire the, often unusual, trees and shrubs, many of which had been grown from seed by Jill – clearly a lady of numerous talents! We were offered either pink or white “Somerset bubbles” as an aperitif accompanied by an appetising selection of canapés which included Mendip snails collected by David. The un-named “bubbles” were, as David put it, the first decent lot of wine to come from the vines in his father's garden in the Mendip Hills and they both drank very well.

Dinner was served in the games room, a large converted barn, although the fine weather enabled a few lucky ones to be seated at a table in the gazebo. For my first

course I chose gravadlax which was home cured in lemon and vodka but in addition I tasted the fishcakes with caper-parsley sauce which were delicious – no ordinary run-of-the mill fishcakes these! Chinese barbecued pork with noodles was also on offer and a selection of home-made breads was passed round.

The three main course options were paprika roasted monkfish (cooked to perfection), duck confit with mashed potatoes and Tartiflette, which consisted of reblochon cheese baked over potatoes, bacon and cream, served with Savoie ham. This was followed by a choice of croquembouche (choux pastry filled with pastry cream and drizzled with caramel), traditional trifle or Thai rice pudding with coconut ice cream and mango or a selection of English cheeses. Or, in the case of those who could still move after such a sumptuous feast, cheese could be taken in addition to their dessert!

A very enjoyable red and white Chateau de la Cistus, supplied by Amphora Wines was available throughout the meal. This was cheerfully and efficiently served by Jill and David's children, Tim and Georgie, together with their friends, Daisy and Bekka.

David once again produced an outstanding meal, all dishes being beautifully cooked and presented, with pleasant, well chosen wines to accompany them. It remains a mystery to me how one man, virtually single handed, can manage to efficiently produce such an excellent and varied meal at home for 32 people, especially in the heat of that particular day. Twenty six members of the Sussex branch, three members from other branches and one guest had a wonderful and most memorable evening and we are extremely grateful to David, Jill and the young people for all their hard work and effort on our behalf.

Lesley Berry



The Griffin family & helpers

David gets the staff organised



around the branches - Members Entertain at Home



CAPITAL BRANCH LUNCHESS WITH FINE WINES CHEZ LES COTENS

On a cold grey spring day 6 members of Capital branch assembled at Joe & Nina Coten's Barbican flat. This was the first of two identical events staged by the Cotens for the branch as space at each was limited.

Joe is a connoisseur of French fine wines and his wife is an accomplished cook and they were kind enough to share their expertise and their cellar with our group.

We started with canapés of tartlets of English asparagus and 'spoons' of salmon paté accompanied by a Champagne Jean Laurent 1997. As a champagne buff I thought it was fabulous.

This was followed by a choice of either 'Fricassée d'escargots aux ceps or Trio de Saumons - marine, fume & tartare. The tartare was finely chopped raw salmon with minced capers, onion, garlic and lemon. All were delicious and admirably accompanied by a Puligny Montrachet la Garenne 1999.

The main course, a perfectly cooked fillet of beef 'en crouete' was served with a timbale d'épinards and pommes de terre de l'île de Jersey. With this we drank two wines - a Pauillac Tourelles de Longueville 2006 and St Estéphe Dame de Montrose 2003.

With the cheeses - a St Nectaire Mimolette Epoisses and a Roquefort - we enjoyed a Ch Léoville Barton 1995. It was such a treat to experience so many distinguished wines we had not necessarily come across before.

We ended this grand banquet with a mixed berry brûléé accompanied by a Sauternes Chateau Roumieu 1998.

With coffee and home made Mignardises there was a choice of three different Armagnacs of varying strengths - wow!

Sadly Joe & Nina plan to move to the Bordeaux region - close to Sauternes - later in the year. However when the dust has settled they plan to open "Chambres d'hôtel", accommodating up to eight people. IWFS members will be most welcome - situated in such a region - need I say more!

Joan Sykes



HEREFORDSHIRE AND MONMOUTHSHIRE BRANCH TASTING & LUNCH CHEZ BOYD

Simon Harvey is from Cornwall and is a retired vet. He ran his own practice from 1978 to 1999 single-handed concentrating on large animals. Simon believes that wine tasting is a fickle woman with whom he has had a love affair for forty years and still feels none the wiser. This was his third visit to us and none of the fifteen members and guests present believes this last opinion.

Simon's first white wine was a Joseph Drouhin Macon Village 2002 vintage direct from France and at its peak. It was introduced as having a well developed colour, full of apples vanilla and nuts. The second wine was a Rhône wine produced by the Paul Mas Languedoc Estate in southern France. Simon said it was full of peaches, apricot, nutmeg and cream. Simon then poured a Pinot Gris. Ron Wilkins thought it sweet but insufficient for a dessert wine. Our host, John Boyd suggested that a later harvest would bring that quality to the wine.

Progressing to the red wines, Simon introduced a Couteau Languedoc. It was a 2009 gold medal holder in *Decanter* magazine for be-

ing the best in the region. "I won't describe it more than having a long, complex finish in order to elicit your comment." Margaret Muir swiftly announced that "We are on tenterhooks waiting for it!"

The next wine to be discussed was a Burgundy Village. Its Gamay grape benefits from the carbonic maceration process which keeps the temperature down and involves bubbles of carbon dioxide in stainless steel vats in order to use the whole grapes which stay intact. "This increases the wine's cherry and meat flavours. Its 12.5% is a far cry from the Beaujolais Primeur of yesteryear, wouldn't you agree?" The company generally agreed.

The last wine of the day was Château Sainte Columbe Côtes de Castillon 1999 12.5% from the right bank next to Saint-Émilion and using the Merlot grape. "Though it is an early-maturer, I have cellared this wine. Nose it!" Ron Wilkins said the wine shows its age on the rim. Simon replied "Think brown. There are soft tannins."

A sumptuous buffet style lunch, prepared by members, included traditional French dishes - Porc à la Normande, Poulet au Riesling, Salade Niçoise, Savoury Potatoes and several varieties of French cheeses.

Peter McGahey, Branch Chairman called upon Jim Muir to propose the Vote of Thanks. He spoke for all present who found the event most worthwhile and enjoyable.

Alan F Harrison

around the branches - Members Entertain at Home



SURREY HILLS MEMBERS RELAX IN THE CHAIRMAN'S GARDEN

How is it we manage to arrange glorious sunshine for our Summer Lunch in July? Thirty members and guests experienced a sizzling time in my garden and partook of a delicious buffet. We started with a glass of Prosecco extra-dry served with prawns in a chilli sauce. The buffet consisted of home cooked ham and beef both with their sauces, all provided by Pam and Sid Brunning and carved by Sid. Various salads prepared by 'moi', included the ever popular jellied beetroot and my famous curried bananas.

Desserts were banana pavlova - made by Susie Joyson, lemon tart - made by Stephanie Shepherd and my fruit salad and apricot meringue. These were followed by coffee and my homemade Cherry Liqueur. The accompanying wines were a Pinot Grigio Matra Mountain 2009 which was crisp and fruity and very well suited to a hot afternoon. Also a light, soft Albera Barbera 2007.

My thanks are due to Alan Shepherd who very competently took charge of the wines, those who made the desserts and helped in many other ways.

Helen Mills

NORTHERN DALES BRANCH BBQ IN WEARDALE



The Northern Dales Branch is located in beautiful Weardale, County Durham. The majority of the members live in and around the picturesque, small towns of Stanhope and Wolsingham. Crawley Edge, the home of our hosts Mike and Eileen Leatherland, has breathtaking views over this stunning Dale scenery. This contemporary, green-oak framed house, built by Mike and Eileen, had long been a dream. Built in the grounds of their original home of twenty years it was begun in 2004 and took three years to complete. Mike and Eileen, along with ten other of the evening's twenty-nine guests, are original members of the Northern Dales Branch founded in 1992 by the late Derek Butler and his wife Joan on their return from many years spent in the Far East, where they had been IWFS members.

On arrival we were guided through the dining room and out through sliding, folding doors and onto the glass-walled balcony overlooking the pond and the panoramic views. We were welcomed with a selection of canapés and Ca'morlin Prosecco, a soft, scented and grapey wine that has delicious lightness and a good length, which proved to be a perfect aperitif for a summer evening.

The air cooled and the sun began to set, spicy aromas permeated the evening air as Mike and Eileen (helped by Andrew Monkman and Ian Edmunds) barbecued the food. The menu consisted of locally caught trout, with which we drank 'Goats do Roam', 2009. This South African wine is light golden in colour with rich aromas of peach and pear complimented by floral and citrus notes. To follow, we enjoyed a selection of meats including, Lemon Thyme Beef Rump, Butterfly of Lamb, and a specially created variety of sausage for the occasion, 'The IWFS Northern Dales Branch Sausages', devised by Nigel of Knitsley Farm Shop! The ingredients for these delicious sausages had been suggested by some of the branch members and included pork, apple, Calvados, fennel, Thyme and black pepper. Maggie Deytrikh provided an accompanying selection of tasty salads. With these dishes we drank the Australian wine, Curious Shiraz, 2009. A subtly integrated wine, American Oak balanced with ripe plums and blackberries giving it excellent structure and length.

After the main course we had the choice of several mouth-watering puddings contributed by members. Baked Vanilla and Strawberry Cheesecakes made by Sue Bruder, Nigella's Anglo-Italian Trifle by Wendy Edmunds, Raspberry Bakewell by Alison Farr and Cynthia Bibby baked a Summer Pavlova. These were followed by a selection of local cheeses. Jo and Andrew Foster, (daughter and son-in-law of Mike and Eileen), of Dillies in Hexham supplied the wine. They also, very kindly, donated the Portuguese dessert wine, Moscatel de Setúbal, which had an intense aroma of muscatel, orange tree flowers, tea and raisins, with a smooth, sweet but fresh palate, and was served in chocolate cups.

We sipped our coffee and indulged our taste-buds with delicious chocolates. All evening, there had been the buzz of laughter and chatter, of friends enjoying good food and wine, together; indeed a night to remember.

Ros Wilson

around the branches - Zurich & Helsinki



Liselotte Bergh and Peter Bennett-Keenan

GASTHAUS LÖWEN IN MENZINGEN

This restaurant has been a gastronomic highlight of the region for decades and Liselotte had been recommending that we should have a meal here. Normally the restaurant is closed on Sunday but they agreed to open for this Sunday. With no menu for reference, we all waited in great anticipation and possibly some trepidation for the first site of our Menu Surprise.

Chef Stefan Oberli and his wife Beatrix surprised us with a selection of dishes that were both artistically presented as well as delicious and his wine selections for the dishes were excellent. We started off with a Rosé aperitif from the Bielersee, an Erlacher Pinot Noir. After everyone was seated without any idea of what we were about to eat, we were treated to an Amuse Bouche, a mini glass of a warm curry soup, beside it was a very small cucumber and seaweed salad, a most interesting flavour combination. Following that we entered into the starter, an artistic presentation of Yellowfin Tuna sushi with a dollop of avocado salad at one end of the rectangular plate and a lightly grilled scallop with a tiny pineapple salad beside it at the other end. This was washed down with an Erlacher Riesling-Sylvaner, a very nice, very dry white wine from the same producer as the Rosé.

Roasted saddle of Swiss Angus beef followed, slices of rare beef sitting on a bed of Tessiner Maispolenta. The beef was tender to the point of melting in your mouth. The polenta was of the grainy type, very popular in the Tessin area of Switzerland where the special corn is grown to make it. The wine accompaniment was a Bricco Manzoni Langhe Nebbiolo from the firm of Rocche Manzoni, a delicious wine that partnered the food excellently.

Dessert came in the form of a Schokoladenkuchen mit flüssigem Kern mit Erdbeervariation. Translated, we had a very warm little chocolate cake that was filled with hot liquid chocolate, surrounded by three small Strawberry dessert creations. A Grains de Malice wine accompanied this from the Valais area of Switzerland, produced by Madeleine Gay. A superb sweet wine that more than matched the dessert with its rich fruit and body.

It was a wonderful day and as usual it was very late in the afternoon when everyone finally headed out the door into the brilliant sunshine.

John Macdonald

“FRENCH WINE COMMANDO” OF THE HELSINKI BRANCH

Members of the Helsinki Branch are certainly not alone with the problem of affording to taste fine wines. Few of us can open an expensive vintage of, say, Château Pétrus in a small company, and at Society events, there usually are too many participants to taste from the single bottle that some generous member has promised to bring along.

An obvious solution is to form “one-bottle” groups of wine enthusiasts, maximum 15 members, that meet whenever an interesting subject is found. At the Helsinki Branch, such a group, originally for evaluating French wines, was founded in February 1992, it has since met regularly once a month during the spring and autumn seasons. It became so popular that a similar group was founded a few months later, but members of the second group gradually lost interest, and the remaining members were combined into one single group. Two similar groups, for Italian and Spanish wines, were founded, but they were short-lived.

Our group has arranged many interesting tastings, usually of wines from a certain region. During the years, the regions of France have been dealt with in detail so other selection criteria have been used, even wines from countries other than France. A tasting of English wines is to be arranged, probably in January 2011.

The number of wines tasted at the event varies from three to six. Usually a snack from the subject region is served after the tasting. All costs, the price of wines, snacks, and the rent of the venue are shared equally between the participants and paid in cash.

At the tasting, the wines and the region are first presented, and “fact sheets” copied e.g. from the Internet are distributed. During the tasting members do not discuss, but after the usually blind tasting, votes are given. The scale is mostly three votes from each participant. Those votes may be distributed in any way – all three to one single wine, two to one and one to another, or one vote to each of three wines. After the voting, each wine is discussed in detail, before the labels are revealed.

In April 2010, the subject was “old French wines”. The results were like this:

1997 Château Rayas Châteauneuf-du-Pape	12 votes
1975 Gloria, St. Julien	8 votes
1993 Château de la Nerthe, Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc	5 votes
1975 Cantenac Brown, Margaux	2 votes
1978 Malescot St. Exupéry, Margaux	1 vote
1985 Lynch Bages, Pauillac	0 votes

All the wines were from the collection of our ex-Chairman, Panu Saukkonen, bought on his travels and chosen so that no very expensive “premium wines” were included, but the selection still would represent good regions and good vintages.

The voting pattern seems to be that the participants preferred the younger wines. The reason is obvious: The bottles were not opened early enough to let the wines breathe, and none of the wines was decanted. The lesson learned from this experiment was clear – never taste old reds too soon after opening. Many a participant said afterwards, that the votes would have been distributed in quite a different way, if the wines had been decanted.

Jaakko Rahola Helsinki Branch Photo by Mrs. Päivi Hanhinen



around the branches - Northampton Away



A RETURN TO NORTH NORFOLK

In June twenty members of the branch made a return journey to North Norfolk, an area we last visited in 2005. On Wednesday night we gathered at the Neptune in Old Hunstanton, run by husband and wife team Kevin and Jacki Mangeolles, awarded one star by Michelin in 2009.

We enjoyed an aperitif of Deville Carte, Tradition Rosé champagne, then moved into the dining room to start the meal with cold asparagus soup containing dice of marinated salmon, accompanied by Sauvignon Blanc 2009, Petit Bourgeois, a delicious crisp sauvignon from the Vin de Pays du Jardin de France. Next came Crispy belly pork with pea purée and pickled sultanas, with the best little straws of crackling that anyone could remember. The final 'starter' course was Langoustine cream with cucumber and prawn toast, or chicken and sweetcorn soup with mushroom toast for your non-shellfish eating correspondent.

On to the main course, we enjoyed Graham Yewdale's Sedgeford Lamb, roasted and braised, with Macaire potatoes, celeriac purée and broad beans, with Brouilly, Les Bruyères, Domaine du Point du Jour 2008. There was slight disappointment in this wine, despite it having been rigorously tested by our organisers, it was decided that there was distinct bottle variation.

Desserts, not unsurprisingly, came next – first a 'pre-dessert' of chocolate sponge, coffee jelly and mascarpone cream – utterly delicious and fresh; followed by Strawberry delice, fresh mint ice cream, macaroons and Campari jelly.

Coffee and petit fours of churros with chocolate sauce completed the meal and we went very happily back to our various lodgings in comfortable local taxis,

The next day we enjoyed a morning of shopping, cultural visiting or plain old lazing about before several of us met at Peter and Margaret Hutchinson's (and Jack's, of course) home in Blakeney for sunshine, drinks and nibbles, followed by a very fine asparagus soup, to while away some of the afternoon before our next culinary experience.

This was at Morston Hall, Galton Blackiston's one star Michelin Hotel which we visited on our last trip and very much enjoyed. We were privileged in that Galton cooked for us although Thursday is apparently his usual evening for taking to the surf! We met outside for Duval Leroy Brut Champagne and canapés or chicken and blue cheese mousse with Béarnaise sauce, before moving into the Orangery for our meal. We started with a Crab bisque with sweetcorn purée and popcorn (asparagus soup with mint foam for me), followed by a Celebration of local Summer vegetables with hens yolk and fresh truffle. Next came a grilled fillet of locally caught sea bream with rare breed pork belly. These were accompanied by Sancerre, Jean Max Roger 2008, which had a very fragrant gooseberry nose and palate with a citrus aftertaste.

Our main course this evening was a roasted breast of Telemara duck with its liver, summer cabbage, bashed Norfolk crystal potatoes, carrots, golden beetroot and white port jus. The wine was Trimbach's Pinot Noir 2006, a great success with its surprisingly deep colour and definite Pinot character.

The meal finished with a Pavlova of English summer berries with Champagne sabayon and vanilla ice cream, or a selection of 7 English cheeses with homemade cheese biscuits, quince jelly and sultana and walnut bread.

We left Norfolk wishing that some restaurateurs of the calibre we encountered would see Northamptonshire as the culinary desert it is becoming and come to rescue us!

Alex Corrin



around the branches - Manchester & Leicester

MANCHESTER AT THE RED CAT

Three members of the Committee had independently eaten at The Red Cat and enjoyed the food and service in this Lancashire country pub, recently converted into a Bistro Restaurant. The co-owners, Chef Chris Rawlinson with his brother Mike as front of house, have won awards as Lancashire Life Restaurant of the Year 2008, North West Young Chef of the Year 2009, and entries in 2009 and 2010 Michelin Red Guide. So we were delighted when they said they were able to accommodate a group of us into this picturesque building with its cosy rooms and interconnected areas, a fortnight before the Chef's Wedding.

A rosé wine, Tempranillo y Garnacha Rosado, Montesierra, Bodegas Pirineos was an enjoyable light aperitif on this sunny evening. The small reception area made for a lively and buzzing start with the Committee and staff co-operating to serve the aperitifs.

The first course of Formby Asparagus, Poached Duck Egg with Hollandaise, Bacon and Parsley Cress was accompanied by Sauvignon Blanc, El Picador, Central Valley, Chile.

The main course was beautifully executed Pan Fried Sea Bass with capers and clams and a Beurre Noisette served on a bed of robust crushed New Peas with marjoram. The Baby New Jersey Royal potatoes were not the usual taste or texture – maybe due to the recent EEC ruling banning the normal practise of fertilising Jersey Potatoes with seaweed or maybe due to the unusually dry spring season. However the chef produced delightfully cooked fish for 33 – no mean feat.

A large glass of Pinor Noir, Las Maritos, Mendoza, Argentinean wine was served with the fish. Due to the confined space it was difficult for the staff to circulate to serve the food and the wine – so instead of pouring 2 glasses of red wine throughout the course – they provided us with large glasses and served the appropriate amount of wine in one pouring – a unique solution to their problem!

On this occasion we had not provided our own wines and chose from the Wine List. Although not Grand Marque wines, they were light and appropriate for drinking in a Bistro on a Summer evening.

Perfectly poached sticks of Yorkshire Rhubarb in its jus with Cornish Clotted Cream and a Ginger Tuille biscuit provided a light dessert, which suited me, but some members would have preferred a more substantial Lancashire pudding.

Coffee and home made fudge completed the meal.

We were pleased to be joined by members from Blackpool, Ron and Valerie Barker, two independent members who live in Clitheroe, two of our Past members, who now live in Cape Town and were back on a visit, and two prospective members for the Branch. This added greatly to the enjoyment of the evening. As Andre Simon intimated Wine and Food is enhanced by good company and friendship and the evening certainly proved this maxim.

Tricia Fletcher



LEICESTER BRANCH - SUMMER DINING



Perkins Carriage hall with mezzanine floor above

On the 15th of June 2010 John and Ruth Percival arranged a dinner at The Marquess of Exeter, Lyddington, Rutland. The Marquess was reopened in May 2009 under the management of the renowned local chef Brian Baker formerly of the Fox and Hounds, Knossington, where he earned praise in the Good Food Guide – unusual for Leicestershire! We dined in the refurbished restaurant behind the old pub with oak beams and log fires.

We were welcomed with a glass of Prosecco Sergio Rosé with canapés. The first course was local Asparagus with Hollandaise sauce, next we enjoyed Roast Saddle of Lamb stuffed with Apricot and Tarragon and for pudding the best Summer Pudding with clotted cream that I've ever tasted. We drank Santa Puerta Sauvignon Blanc 2008 and Rioja Vega Tinto Bodegas Muerza 2008 which complimented the food perfectly. The cooking was excellent and service good. I thought it good value for money at £40.

Our July event was a Luncheon at the Carriage Hall, Perkins Restaurant, Plumtree near Nottingham. Perkins started business in a redundant station on the old Melton Mowbray to Nottingham line closed by Beeching. They have recently converted an old railway carriage building further along the line into a large dining room. We could see a single track railway running alongside the building. Apparently it is still used to test locomotives.

Our aperitif was a very good NV Loire wine, Bouvet – Ladubay “Rose Excellence”. We sat at circular tables. The starter was their own smokehouse salmon with a poached fresh salmon and dill tian and sauce Gribiche. An excellent Sauvignon 2009 from Domaine du Laulan, Cotes du Duras matched it well. For the main course we had duck cooked two ways with a pea, mushroom and tarragon fricassée. Sliced seared breast and a crisp skinned confit of duck leg tasted delicious and for me impossible to cook at home. We drank Chateau Boissel, “Haute Expression”, AOC Fronton 2003. We just made room for a strawberry and vanilla custard tartlet with a strawberry sorbet. Coffee and a homemade chocolate thimble enclosing a delicious cream completed the meal. Our thanks are due to Margaret Bowen who organized the event for £40 per member and £42 for guests.



Mary Jewell

around the branches - Cape Town

A FESTIVAL 'GIFT' - TASTING & DINNER - TEN YEARS ON – WINES OF THE 2000 VINTAGE



We launched the year with not just one dollop of generous goodwill, but two! At the closing of the International Festival last year, Chairman Chris Bonsall announced a donation – out of Festival funds – to the Granger Bay Hotel School for the edification of its students. So we returned there in March to hand over the gift. But not before members had also benefited from a smidgeon of Festival largesse. We are delighted to have secured Roland Peens of local vinous boutique Winecellar, an erudite Master of Wine (UK) candidate, to present a rare tasting of wines of the world, 'TEN YEARS ON'. We savoured ten mature wines from the fabulous 2000 vintage.

Menu

Welcome snack

Cherry tomato, basil & mozzarella skewers

Main Course

Lemon & Thyme infused Chicken served with seasonal vegetables and Jasmine rice

Dessert

Bake of the day served with traditional French custard

Wines

Aperitif

Gran Castellflorit Cava NV

Champagne

Champagne Tribaut Vintage 2000

Champagne le Mesnil Blanc de Blancs 2000

Burgundy

Armand Rousseau Gevrey Chambertin Premier

Cru Lavaux-Saint-Jacques 2000

Domaine Jacques Prieur Corton Bressandes

Grand Cru 2000

Piedmont

Marco Marengo Nebbiolo d'Alba Valmaggiore 2000 (Piemonte, Italy)

Aldo Conterno Barolo Riserva Granbussia 2000 (Piemonte, Italy)

Bordeaux

Chateau Duhart Milon 2000 (Pauillac)

Chateau Clos du Marquis 2000 (Saint Julien)

Sweet Wines

Domaine du Tich 2000 (Sainte Croix-du-Mont)

Bordeaux Blanc)

Warre 2000 Vintage Port (Portugal)

"SALMONS OF THE WORLD" TASTING & SEAFOOD SUPPER



We were delighted to have the services of Greg Stubbs, an aquaculture-fundi and CEO of Three Streams Salmon & Trout farming (www.three-streams.co.za), and Judy Sendzul of The Salmon Bar (www.salmonbar.com). Greg and Judy entertained us with a three-way tasting, with super wines to celebrate this delicate fish. We explored the different origins, different smoking methods as well as salmon and wine pairing (to wood or not to wood, this is the question!!) A fun food and wine education evening.

Anna Ridgewell, Chef-Patron of Café Max and member of the IWFS, hosted us in the newly rejuvenated Café Max in Green Point (www.cafemax.co.za). Following the Salmon tasting, we enjoyed a hearty bowl of Bouillabaisse, followed by seasonal fruit with cinnamon cream – lick your lips!!



Anna Ridgewell

APERITIF

Dry vermouth

TASTING OF SALMONS OF THE WORLD

Tasting One

Cold-smoked samples of

Scottish Salmon | Norwegian Salmon | Royale Highland (Lesotho) Trout

Tasting Two

Hot-smoked samples of

Chilean Salmon | Norwegian Salmon | Royale Highlands (Lesotho) Trout

Wines

De Wetshof Limestone Hill Chardonnay 2009 (unwooded)

Sterhuis Chardonnay 2007 (wooded)

MAIN COURSE

Anna's Bouillabaisse with crusty bread

Wines

Badenhorst Family Secateurs Chenin Blanc 2009

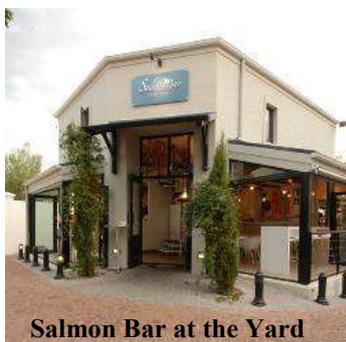
Domaine Grier L'Aqueduc 2006

Chapoutier Cotes-du-Rhone Belleruche Rouge 2004

DESSERT

Grilled Plums or Peaches (seasonal) with Cinnamon cream

Elmari Swart



Salmon Bar at the Yard

Three Streams Farm Franschhoek Valley



around the branches - Surrey Hills & Wessex

BROOKLANDS MUSEUM



Wellington bomber

SURREY HILLS ENJOY AN HISTORIC DAY OUT

The home of British Motor Racing and Aviation is one of Britain's best kept secrets, but to some of our members that is, now, not so.

As a Trust member I organised a party to go to Brooklands in Weybridge in June. Some experienced a 'flight' on Concorde. We saw the Wellington bomber and Brian Wallis's bouncing bomb all manufactured here. Also Malcolm Campbell's Shed and many other veteran, vintage and historic cars and aeroplanes.

We enjoyed a buffet lunch of a beef ragout with fresh vegetables followed by profiteroles and coffee in The Bluebird Room accompanied by Duc de Chapelle Red and white wines. A Cabinet Sauvignon/Merlot from Pays de L'aude 2009 and a Columbard Chardonnay from cotes de Gascoigne 2009.

Though not strictly 'Wine and Food' everyone had a most interesting day with a trip down memory lane.

Helen Mills, Chairman



Malcolm Campbell's Shed

WESSEX BRANCH LUNCH AT THE PRIORY HOTEL, WAREHAM



After several days of heavy showers and high winds we were fortunate to have good weather for our visit to The Priory Hotel in Wareham, which meant that we were able to have lunch outside on the lawn. The Priory, a charming historic building dating in parts back to the 16th century, has a splendid location on the banks of the River Frome with well-kept gardens and lawns sweeping down to the river and superb views over the surrounding countryside. On a beautiful July day it was a real pleasure to be outside enjoying the sunshine and the vista before us.

The lunch was organised by members Geoff and Clare James, who had chosen an Italian theme centred around a variation on the traditional Italian dish of porchetta (suckling pig). We gathered on the terrace for an aperitif of prosecco, a light, fresh sparkler perfect for a warm summer's day, before taking our places for the meal. The tables, laid with crisp white tablecloths, spotless cutlery and generously sized well-polished wine glasses, were shaded by strategically placed umbrellas and looked most inviting.

For the first course we had a choice of carpaccio of melon and strawberries or chicken liver and foie gras parfait. The melon was perfectly ripe and beautifully presented in folded ribbons decorated with the strawberries and an elderflower sorbet. The parfait, equally appetising, was served with slivers of pear poached in mulled wine and thin sesame and olive oil toast. The accompanying wine was a Gavi di Gavi, Fratelli Levis 2009, a refreshing wine with ripe pear flavours but enough acidity to cut through the richness of the parfait.

The main course was the porchetta, cooked with sage and garlic and served with spring onion mash, caramelised apple and roast jus. It was very tender and well-flavoured and stood up remarkably well to the wine, a 1995 Brunello di Montalcino from E. Roberto Cosimi. This was a powerful dark red wine with strong tannins and dark cherry and plum flavours which, on its release, was awarded 5 stars in a tasting by Decanter magazine.

For those few who preferred a lighter main course pan-fried sea bass was provided as an excellent alternative. The best of the morning's locally-caught fish, this was simply cooked to retain its succulence and flavour and served with asparagus and seasonal vegetables.

Dessert was a choice between white chocolate and Bacardi mousse with cappuccino sauce or iced nougat parfait with mango coulis. Both were most attractively presented and delicious. A selection of cheeses was also on offer for those with less of a sweet tooth. A luscious liqueur Muscat from Kay Brothers in McLaren Vale, kindly donated by Geoff and Clare, was on offer for those who wanted it and made a suitably indulgent ending to an excellent meal.

The hotel's attention to detail, from the freshly baked warm rolls to the exemplary service, was impressive. After lunch many members chose to linger in the gardens and were so reluctant

to leave that several chose to stay on and partake of afternoon tea later! Altogether a very happy and most successful event.

Joan Cardy, Secretary

around the branches - London



THE SPLENDID WINES OF VIRGINIA

On the 10th June, the London Branch met at the Naval Club to taste 12 wines from Virginia, USA, presented by Chris Parker. He is the founder and managing director of New Horizon Wines, and deals with leading producers who now export to England. He was an excellent speaker and the wines were all of very high quality. Most are available from Whole Foods Market in Kensington, Oxford Wine Company, and Hercules Wine Warehouse, Kent.

In 1607, Jamestown's settlers had a rule that each household had to cultivate ten grape vines; Thomas Jefferson at Monticello tried to grow European varieties, but the real advances have been in the last 30 years. 160 wineries have about 3,000 acres between them, producing about 450,000 cases a year. They get excellent advice from the 25-year-old Enology Department of Virginia Tech., one of the top American agricultural colleges.

The first and last wines had been requested by the organiser after loving them at the London Wine and Spirit Fair in May 2010, although they are not currently available here. The Virginian wines were "discovered" by Brenda Lamb at that wine fair in 2009 when she tried the Viogniers.

The Williamsburg Winery Chardonnay Reserve 2007 was a really rich and satisfying wine with a great bouquet, flavour and length, in a very classy Burgundian style. Then we had three very enjoyable Viogniers to compare: Barboursville Vineyards Viognier Reserve 2008; White Hall Vineyards Viognier 2008; Breaux Vineyards Viognier 2008. The last was my favourite, from a warmer region in the Blue Mountain foothills. It had an intense bouquet, a lot of body and a huge, complex flavour, with honey, stoned fruits and spices; 13.8% alcohol, £17-99.

Cabernet Franc fruits very well in Virginia, ripening more fully than in the Loire Valley. We tried Veramar Vineyard Cabernet Franc 2008; Veritas Winery Cabernet Franc 2008; Williamsburg Winery Trianon 2006 (predominately Cabernet Franc) and Barboursville Vineyards Cabernet Franc Reserve 2007. These were all delicious, with the last one being a great and serious wine, with real depth and lots of fruit (13%; £19-99).

The next wine was the first pure Petit Verdot which most of us had tasted: Veritas Winery Petit Verdot 2008. It was delightful, deep black-purple, fully ripe, with soft tannins (£17-99). The last three wines were Bordeaux-type blends: Boxwood Winery Boxwood 2007 (Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot; £24-99); Barboursville Vineyards Octagon 2005 (M, CS and Cabernet Franc; £29-99) and Williamsburg Winery Adagio 2007 (40% M, 40% PV, 20% CF). The first two were excellent in all respects already, dark black-purple, very fruity and complex, with good ripe tannins, while the last had great potential but needed longer to mature.

The wines are not cheap but they were hugely enjoyed and good value. Several people said that it was one of the best wine tastings that they had been to, and all agreed that the wines of Virginia deserve to be much better known as they are world-class.

Bernard Lamb, organiser

Bernard Lamb's new book, **'The Queen's English and How to Use It'** is being published on 2nd September by O'Mara Books Ltd., in hardback, with 256 pages, price £12-99. It has clear advice on many aspects of written and spoken English, including style, spelling, punctuation, grammar and using foreign expressions. There are some excellent cartoons and lots of jokes.



around the branches - Blackpool and Fylde Coast

BLACKPOOL CHAIRMAN'S GARAGE WINES

Garage wines mean different things to different people. In America the term sometimes means boutique specialist wineries where the wine is produced in the winemakers 'garage'. They can be excellent.

In Blackpool we do not make many wines. But we do store some in garages; sometimes the wine is worth more than the car!

Blackpool Chairman, Brian Sager, Lord of Leigh, has collected wines for many years and has enjoyed drinking many of them. However he came to the conclusion that he owned more than he could consume and therefore the best went to auction financing a number of cruises. He was left with a selection of odds and ends, and a desire to share the pleasure of opening and tasting them with fellow members.

So, in Aysgarth Court, on Monday 5th July 30 members and guests gathered to sample 19 different old wines. We were warned in advance that some would be 'over the hill' and, in fact some had to be thrown away, but we all learnt a lot and enjoyed the experience. Members were told the details of each wine as it was poured but the vintage was kept secret so that members could discuss/argue/guess!

We started with 3 bottles of Cloudy Bay 1997 and then discovered that two of them were the famous Sauvignon Blanc and one was Chardonnay. The two Sauvignons had lost their freshness but gained some complexity and were very drinkable. The chardonnay went down the sink. We moved on to 1987 Gewürztraminer from Victor Wilhelm. The bottle with the worst cork and some ullage was nearest to drinkable; the others were binned.

Now on to reds; starting with a Mexican wine, 1988 Petite Sirah from L.A.Cetto. I had not realised that Mexican wines had been imported at that time but strangely enough the following evening I was served the 2006 version of the same wine in a blind tasting. The 1988 had survived the garage and was drinking well. Then 2 'Burgundies', a 1985 Chambolle Musigny from Pierre Bouree that divided those of us who love old 'forest floor' aromas from those who crave fruit driven wines, and in comparison, we tasted a 1969 English bottled Paul Deloux Pommard. It was remarkable and still very drinkable but dates from the era when there was little, if any, control on what went into Burgundy. This could well have been enhanced by grapes from the Rhone if not Algeria.

We moved on to Claret with a succession of wine vintages from 1964 and 1991. My own favourite (and this is a very personal choice) was a 1970 Chateau Cheret-Pitres from the Graves. It beat better known wines such as Pape-Clement and Montrose. The crème de la crème was to be 3 bottles of 1957 Chateau Margaux which the Chairman assured us had been stored identically next to each other since purchase 50 years ago. One had retained the quality of old claret and was probably worth a fortune. The other two were undrinkable!

We finished with 2 dessert wines; a 1981 Tokaji (5 Puttonyos) and a 1986 Masi Mezzanella Recioto de Valpolicella that strangely stated on the bottle that it was 18% proof.

It was a tasting that demonstrated the benefits of membership. Most of us will never get the chance to try wines this old. Some will wish to never repeat the exercise but it was a most educational and enjoyable experience and our thanks go to Brian who provided the wines and to our Treasurer David James who spent all evening in the kitchen fighting with the old corks and decanting the wines.

Ron Barker



around the branches - St James's

CELEBRATING LEBANESE WINES AT THE DORCHESTER

Ari Sofianos opened the evening at the Dorchester Hotel with a warm welcome to our Lebanese guests. Khalil Sara, co-owner of Chateau Ksara, spoke of his involvement at the vineyard. This was followed by a brief talk from the oenologist Elie Maamari, who shared with us in detail, the grape varieties of their red and white wines. For the red wines they use: Cabernet sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Syrah, Petit Verdot, Carignan, Mourvèdre, Tempranillo.

For white wines they use: Chardonnay, Sauvignon, Semillion, Gewurztraminer, Marsanne, Viognier, Muscat de Frontignon, Muscat d'Alexandrie, Grenache Blanc, Ugni Blanc.

We understood from Elie, that the vineyards are not irrigated because they have a rainfall of 600-700 mm. In addition, the snowfall stays one to two weeks on the vineyards. Adding to that is the snow of Mount Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon that melts and creates the reserve of water in the soil of the Bekaa Valley.

Further to the talk, we were indulged in a little history, about Ksara's natural wine cellar, which was a grotto discovered by the Romans. In 1857 the property was acquired by the Jesuit Fathers who revived the tradition of wine making. I was told many years ago, that the land was offered to the Jesuit Priests by the Ottomans as a gift of forgiveness, having suffered losses of life at their hands.

As our minds were drifting to the vineyards in the Bekaa Valley, food was served. We sank into the most succulent Dublin Bay prawns which went perfectly with the delicate aroma of Chateau Ksara Gris de Gris 2008. The second course, a very interesting and tasty dish of ginger crusted halibut with wild garlic risotto, was a good accompaniment with the round flavour of the Sunset Rose 2009. The remaining dishes were of high quality, tasty and in harmony with the remaining wines. The Chateau Ksara Cuvee du 3eme Millenaire 2005 was full bodied and Chateau Ksara Rouge 2009 had fruity notes to it. As for the Moscatel, I thought it was delicious to drink, the sweetness was subtle and delightful.

Ari ended the dinner with praises for Henry Brosi, the executive Chef and his team and a thank you to all present.

Nada Saleth



ANOKAA

contemporary indian cuisine

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ANOKAA
Contemporary Indian Cuisine

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For this spicy issue, I was informed, 'we need an Indian restaurant review'. I fully admit I am prejudiced, having experienced the Curry House revolution of the 60s and 70s and the aromas wafting through the house from the microwave when our teenagers brought home an Indian take away, ugh! I honestly think I can manage without another chicken tikka masala or pork vindaloo for the rest of my life.

It took several weeks of nagging before I would even consider the idea. We did drop hints to some member friends but received no volunteers for the job. Then I was made aware of Anokaa, or maybe I should say I found food guides lying around the house, open at the Salisbury page. Salisbury I hear you say, not actually the Mecca of gastronomic enlightenment. The city's ecclesiastical ancestors may have been fond of their food but I can't imagine the whiff of chicken korma being carried on the breeze through the hallowed cloisters.

Under duress I perused the reports - 'the most attractive Indian restaurant in the south-west' say some - 'still Salisbury's best restaurant of any kind' says the Hardens guide. Others just call it The Anokaa Revolution.

**'the most attractive
Indian restaurant in
the south-west'**

Seven years ago Solman Farsi decided Salisbury needed a high class restaurant that would make waves in the city. On an impulse he put his money into Anokaa - the word means 'exceptional' in Hindi. Today Anokaa is a local legend and the restaurant is one of Salisbury's most successful business enterprises.

Head Chef Puban Kumar Bhaniya at Anokaa is creating food that I can only term as 'east meets west'. When we arrived at six thirty on a Tuesday evening this ninety cover restaurant was over half full with a broad spectrum of diners, families with small children celebrating, down to singles enjoying one course on the way home from work. This was the pattern all evening, they were turning tables around promptly. Conversely for those of us that wished to linger there was no pressure whatsoever. The staff is so plentiful I would think it is a good thing there is a 'Job Centre Plus' around the corner. On this hot evening one young man constantly kept our water glasses replenished earning allusions from my partner to that other famous water carrier of yesteryear. For those not having to drive seventy miles home there is an enticing array of cocktails on offer to start your meal.

REAL INDIAN CUISINE SERVED WITH STYLE AND PANACHE





Poppadoms served with the usual pickles and relishes that were freshly made ranged from very good cucumber and mint raita and tomato salsa to an average mango chutney. We ordered the sea food platter - black tiger prawns, chilli fried baby squid, crab cakes and salmon tikka. The marinated tiger prawns were tasty enough, chilli fried baby squid was tough and inedible, any crab flavour in the crab cakes was hidden by the spicy sauce but the cubes of salmon tikka were cooked about right. Not a great success as a course, the starters being served at other tables looked much more inspired. The main courses were where the restaurant came into its own. My tandoori seared lamb rack with sweet chillies and marjoram was cooked perfectly, crispy and spicy on the outside, pink and juicy in the middle and very tender. The accompanying marsala mashed potatoes with spicy sundried tomatoes were especially tasty but the cashew nut based sauce with mint, peppers and yogurt just didn't seem to hang together. Others may have enjoyed it but for me it didn't hit the spot.



When the other half ordered a whole John Dory he was warned about, 'many, many bones'. Not being one to worry about bones he was very happy with the good sized fish which was presented on a bed of lightly spiced pine nut, pepper and yogurt sauce, served with garlic spiced spinach and mango dressed rocket. The fish was cooked 'a point' and the sauces complimented it well. It was pronounced delicious.

On their website Anokaa shows several enticing puddings, not a line Indian restaurants are strong on. Here their chefs have definitely taken a lean towards the west. There was only one word for my dark chocolate mille-feuille layered with cream and a soft chocolate mousse on top of a very light sponge, luscious. To stay in keeping we drank a bottle of Chenin Blanc from the Sula vineyards at Nashik. Situated 180 km northeast of Mumbai, Nashik is India's largest grape-growing region. It was a well balanced, refreshing, fruity wine that stood up well to the spices, especially when it had warmed up a little. Coffee was good and strong and concluded a very interesting evening. I would like to return to try some of the other interesting sounding dishes on the menu.

The bill was £78.55 and I made it up to £ 90 for the excellent service.

Anokaa truly deserves its accolades and lives up to its Hindi name, it is 'exceptional'.



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