

Food & Wine



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Free to European & African Region Members - one per address - Issue 105

A Woman with a Mission

Dispatches from the Fairest Cape

The True Roast Beef of Old England





CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Dear Members

I send my heartfelt sympathy and prayers to the incoming Society Chairman Alec Murray. With his wife, Irene, he travelled from his home in Canada for the annual 'face to face' meeting of Council and the Regional Festival in Sydney. Whilst Alec attended the Council meeting that confirmed his new position Irene fell down stairs in the hotel Library and badly broke her leg. She has now had 3 operations and there have been further complications resulting in their return home being indefinitely postponed.

It is only 3 months since I last wrote a Chairman's column but they have been very eventful. Firstly on a domestic level I celebrated a significant birthday and a notable wedding anniversary. My wife Val and I chose to do it in London. The club facilities at the 'In & Out' in St James's Square made an impressive base. As well as attending a Capital Branch dinner so that I could present Long Service awards to John & GINETTE Gray (and enjoy Pam's cooking and Sid's 1970's clarets) we booked into 3 highly rated restaurants.

On the wedding anniversary we ate at Marcus Waring's restaurant in the Berkley. Despite some recent negative publicity the meal was one of the best I have ever enjoyed and it was made even more special when Marcus invited us into his kitchen to learn some 'tricks of the trade'. Val was particularly impressed with the 3 different processes (water bath, roast and then flash fry) to prepare the Quail breasts. It may have been excellent but it was also the most expensive meal we have ever enjoyed even though we did not go overboard on the wines. Those who consider that some Society events are overpriced should try eating in top London restaurants!

The next day, my birthday, we had lunch at the Waterside in Bray. Alain Roux was in charge of the kitchen. The best meals occur when the chef/patron is in the kitchen. Although very different to the previous evening the experience was just as memorable. This was partially due to the location on the banks of the Thames but had even more to do with the superb service. In a conversation with Diego Masciaga, the 'Master of Ceremonies' Director, who has worked for the Roux family for over 25 years we agreed on the importance of 'front of house' staff. Although there are now awards for chefs and sommeliers, it is time for the hospitality industry to invest in better training for waiters and front of house staff. Their attitude can make or break an enjoyable event.

In September we travelled to Lisbon to hand over the Branch Charter. I was very impressed with the quality of the food and wine and the friendliness of the branch members. There is a report on page 31. In October we launched the new monograph (see page 6) and I found myself having dinner with 4 Masters of Wine, including our President John Avery.

In October it was off to Sydney for the Regional Festival (report page 4) and the Society AGM. I am pleased to report that in 2009 under the stewardship of Chairman Chris Bonsall and previous Secretary/Treasurer John Valentine the International Society has recovered from its previous financial problems and is now in a good position to move forward. This was achieved by reducing administration costs, improving operating practices and by converting the extremely successful Cape Town Festival from an EAC event to an International one benefiting the whole Society.

These two top positions in the Society have now passed into North American hands. We need to ensure that they continue to promote Internationalism, Independence and Freedom from commercial influence whilst passing benefits to all members and maintaining our financial security. The EAC will continue to be represented on Council by Chris Bonsall and myself for 12 months when Shirley Kilian (from South Africa) will replace Chris.

Ron Barker

CONTRIBUTORS

Darina Allen has been acclaimed as the "Julia Child of



Ireland". Her fifteenth book, 'Forgotten Skills of Cooking' is a treasure trove of recipes. At 61 Darina still has more energy than many of her students at her cookery school. In an interview for The Irish Times she explained that her mission in life is to educate the next generation in the "forgotten skills".

Martin Fine who was born in Birkenhead, graduated



from Cardiff College of Food Technology and commenced his hotel career at the famous Grosvenor House Hotel, London and the George V in Paris.

While working in France he met his wife, Pauline, a celebrated artist. They have two grownup children. Martin has managed

numerous hotels throughout Africa and has written seven novels. Combining his hotel experience with a love of wine and gastronomy Martin now runs his own tour company specialising in gourmet experiences.

Derek Hawes is a retired academic and author. He has been



a member of the St James's branch for about ten years and spent many years trying to improve the cellar of Bristol University. His favourite tippie is vintage Pol Roger, but "a chilled Chablis and smoked salmon in the Ritz will do equally well!"

Photo -© Robin Hawes

Alan Shepherd has been a member of IWFS for five years,



and is now Executive Vice Chairman of London Branch, and on the committees of Capital Branch and Surrey Hills. He and his wife Stephanie own an apartment in St Martin de Belleville, a small village in the French Alps, and have developed a particu-

lar interest in the wine and food of that region. They have hosted a number of IWFS events at their home in Camberley.

Alan Harrison is an Independent Member. He became Brillat-



Savarin Professor of Gastronomy in 1982 in Switzerland and throughout his life in academe. He has lectured all over the world as seen at gastronomy.org.uk Since joining the Society two years ago, he has concentrated on membership recruitment.



Food & Wine

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Editorial

The other day we lunched at a one Michelin star restaurant and our impression was that the chef was obviously striving for his second star. He had created a meal to appeal to the eye as much as the palate with a plethora of exotic ingredients, some of which hung together and some didn't.

Quoted in these pages Rowley Leigh claims, "I gave up Michelin stars in about 1987 when I wanted to do away with fripperies. The only reason I crave one now is because it is impossible to recruit chefs without one."

As Ron says it is very expensive eating in top restaurants. This is due, in a large part, to the complicated structure of the dishes and the time spent in the preparation of 'fripperies'. It is certainly not down to the cost of the tiny amounts of meat or fish used, which are often cooked 'sou vide'. As for sauces, the few drips that decorate a plate might as well be made from an oxo cube, for all they add to the dish, as there is usually not enough to taste. Looking at 1970's photos of 'nouvelle cuisine' the dishes look large compared with today's 'Michelin Fripperies'. Is this what we want when eating out?

A delegation from the UK enjoyed superb food and some excellent wines at the Sydney Festival, and the EAC are looking forward to welcoming members from the 'new world' to the 'old world' for the Merseyside Festival next June (there are a few places for individual events still available - see page 24). It is great to see the implementation of André's dream of a truly worldwide Society.

This spirit of globalisation is being advanced by the development of the new website. Our four centre pages are devoted to instructions for you to log on to the members page and navigate around the site. We hope in time every branch will load their events onto the system so that wherever you travel in the world you can visit the local branch and make new friends.

We have a new correspondent, and member, bringing to you the delights of South Africa. Martin Fine is an accomplished author and I am looking forward, in future issues, to his tales of this spectacular continent.

In line with the educational aspect of the Society our latest monograph, *Biodynamics in Wine*, was launched in October. It makes intriguing reading; it even tells you how a wine should taste on different days of the week depending on the type of day. If it is a leaf day it will taste of leaves or a flower day it will be fragrant, a fascinating subject. Also promoting the educational aspect of André's work, The André Simon Book Award for food writing was won, very appropriately, by Darina Allen an Irish lady with a mission in life to educate the youngsters of today in the arts of the kitchen. In this issue she tells 'Food & Wine' of her life's involvement with cooking.

Once again there are a lot of branch reports, thank you for all the interesting contributions. If your report has not made it into these pages it is probably because it had little or no descriptions. With so many colourful accounts arriving each month, a menu and a list of wines are a waste of space.

With your Christmas dinner in mind our cover story is on the true roast beef of old England. Roasted in a hot oven, all brown and crispy on the outside and moist, juicy and flavourful within, nothing can compare – certainly not a piece of meat that has endured seventy hours at sixty degrees - 'sou vide'. Ah well, each to his own.

Have a peaceful Christmas and hopefully, not too much snow in the New Year.

Pam Brunning

REGIONAL FESTIVAL - SYDNEY 2010

By Ron Barker



Sydney harbour is a superb backdrop for a festival. One hundred members, mainly from the Asian Pacific Zone, but including a few from Europe & Africa and a sizable contingent from North America, enjoyed the hospitality and organising skills of the New South Wales branch under the unique Andrew Fegent. All members of Council and the President were in attendance. The Festival started at the Royal Sydney Harbour Yacht Squadron with a black-tie reception. Excellent canapés were followed by a three course meal served with 6 wines mainly from the exceptional cellar of Peter Bartter who became known fondly during the Festival as the Lord Tit Willow.

Our first full day was spent on the water, on the superbly appointed catamaran MV Majestic II. As well as being able to tour the bay and see Sydney from the water we were treated to a seated tutored wine tasting presented by 3 young wine makers, rising stars in the Hunter Valley. This was followed by a BBQ (it wouldn't be Australia without a barbi!). The weather was superb, sun and clear blue skies for the whole of the cruise but a storm arrived as we departed for our coaches. It continued into the evening when we visited the Sydney Motor Yacht Club where we also enjoys fabulous views across the Harbour. The food was served in an interesting, almost tapas, way. Each course, starter, main and dessert, comprised three small portions of different dishes to compare and contrast, served, of course, with three wines per course. For the main course we compared kangaroo, venison and beef and this method aided quick service. As well as the excellent food and wines we enjoyed a cabaret act by three young ladies and the opportunity to dance.

The rain lasted all night and continued all the next day as we travelled through the Hunter Valley with tours and tastings at Tyrrells and McWilliams and then a lunch at Margans Vineyard.

Monday morning we were invited to get up early ('coaches leave at 6:00am!') to visit the Fish Market. Forty four of us managed it and twenty of that number got entry onto the trading floor whilst the remainder watched from the balcony. Some still had time for an oyster breakfast before returning to the hotel where we picked up the remaining 'stay in beds' and drove north to Manley and lunch at Pilu Restaurant. Again the setting, with views over the beach to the sea, was magical, but still it rained!

In the evening we were fortunate to have the final black tie dinner in the Sydney Opera House and the weather cleared. The meal was served 'degustation' style, nine small courses each with a matching wine. At the end Chris Bonsall (who had kept the chain of office due to the accident and hospitalisation of the incoming Chairman's wife) presented Andrew Fegent with the Andre Simon Bronze medal and was then surprised by the Secretary/Treasurer Bob Gutenstein who presented him with the Society Gold Medal on behalf of Council.

On Tuesday morning we received the Andre Simon Lecture from David Lowe, President of the NSW Wine Industry, on Regionalisation, (a transcript will be placed on the website) before sitting down to the final meal, a brunch. We had many excellent meals and tasted 94 wines most of which were Australian. It is difficult to think of anything to criticise. There was perhaps too much time spent waiting for coaches and waiting for latecomers. The organisers wanted to show us the best of Sydney food which is dominated by the sea but they also wanted to show off the best Australian wines which include many top quality reds. As a result we occasionally had challenging matches of fish and seafood with full bodied reds.

The next Festival will be on Merseyside, all places are sold and there is a waiting list, but there is still an opportunity to attend individual events. The American version of this magazine is called Food, Wine and Friends and that will be my fondest memory of Sydney.

Andrew Fegent receives his Bronze Medal



Our President finds these Festivals hard work!



Dear Members

Activities at the International Secretariat (IS) over the past months have focused, once again, on the valued IWFS Vintage Card for your 2011 Membership Card. There are two new areas of investment by Council - the new website, which I hope you have had the chance to look at by now and have found useful and also the publication of the new monograph.

The 2010 version of the **IWFS Vintage Card** is now available. Two new members joined the Wines Committee this year - Harriet Lembeck (director of the Wine & Spirits programs in New York) and Michael Brajkovich MW (winemaker for his family owned winery in Kumeu north of Auckland, New Zealand). Each bring expert knowledge of their countries wines and came highly recommended by the Wines Committee. While maintaining the integrity and history of the Card is very important, the Wines Committee also welcomed the new ideas as to how we could increase the value of the Card to the members. As a result assessments for Central Coast and Sierra Foothills have been included within California plus Hawkes Bay in New Zealand and Valpolicella (Amarone) as recommended by our Italian specialist consultant, Nicholas Belfrage MW, who felt that wines from this true Italian classic were a must.

If you would like to order some Cards for Christmas please contact me at the IS. They do make an ideal gift to include in with your seasonal messages to friends, family and colleagues. Please see below the special prices for members (full details and an order form are also available on the members only pages of the website).

2010 Vintage Cards

Quantity	Cost per Card	Regular Price	Members' Price (inc p&p)
12	£2.15	£25.80	£23.22
25	£2.05	£51.25	£46.12
50	£1.95	£97.50	£87.75
100	£1.85	£185.00	£166.50

Website – a lot of information has been loaded onto the website which is intended to provide you with useful information. This is an ongoing project and more information will be added in the coming months.

Monograph – The monograph, “Biodynamics in Wine” was launched by the EAC at the In & Out Club on 12 October where members were able to sample six biodynamic wines. See details and wine offer page 6.

You may also wish to arm yourself with a copy of the biodynamic wine calendar to find out if you are enjoying the wines on a flower, fruit, leaf or root day - see page 27 of the monograph - it could affect how the wine tastes on the day! For those keen to put this to the test there is a pocket book “When Wine Tastes Best 2010 – A Biodynamic Wine Calendar” by Maria Thun which is available from leading retailers for approx £4.00.

Seasons greetings to one and all

Andrea Warren



A Well Deserved Gold for Chris

It was with great pleasure that I received the news that, at the Sydney Festival, Council had presented our very own Chris Bonsall with the Society's highest accolade, an André Simon Gold Medal.

Since joining in 1983, whilst in Hong Kong, Chris has worked tirelessly throughout the world to promote the Society's ideals. He was Chairman of the Hong Kong Branch and a Council Member for the Asian Pacific Zone for three years.

Moving to the UK he joined the EAC as treasurer in 2005 and took up the reins as Chairman in 2006. As EAC Chairman he became a member of Council and was appointed Chairman of Council in 2008.

I refer to him as ‘our very own’ Chris as I don’t think there can be many members in our area that did not have the pleasure of meeting Chris and his lovely wife Sue during his period in office. The Bonsalls have travelled tirelessly to all corners of the area, from Russia to Johannesburg, to visit branches, bestow awards, and present numerous accolades. They have also attended all major events around the world from EAC ‘Awaydays’ to International Festivals. Between much travelling Chris has, with the help of colleagues on council, moved the Society forward into the 21st Century, implementing the Strategic Plan and guiding the progress of the website.

Chris officially stood down as Chairman at the AGM in Sydney but we hope we will be around for a long time to come, providing a guiding hand to his successors and promoting a truly global Society, as envisioned by André.

Congratulations Chris, you will be a hard act to follow.

Pam Brunning.



The Society has negotiated an account for all IWFS members, which gives extra discount benefits if you go to your local store, and produce your IWFS membership card:

- 1 Buy single bottles of wine or Champagne and get the 20% discount normally applicable to case purchases only.
- 2 Get extra account discounts on certain lines and special offers; check in store as to what is available and get advice from the staff

Each branch will be able to access and check the account details on computer. The account reference is International Wine and Food Society. All branches should ask you to produce your membership card.

The branch that is hosting this account is Street Lane, Leeds – Tel 0113 393 0107

Full details of the branch network are available online – www.oddbins.com

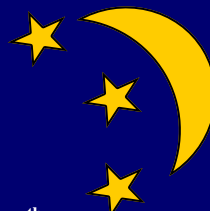
Access to the Oddbins website will also be available from the IWFS members pages.

For any further information please email timgittins@aol.com

Tim Gittins, EAC PR and Marketing Manager



‘... it is impossible to understand plant life without taking into account that everything on earth is actually only a reflection of what is taking place in the cosmos’
Rudolf Steiner.



“Biodynamics in Wine” by Beverley Blanning MW is the 13th monograph in the series of monographs commissioned and published by The International Wine & Food Society and its first since 2004. This timely publication on a topical subject is something you cannot afford not to read if you wish to be up to date with one of the most exciting and exacting developments in winemaking today.

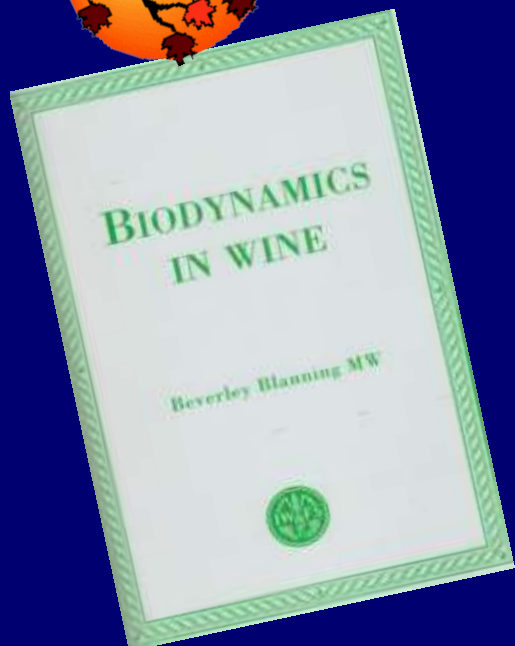
Biodynamics is a holistic system of agriculture based on a series of lectures given by Rudolf Steiner in 1924, the text of which was not published until 1993. It is a subject which has attracted heated debate, which is perhaps no wonder when the scientific basis of taking into account the cosmos, horn manure and dead cows for example is certainly open to doubt and yet wines made from biodynamically grown grapes do seem to have a purity and intensity of their own, particularly when tasted on a fruit day! Is this perhaps the key to understanding the true nature and expression of terroir?

In this impressively researched and well written work Beverley gives us a balanced view of the subject. This monograph should be read by all members keen to improve their knowledge of wine.

Chris Bonsall

Hard copies available at £5.00 each inc p&p. Please make cheques payable to “IWFS - EAC” and send to EAC Membership Secretary, Katie Wilkins, 14 Highbury, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 3DX. UK.

It is also available free to download on the members section at www.IWFS.org



Read the Book, now try the wines -

Biodynamic Wines Special Offer for Members from Vintage Roots

Six Bottle Case – Code number **LB066** - £62.00 (usual price £66.45) – plus £6.95 delivery*

Twelve Bottle Case**– Code number **LB012** - £122.00 (usual price £132.90) – plus £6.95 delivery*

Product Code:

CIM02	Barone Pizzini, Pievalta Verdicchio dei Castelli di Jesi, Italy 2009
CNZ04	Richmond Plains, Sauvignon Blanc, Nelson, New Zealand 2009
CNZ01	Millton Vineyards, Te Arai Chenin Blanc, Gisborne, New Zealand 2007
EFD02	Coteaux-du-Tricastin, M Chapoutier, France 2007
EAA01	Meinklang, Pinot Noir, Burgenland, Austria 2008
ECC05	Coyam, Emiliana, Calchagua Valley, Chile 2006

* UK mainland deliveries only – otherwise price on application.

** two bottles of each of the six wines listed

To place an order please call Vintage Roots on: 0118 932 6566 . To find out more visit www.vintageroots.co.uk.

**VINTAGE
ROOTS**
The Organic Wine People



Darina Allen - A Woman with a Mission



Cookery School

Ever since I was old enough to toddle around in rompers many of my childhood memories were connected to food in one way or another. **I've always lived in the country, originally** in a tiny village called Cullohill, in the Irish Midlands and now in Shanagarry in East Cork. My father was the village merchant, my mother loved babies. Altogether there were nine of us; Mummy devoted her entire time to nurturing us and looking after our father whom she adored. There was always cooking going on in our house. With so many children once they had finished clearing up after one meal it was almost time to start preparing for the next.

We had an extensive kitchen garden behind our house, with boxwood hedges, a few apple trees and lots of currant and gooseberry bushes. Mummy also kept a flock of hens and reared fine Rhode Island Red fowl for the table. One my earliest memory is taking my little sand bucket of kitchen scraps down through the garden to feed the hens. Occasionally, a hen would hatch out a **clutch of chickens but if nature didn't take its** course Mummy would order a batch of day old chicks from Donoghmore Creamery in Co. Laois. **We'd all pile into the old Ford Zephyr car to go to** collect them - **you can't imagine the excitement.** **Once we got them home we'd put them under an** infra red lamp and feed them oatmeal, bread-crumbs and special chick meal – watching carefully to see which ones sprouted tail feathers, these were destined to be cockerels and would be reared for the table – usually a big juicy roast with lots of crispy potatoes and whatever vegetable was in season. We always ate with the season **then, that's how it was.** **The old hens were slowly** poached in the bottom oven of the Esse to make a fricasse and a fine pot of broth.

Waste was not an option when I was a child, every scrap was used. I learned the skill of thrifty housekeeping not only from my mother but also from running in and out of the neighbours houses and holidaying with my relatives most of whom were farming. I learned how to milk a cow and make butter and cook in a *bâstible* (Dutch oven-*Ed*) over the open fire, with my great aunts in Tipperary. It was there too that I learned how to make black and white puddings, cure bacon and how to save turf. In spring I would go with my friends mother to collect watercress in the chapel meadows outside the village – she taught me how to tell the difference between watercress (top leaf largest) and wild celery (top leaf smallest) both of which grew side by side in the fast flowing river.

Later we picked wild garlic and wood sorrel in the woods, elderflowers in early Summer and **then joy of joys we'd pick wild strawberries in July** and August along both sides of the long boreen in Noard. Aunt Lil and I would whisk a sponge cake **(by hand) and while it was cooking we'd skim** thick cream off the top of the milk in the dairy to spread over the top before we sprinkled it with the tiny wild strawberries and a generous sprinkling of castor sugar.

In late summer around Lughnasa there were wild bilberries or fraughans on Cullohill mountain. The tiny purple berries took ages to pick from the low growing scratchy bushes but were so delicious when crushed with a potato masher and sprinkled with sugar that we soon forgot the discomfort. Sometimes when the weather was warm and humid in late summer there were also field **mushrooms.** **We'd race out into the fields after** dawn to pick the tiny buttons and little flats, it was usually a feast or a famine. We cooked them simply, they were stewed in milk, fried or simply roasted on the cool plate of the Esse with a few grains of salt and a lump of butter in the centre.





Students hard at work

We'd make toast on the hot plate, slather it with butter and pop the juicy mushrooms on top. The surplus mushrooms were made into ketchup or better still we threaded some on fine cotton string and sold them by the roadside. Bliss a few pennies **to buy Sailor's Chew or Black Jacks 1^d bars which could pull the teeth out of any child's head!**

In early Autumn there were damsons around the ruins of Cullohill Castle and hazelnuts on the sides of the mountain. Mummy made jam throughout the year with every available fruit – rhubarb and ginger in May then gooseberry and blackcurrant. **There were lots of those but I don't remember much raspberry or strawberry – that was a complete luxury. Mummy's homemade jams made me lots of friends when I went to boarding school in Co. Wicklow. Damson was the absolute favourite.**

Looking back it's easy to see how I learned my cooking, preserving and foraging skills.

When it came to making a decision about a possible career, the only flash of inspiration I had was to do horticulture or be a chef. This was way back in the early sixties long before chefs were super stars. The food and restaurant scene was quite different - men were chefs, women ran tea-shops or on the rare exceptions ran country hotels but had little status.

Understandably my mother (my father died when I was 14 which meant mum never realized her dream of having 12 children!) and a career guidance teacher encouraged me to do Hotel Management. I managed to get into Cathal Brugha Street (now Dublin Institute of Technology) the famous Dublin Hotel School on the second count. I had scant interest in much of the management classes but never missed a cooking session. As the terms progressed I became more and more confused by the encouragement to use frozen and the **'new' pre prepared and even freeze dried products** coming on stream. As the course neared completion I was desperate to get into a top restaurant kitchen maybe Jammets or the Russell in Dublin. Not a chance, only men chefs there.

I so wanted to learn more about fresh herbs, how to make a soufflé, homemade ice-cream, pâtes – they all sounded so exotic in the late sixties. I knew about parsley, chives and thyme, we grew them at home but what was tarragon, chervil and **what would you do with marjoram? Basil wasn't even heard of, not until I read Elizabeth David's books.** Well you never know what little event may change the course of the rest of your life, in my case it was a chance remark made by one of my **lecturers when she discovered I still hadn't secured a job just weeks before graduation.** I explained my predicament, impossible to get into a top restaurant kitchen; I also wanted to find somewhere where I would learn more about fresh herbs and where they were using fresh ingredients. Remember, in the late 60s, most restaurants wrote the menu the day they opened and it was still the same ten years later. The idea of writing a menu every day was considered to be very amateurish. My lecturer was somewhat amused and told me I was far too fussy but then remembered that the conversation at a recent dinner party had been about a farmer's wife down in Cork who had opened a restaurant in her own house out in the wilds of East Cork, miles from the city. Apparently she wrote the menu every day depending on what was in the garden and what was available on the farm and in the local area. Fish came straight from the boats in nearby Ballycotton. The restaurant was in the middle of a 400 acre farm and had a herd of Jersey cows for milk and cream. There were pigs, sheep and hens as well as a mushroom farm, walled vegetable garden, greenhouses and acres of orchard.

Joy of joys it sounded perfect. My lecturer **couldn't remember the woman's name but promised to inquire and a few days later gave me a scrap of paper with a name and address.** That name was Myrtle Allen who is now my mother in law. I became a member of the family by the simple expedient of marrying the eldest son - a horticulturalist – the wheel had come full circle. I worked **side by side with Myrtle whom I've always called Mrs Allen** in the Ballymaloe House Kitchen for many years. She taught me the opposite of much of what I had learned at Hotel School, I was like a sponge – I found her totally inspirational, soaking up everything she taught me and to this day feel so blessed that our paths crossed in life.

In September 1983 having taught a few cookery classes with Myrtle my brother Rory O Connell and I opened the Ballymaloe Cookery School in the centre of the 100 acre farm we inherited from my parents in law just outside the village of Shanagarry. We teach both long and short courses for those who want to earn their living and for enthusiastic amateurs who love to cook for family and friends. Students come from all over the world. Part of the attraction is that the school is situated in the centre of an organic farm that has hens, pigs, cattle and cows and has extensive gardens and greenhouses which produce wonderful produce for the students to cook with. ➡

POTTED CRAB WITH MELBA TOAST

SERVES 8–10 AS A STARTER

225g (8oz) crab meat, freshly picked and cooked

110g (4oz) softened butter, pinch of mace

1–2 teaspoons parsley, finely chopped

freshly squeezed lemon juice, to taste

English mustard (optional), to taste

Clarified Butter



Mix all the ingredients together in a chilled bowl or, better still, whiz them in a food processor. Taste carefully and continue to season until you are happy with the flavour, it may need a little more lemon juice or even a little English mustard.

Press the mixture into little pots, cover with a thin layer of clarified butter and refrigerate. Serve with Melba Toast or hot, thin toast. Keeps for 3 or 4 days.

FIGGY TOFFEE PUDDING

Like everyone else, we love sticky toffee pudding, which we always made with dates. One day, we had no dates and used plump dried Turkish figs instead. Now, it's the version we prefer! .

SERVES 8–10

225g (8oz) chopped dried figs

300ml (½ pint) tea

110g (4oz) unsalted butter

175g (6oz) caster sugar

3 organic eggs

225g (8oz) self-raising flour

1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

1 teaspoon espresso coffee

FOR THE HOT TOFFEE SAUCE

110g (4oz) butter

175g (6oz) Barbados sugar

110g (4oz) granulated sugar

275g (10oz) golden syrup

225ml (8fl oz) cream

½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract

20cm (8in) springform tin or a cake tin with removable base



Preheat the oven to 180°C/350°F/ gas mark 4. Brush the cake tin with oil and base-line with oiled greaseproof paper. Soak the figs in hot tea for 15 minutes.

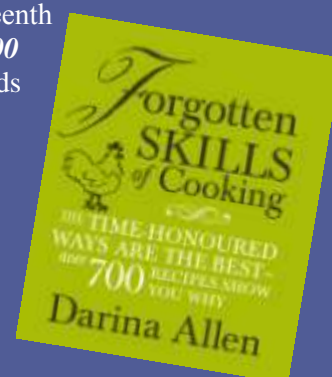
Cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in the eggs, one at a time, then fold in the sifted flour. Add the bicarbonate of soda, vanilla extract and coffee to the figs and tea and stir this into the mixture. Turn into the lined tin and cook for 1–1½ hours or until a skewer comes out clean.

To make the sauce, put the butter, sugars and syrup into a heavy-based saucepan and melt gently over a low heat. Simmer for about 5 minutes, remove from the heat and gradually stir in the cream and the vanilla extract. Return to the heat and stir for 2–3 minutes until the sauce is quite smooth.

Pour some hot sauce on to a plate. Put the figgy toffee pudding on top, pour lots more sauce over the top. Put the remainder into a bowl, and serve with the pudding as well as softly whipped cream.

Recipes from Darina Allen's award winning book *'Forgotten Skills of Cooking: The Lost Art of Creating Delicious Home Produce'* by Darina Allen is published by Kyle Cathie at £30

Darina Allen has been acclaimed, world wide, as the “Julia Child of Ireland”. Her fifteenth book, *Forgotten Skills of Cooking: The Time Honoured Ways are The Best – Over 700 Recipes Show You Why*, is a treasure trove of not only Irish and British recipes but foods from other parts of the world such as Italian slow food. It also has articles and remedies for raising your own chickens for meat and eggs. It even gives instructions on how to properly butcher large farm animals like pigs, cattle and lambs. At 61 Darina still has more energy than many of her students. In an interview for The Irish Times she explained, in the way of an angry schoolmistress, that her mission in life is to educate the next generation in the “forgotten skills”. “That’s one of the reasons why I wrote this *Forgotten Skills* book. It’s the whole underlying thing. Let’s not ever let our young people away without equipping them with the skills for life.”





The True Roast Beef of Old England by Pam Brunning



Silver - The mother of the Hereford Breed

"Any of us would kill a cow, rather than not have beef."

Samuel Johnson -- (1709-1784)



Champion of English Beef

If you are thinking of a joint of beef as a treat for Christmas forget the big black beasts from Scotland that appear on our supermarket shelves in far larger quantity than are ever actually bred on our farms. Forget the breed that has been reared to conform to the modern day belief that fat is bad, lean is good. When you are looking for a really superb joint with lots of flavour it is worth seeking out Hereford beef.

Our native Hereford is a ubiquitous breed. Their distinctive markings stand out in the arctic snows of Finland or they can endure the heat of the Northern Transvaal. They are found throughout Europe, Scandinavia and as far afield as Israel and Japan. They are prolific in the outback of Australia and make up the largest percentage of registered cows in the high country of New Zealand.

Renowned throughout the world for their ability as foraging cattle, their diet consists mainly of grass and grass products and they can thrive on the poorest of farmland. The export trade began from the United Kingdom in 1817, first to Kentucky then spreading across the United States and Canada through Mexico to the great beef-raising countries of South America.

It is generally agreed that the Hereford was founded on the draught ox descended from the small red cattle of Roman Briton crossed with a large Welsh breed once numerous along the border of England and Wales. By the early 1700's the native cattle of Hereford and the surrounding area were an odd mix of colour combinations called 'mottles' or 'pigeons'. The 'mottles' were mainly dark red all over, some with brindle in their coats, and many with white spots or splotches on their faces. In contrast the 'pigeons', as their name describes, were bluegrey in colour. Cattle art of that day can be deceiving, it often depicts large heavy beasts of varying colours, often painted to flatter the animal as in the farmer's eye big was beautiful and the artist's bill was paid more readily.

One of the great assets of the strain today is the ability to put a white face on any crossbred, regardless of breed in the first generation. This attribute, called the 'Whiteface Advantage' is down mainly to one family of breeders, in the 18th century. The distinguishing marks were developed by a Hereford farmer, Benjamin Tomkins. Breeders were always trying to improve their herds and when his father left young Benjamin, 'Silver', a beautiful red heifer with a silver head, he was determined to retain the trait. With the passing of time he discovered that he could not retain the coat colour in her offspring, regardless of the sires she was put to all her calves reverted to a mottle colour. It is not known whether it was by accident or intent but one day he mated a mottled son of Silver over one of her mottled daughters and was thrilled at the birth of a bull calf with the same colouring as the grand dam's unique coat. By the end of the 18th century the white face characteristic of the modern breed was well established. The modern colour was stabilised during the 19th century but never at the cost of the breeds other excellent qualities. Even on the poorest land the breed has a high food conversion rate. It is also renowned for ease of calving and has an excellent temperament. Known for their longevity, many females live and produce calves beyond the age of 15 years. Bulls are capable of remaining profitable at stud to the age of 12 or more. Many breeders keep their elderly cattle until they die of natural causes and the more sentimental of them, bury them on their farms.

The Hereford Herd Book Society, founded in 1878 by Mr J H Arkwright of Hampton Court, Herefordshire, was under the patronage of Queen Victoria. The Herd Book has been closed since 1886 to any animal whose sire or dam had not been entered previously. So, for over 120 years, the purity of the breed has remained intact.

Because of the Hereford's performance as a crossing sire on commercial cattle and indigenous breeds throughout the world the impact of the beast on world beef production has been enormous. This widespread popularity has only come about because farmers, ranchers and feeders have found the Hereford to be consistently profitable

under a wide range of climates and conditions. More than five million pedigree Herefords exist in over 50 countries. Their success has been spectacular and the Hereford has become the cornerstone of the beef economy in all the cattle-raising countries of the world. The Hereford beef that is enjoyed throughout the world has a good lean to fat ratio with excellent marbling giving a flavour that is second to none. The end product today offers the housewife and restaurateur alike, superb quality beef. Hereford beef from Ireland came out on top in a steak test carried out by a Germany food magazine. Steaks from eight major beef producing countries were tasted by an expert panel of judges evaluating flavour, tenderness and texture, as well as visual appearance. The Irish rib eye steak was chosen as the clear winner, ahead of the anticipated favourite, New Zealand Wagyu (kobe) beef, which sells for up to €150/kg. Other competitors included Argentinean Angus steak, Angus fillet from US, Florentine steak from Italy, Charolais fillet from France, bison from the US and German Simmental. They were all eclipsed by the Hereford.

Scientists at the University of Bristol have proved that beasts fed grass have a better meat colour, prolonged shelf-life and increased levels of omega-3, an essential fatty acid.

When an animal is first slaughtered the meat is generally quite tender. During the first 12 to 24 hours the meat will toughen as the muscle fibers shorten and enzymes in the meat attack the structural proteins and make the meat tough, a process called "postmortem proteolysis", resulting in slow and natural tenderization. The enzyme action has the additional effect of improving and strengthening the flavor of the beef, due to the breakdown of proteins into amino acids. Aging is generally done between 34° and 38° F to inhibit bacteria and mould growth. Beef can be aged for anything up to six weeks but because of the considerable weight loss it is often only hung for up to three weeks. This dry aging results in a loss of weight over time due to water evaporation and surface mould (which must be trimmed off), but it greatly concentrates the flavor of the meat. Sometimes the process can be taken to extremes. Food writer Harold McGee reports, "In the 19th century, beef joints would be held until the outside was literally rotten; the French called this mortification."

It is important that animals are slaughtered locally in small-scale operations minimising trauma. This is important as stress directly affects meat quality by releasing chemicals which in turn raise the pH within the beef. A high pH causes the meat to be dry, dark and firm, affecting both tenderness and flavour.

If your Sunday roast has been looked after as well after slaughter as your Hereford beast has before slaughter, with several hundred years of stockmanship behind it, you will be enjoying some of the world's finest beef no matter what continent it was reared on. All that remains is for your joint to be cooked right.



The recessive character, red coat, is easily fixed by mating red with red. For a dominant character such as white face, you need to distinguish the heterozygote (one gene for white, one for non-white) from the dominant homozygote (two copies of the gene for white). This is easily done by progeny testing. When crossed to the recessive homozygote (non-white face), all offspring will have white faces if the white-faced parent is homozygous, but if the white-faced parent is heterozygous, both white- and non-white faced progeny will be produced, in about a 1:1 ratio. Once you have dominant homozygotes of each sex, you mate them and the character is fixed.

Dr Bernard Lamb, Emeritus Reader in Genetics at Imperial College London.



Dispatches from the Fairest Cape

By Martin Fine

That's what Sir Francis Drake called our part of the world and we like the name but, this famous explorer never landed. It was left to the Dutch, Jan Van Riebeck in 1652, to establish a station to provide fresh food and water to ships of the Dutch East India Company on their long voyage to the Indies. After months at sea, surviving on a diet of dried strips of leather – meat, and mouldy biscuits, how welcome was the majestic sight of Table Mountain to a lice-ridden crew dying from scurvy.

Let's fast forward. Today's well-heeled visitors disembark from a long-haul flight, having enjoyed hours of cramped discomfort whilst feasting on plastic overcooked airline nosh to a city – the Gourmet Capital of Africa. But back to the Dutch. Realising that the Cape enjoyed a Mediterranean-style climate they were quick to plant grapes. The first wine was produced in 1659 – it was not very good! Relax! We have come a very long way since then. As the *Cape Station* grew it evolved into a colony and the Burghers – Dutch farmers – a troublesome lot – some things never change – were granted permission to move out of the Cape to establish farms.

In 1694 a fiscal, Heinrich Lacus, struggled east over the rugged mountains to open the gateway to the Overberg – a new region of the *Colony* was born. By 1820 more than 4,500 ox-wagons a year were trekking over the Hottentots Holland Kloof Road. Today, we speed over a 2-lane highway – Sir Lowry's Pass, (No! not named after that North Country artist but after Governor Sir Lowry Cole) to arrive at Elgin which we will now explore. "Why"! I hear you shout. "What about Stellenbosch, Paarl, Franschhoek, Robertson, Worcester and..."

"Enough!" This is my article and I choose to focus on Elgin. The other areas will have to wait their turn.



The Elgin Valley is where the San hunters and Khoi pastoralists migrated with the majestic wildlife which once roamed the fertile valley. In 1966, on Applethwaite Farm, Edmond Lombardi created a drink, free of additives and preservatives, a pure apple-juice beverage known as 'Appletiser'.

Today, the town of Grabouw, in the heart of the Elgin Valley, is the commercial centre for what is the largest single export fruit producing area in Southern Africa. Renowned for its apples, pears, its greenhouse cut flowers, its rose growing, and, increasingly, for the production of high quality cool climate wines.

A total of 24 members now make up the Elgin wine guild.

A drive through the picturesque undulating countryside restores a sense of tranquillity, a time when life was less hurried, a period when families enjoyed supper together around a table. Stimulating conversation, good food and fine wine were the rewards of the day. Television soappies, teenagers SMS-ing each other and irritating cell phones, were yet to be invented. Now, all this talk generates an appetite which brings *me*, and introduces *you*, to my favourite port of call – South Hill. It is here, where winemaker, Sean Skibbe creates his superb wines, and where Chef Gordon Manuel conjures up magic at Elgin's finest gourmet establishment; Gordon Manuel @The Venue.

You will find South Hill nestled on the southern hills of the Elgin Valley, along The Valley Road. Previously known as South Hall Farm, the land was cultivated with apple and pear orchards, like many others at the time, before being transformed into a wine estate inclusive of luxury accommodation, a gourmet restaurant and a function venue, back in 2001. With spectacular surroundings and abundant plant, bird and wild life, it is hard to believe that this little slice of rural bliss still exists only an hour's drive from Cape Town City Centre.





Pop in for a chat, a wine tasting, gourmet meal, or stay the night and you won't be disappointed. South Hill offers exquisite accommodation for the perfect peaceful getaway. The Guesthouse is a four bedroom, en suite luxury villa with full guest amenities and each superb en suite room is individually decorated with doors opening out on to a private patio. The living area is open plan with the kitchen, dining room and lounge area tastefully presented overlooking the garden and surrounding vineyards as well as a decent-sized swimming pool. Housekeeper Sophie is never far away, to ensure that you really do enjoy your downtime during your stay.

For budding chefs, self-catering in the state-of-the-art kitchen is a delight, but for those less enthusiastic about cooking, resident chef Gordon Manuel can be called upon to whip up a dish just for you; or, from Wednesday to Sunday you could dine in his gourmet country style restaurant, Gordon Manuel @The Venue, just a stroll across the lawn.



Gordon Manuel's country-infused cuisine is always enjoyed in style with walls bedecked by art from Red! The Gallery. Only the best locally grown produce from the Overberg region is selected for the French-style (with some cheeky local twists) menu – which is succinct yet spontaneous; changing to match the mood of the seasons. Add to this the fact that South Hill's very own wines are available to pair with these dishes and you will not be dissatisfied. We enjoyed the combination of superb food, wine and hospitality when South Hill hosted an International Wine and Food Society Gala Dinner in 2008.

South Hill is also well known for memorable weddings both posh and rustic. Hassle-free; the coordinator on site handles all the farm arrangements and honeymoon couples enjoy the privacy of South Hill's other little accommodation gem; The Pumphouse Suite.

Secluded and private, in amongst an indigenous fynbos garden on the banks of a dam surrounded by Shiraz vineyards; The Pumphouse is a little universe of luxurious self-catering calm, complete with comfy finishes, waterside views and an outdoor jacuzzi to while away the weekend in.

For more information on South Hill you can call +27 21 844 0888, email info@southhill.co.za, or visit www.southhill.co.za.



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Sir Francis Drake, Vasco da Gama, Batholomiew Dias and even Jan Van Riebeeck himself, probably never cast their eyes upon *Struthio Camelus* although in those far off days the creature was inhabiting the Elgin Valley. The Cape Cuisine evolved, as did the Afrikaans language, over the centuries thanks to the contribution of a diversity of cultures.



Picture the poor Dutch settler. With acre upon acre of fertile farmland his biggest problem was labour. Breeding sons takes time. The locals – the San Hunters and the Khoi-Khoi pastoralists did not want to work for him and who can blame them. Contrary to popular belief the nearest Bantu – Black African – was hundreds of miles away in the East of the country and another hundred-plus-years passed before they came into contact. The Dutch answer to the labour shortage was to import slaves from their other colonies. Angola, Madagascar and Indonesia. The Dutch East Indies – Malaysia – the home of spices.

“But what has all this to do with food?” I hear you say.
 “Patience!” I reply. “I’m coming to the point.”

The San had inhabited the Cape for over 750,000 years. As Nomadic hunters they were expert at gathering wild plants to eat and use as medicines. A chestnut flavoured bulb – the waterblommetjies, wild figs, rooibos all made their way into creating Boerekoes – farmer food in Afrikaans. In contrast the Khoi, herders of cattle traded with the early Dutch. They roasted their fish on coals and in kelp, sea bamboo. Back to *Struthio Camelus*, this strange creature that I am sure you have correctly identified as the Ostrich, was important to the San. They ate its meat, wore its skin and its eggs served as precious water canteens.



Struthio Camelus – the Largest bird in the world.
 Farmed in South Africa since 1864, and now exported worldwide. The Cape still accounts for 65% of all ostriches and 80% of all products. They are the fastest running creature on two legs reaching speeds of 45 mph. The only bird that urinates and defecates – thank God they don’t fly!
 Living to the ripe old age of 40 they mate for life and the female – she with the dull brown feathers – sits on the eggs during the day making him – the male, serve out the night shift, hence his magnificent black feathers provide better camouflage.
 They dine on shrubs, grubs and grasses and the chicks on birth have to swallow stones to assist digestion. Ideally adapted to a dry arid climate they can survive without water for days. Of course you all know the meat is dark

OSTRICH BOBOTIE

My personal yummy scrumptious Cape Malay favourite! It is usually made with lamb but ostrich mince creates a drier dish (in my humble opinion) thereby allowing the spices to blossom.

My idiot proof quick quick recipe:

2 cloves finely chopped garlic, chilli (go easy), 2 rough chopped onions, 2 teaspoons curry powder, 1 teaspoon turmeric, 20 chopped almonds.

Fry the above lightly in oil then add:

1 kg seasoned ostrich mince cook out

Add ½ cup vinegar, 1 big spoon chutney, juice of 1 lemon.

Now: Soak 1 crustless slice of white bread in milk, add bread to meat, stir well.

Remove contents to a heavy casserole dish.

Beat 3-eggs with 125ml of milk pour over top and bake in oven for 30-mins at 180°C



To pair with ostrich you ask? South Hill’s Cabernet Sauvignon is perfect! The wine has typical Cabernet aromas of black cherries and cassis; and the palate is fruit driven with juicy dark chocolate, clean, red berry fruit and a hint of vanilla, which makes it deliciously easy to drink.

Well, it’s time to sign off from the Fairest Cape in all the world. The ship carrying this dispatch sails with the tide. Please feel free to contact me – **Martin Fine** at capefuntours@icon.co.za and www.capefuntours.co.za. For more information on Elgin, visit the Elgin Valley Tourism website: www.elginvalley.co.za.

Collectanea - solina



"Between the crisis and the catastrophe, there is always time for a glass of Champagne." *French Ambassador Paul Claudel, on the eve of the 1929 Wall Street crash.*

Another 'Superfood'

Black rice is the latest miracle food, 'Just a spoonful of its bran contains more health-promoting anthocyanin antioxidants than are found in a spoonful of blueberries,' said Dr Zhimin Xu, of Louisiana State University, 'but with less sugar and more fibre and vitamin E antioxidants.' It is no wonder that in Ancient China it was called 'forbidden rice', only the nobles were allowed to eat it.



Quote of the Week

"I gave up Michelin stars in about 1987 when I wanted to do away with fripperies. The only reason I crave one now is because it is impossible to recruit chefs without one." *Rowley Leigh claims the industry's skills shortage is in the stars*

A Soberer Nation

UK drinkers are enjoying less alcohol, with new data revealing the biggest fall in consumption in 60 years. The newly published British Beer & Pub Association (BBPA) Statistical Handbook 2010 reveals a 6% decline in year-on-year alcohol consumption in 2009, which represents the largest fall since 1948.

It means that UK drinkers are now consuming 13% less alcohol than they did in 2004, with UK consumption below the EU average as the Government conducts a review of the licensing laws in England and Wales.

By Chris Druce - online news editor at www.CatererSearch.com

Waste not Want Not!

British restaurants throw away more than 600,000 tons of food each year - equivalent to half a kilo every time someone eats out. Nearly a third comes from diners' plates. - *The Independent*



Asda's Crunchy Sandwich

Asda has come under fire from the 'food police' for selling the new 'Crispwich', - four slices of buttered bread layered with a packet of Ready Salted crisps.

Local??

According to a nationwide investigation of pubs and restaurants by trading standards officers don't believe what you read on the menu. In North Wales they found that only half the meat sold as 'Welsh lamb' came from Wales, while the 'Hampshire spring lamb' sold in a restaurant in Fareham was from New Zealand.



"THE LOCALLY SOURCED VENISON SOUNDS TEMPTING..."

Courtesy of The Daily Mail

European Mice Celebrate

At last the Europeans have realised where the best cheese comes from. Exports from the UK have soared with Germany's imports alone rising by £66m last year.



Finding the Healthiest Wine

We can now be more discriminating in our drinking. Scientists have created a new device to assess which wines contain the highest levels of health boosting antioxidants. The gadget detects the levels of polyphenols present in individual bottles of wine.

Anyone for Roast Badger or maybe Young Gannet?

Letter to The Daily Telegraph

'With the removal of protection for badgers we can return to the days of badger feasts at the local pub. Until the Second World War, these were held annually on Boxing Day, where a badger - weighing up to 60lb - was roasted and carved.' *Gerry Masters, Ilchester, Somerset*

For something a bit fishy how about young gannet? Each year a group of men set sail from the northern Hebrides to hunt young gannets on the uninhabited islet of Sula Geir. The meat from the chicks, which are dispatched by a sharp blow to the head, is considered a delicacy on the Isle of Lewis. But the Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals are now trying to ban the practise on animal welfare grounds.

Has Food Labelling Gone Mad?

Often there is not too much to worry about when you look at the list of additives on a food packet. Every common ingredient is given an E number so they are not necessarily bad for you. For instance if you see preservative E330 on a packet it is only lemon juice. E322 is the code for egg yolk. In most cases, says Stefan Gates on BBC News online, if you eat junk food it is not the E numbers but the excess of natural ingredients such as fat, sugar and salt that will kill you.



Fact: Almost 900 village pubs closed in 2009, 400 village shops closed in 2008 and rural schools shut at the rate of one a month between 1997 and 2008. *The Daily Telegraph*

Crying Into His Wine?

A French vigneron discovered that his entire crop of Cabernet Sauvignon grapes had been stolen overnight. Roland Cavaille said the thieves took advantage of the full moon to harvest the 30 tons of grapes with a harvesting machine. "... this means there was no need to have lots of people, two people would have been enough," said Cavaille. The vineyard is in an isolated area and no one heard anything. The vineyard is insured but the policy does not cover the grapes themselves!



DEREK HAWES GOES HUNTING

- 'FOR THE NICE DARK ONE...'



Dawn was more rosy-fingered than usual, rising behind the Tuscan hills as we turned off the Autostrada from Pisa. Circling Siena and driving up through the ancient villages and hilltop towns. The dawn mists began to settle into the valley bottoms, through which the fortified hilltop castelli peeped in the morning sun.

We were going a'hunting: not for little men, nor for wild boar, despite the pleading of our Tuscan friends, but for that most distinguished, unknown and entirely Tuscan wine, the Brunello. We were going to Montalcino.

The journey was enlivened by choruses of the hoopoe, and the cuckoo. Bright yellow broom, filled with goldfinches, lighting our way through the vineyards and the olive groves along tree-covered lanes.

We see the sunlit castello well before we get to Montalcino, arising out of the plain, with clusters of red-roofed homes sheltering under its protective walls, the mightiest of which had been built by Cosimo de Medici. Like an island in the heart of Tuscany, the hill town offers to those who ascend from the valleys surrounding it the feeling of a gradual conquest, the sense of arriving at a snug harbour. To quote the local publicity, 'Because of the purity of the air of an environment that is still intact and wild, Montalcino provides a host of stimuli for the imaginations of those who visit' The town is seventy miles southwest of Florence, 1,850 feet above sea level, in the province of Siena. In the distance, Monte Amiata, the highest peak in Southern Tuscany provides a sheltering influence, tempering the region's climate and rainfall.

Although it is the wine that dominates now, the visitor, driving slowly up the quiet streets to the castello, quickly understands there is a long and glorious history recorded here too. It was in 1888 that the first "modern" version of Brunello di Montalcino was made by Ferruccio Biondi-Santi, who had fought with Garibaldi during the *Risorgimento*, when the wine was aged for over a decade in large wood barrels. But its lineage is much older than that, the first record of "Brunello" was in the 14th century. The climate is one of the warmest and driest in Tuscany, with the grapes ripening up to a week earlier than in nearby Chianti and Montepulciano, about which Ron Barker wrote in the September 2008 edition of this journal. It is the most arid DOCG, receiving an average rainfall of about 28 inches, considerably less than its more prolific neighbours.

In the years following the second World War, great technical advances were made in wine production in Montalcino and Hugh Johnson, writing in 1966, said 'Brunello di Montalcino, which is not entitled to be called Chianti, is better than any except the very best Chiantis and has more of the power and richness of a Barolo – it has the cleanness and character of a very fine wine, strong, but wonderfully delicate at the end...' It is produced exclusively from the Sangiovese grape (known locally as Brunello) and is subject to a very strict discipline with standards that, as well as fixing limits on yields per hectare, the period of obligatory ageing and characteristics of the product, also demands that before the wine can be sold it must be subjected to examination by a formal commission. See box:

Main rules for production of Brunello: 1980

Growing area: The commune of Montalcino

Variety: 100% Sangiovese

Maximum Yield: 80 quintals per hectare.

Yield of wine: 68%

Ageing: At least 2 years in oak cask.

Ageing in bottle: At least 4 months (six months for *Riserva*.)

Colour: Intense ruby red, tending to garnet with ageing

Odour: Characteristic and intense perfume

Flavour: dry, warm, slight tannic, robust and harmonic.

Minimum alcohol: 12.5% by volume

Minimum total acidity: 5 g/l

Bottling: Must take place in production area. Sold only in Bordeaux-type bottles

Market availability: 5 years after the harvest, (six years for the *riserva*)



Currently there are 208 separate producers of this wine, ranging from small farmers with very few vines, to the great Casanova di Neri with over 60 hectares of vines. The Bioni-Santi estate, which has been in business for over one hundred and fifty years, was in the forefront of the post-war modernisation drive. This led, in 1968, to the region being granted the *Denominazione di Origine Controllata* (DOC) and, in 1980 to DOCG, the first such designation in Italy. It was the Bioni-Santi estate that opened up the American market, now accounting for 33% of the total output.

Brunello is a big, big wine, matching the very best of the Chianti. Mary Ewing-Mulligan, the first American Master of Wine, believes that most Brunellos often need at least ten years before they shed their youthfulness and start to harmonise their flavours. For those who judge with their noses, it is full of fruits and herbs, plums berries and earth. And for those with an agro-chemical bent, or who become passionate about the soil and the climate or wonder at the purity of the lone Sangiovese grape, there is much here about which to wax lyrical.

The wine makers of Montalcino say that “brunello” means, in the local dialect, ‘the nice dark one’ and from the business being done in the many small wine shops in the town, there were plenty of people anxious to take home samples of the ‘nice dark one’.

In a small restaurant, perched on a precipitous ledge that dropped away beneath us, with views across the open plain, we chose the 2003 vintage to go with our light Italian re-past. Pasta and sweet-meats were followed by slices of the local pecarino cheese and juicy sliced pears. Technically of course, this was not at all the right wine to choose, but how could we possibly not experience this enchanting little town, its passionate people and its quintessential romance and not taste the very purpose of its being. “It is Michelangelo in a bottle” said the waiter, as he poured the ‘nice dark one’ and it seemed the perfect way to end the day’s hunting. We had, after all, found our quarry.

The local consortium (*Consorzio del Vino Brunello di Montalcino*) awards each year’s vintage one to five stars for quality, on a scale ranging from 1- insufficient, to 5 - outstanding. In the Town square one wall is given over to a series of beautifully crafted graffiti or artistic panels, in which each year’s vintage score is celebrated with its own special design. The last decade shows three 5 star years, five 4 star years – only one year - 2002 scored 2-stars and one a three star - 2000.

Descending through the hills towards home we could not but agree that it is the ineluctable passion of the Italians for this most noble wine, that somehow defies expression. Like Charles Dickens we knew that ‘there is a passion for hunting something deeply implanted in the human breast...’ and on this occasion we found it on the top of an Italian mountain, in the hearts of the Tuscan winemakers of Montalcino.

Derek Hawes - St James's Branch, London.

www.consorziobrunellodimontalcino.it Email: info@consorziobrunellodimontalcino.it



**The Board of Governors of the Americas
Present
“Cruise with IW&FS Friends”
August 21 – 28, 2011
A Visit to the Mediterranean
Aboard the Holland America *Nieuw Amsterdam***

ITINERARY

Sunday Aug 21 – Depart Barcelona, Spain at 5:00 pm
 Monday Aug 22 – Monte Carlo, Monaco
 Tuesday Aug 23 – Santa Margherita, Italy
 Wednesday Aug 24 – Civitavecchia (Rome), Italy
 Thursday Aug 25 – Trapani, Sicily
 Friday Aug 26 – La Goulette, Tunisia
 Saturday Aug 27 – Cruising At Sea
 Sunday Aug 28 – Arrive Barcelona, Spain at 7:00 am



Wining & Dining: BGA Governor Steve Hipple (who will serve as the cruise’s on-board host) and his organizing committee have arranged for some very special experiences for us. Six evenings will begin with a private champagne reception followed by a special dinner planned by Mr. Hipple and prepared by the ship’s world-class culinary staff. Our five-course dinners will be accompanied by wines representing the great wine producing regions of the world and purchased by the IW&FS specifically for our cruise. We will also have a private wine tasting.

For full details please contact Steve Hipple at stephenhipple@hotmail.com or the travel agency directly - Stephanie Schmitz at: AAA Travel Agency, 910 North 96th St., Omaha, NE 68114 sschmitz@aaane.com or go to www.IWFS.org

UPDATING THE SAVOIE

by ALAN SHEPHERD



Stephanie Shepherd adding tawny port to the herb jus for the boeuf en croute



Jean Sulpice demonstrating how to wrap the beef in pastry for consistent results.

For many of us, whose exposure to the French Alps dates back to package skiing holidays some years ago, Savoie cuisine is cheese, potato and not much else. So Stephanie and I were a little surprised, on moving into an apartment in a rather obscure ski resort ten years ago, to find that we had a Michelin star restaurant a few yards up the road. It had been established by Rene Meilleur, a local man, entirely self-taught, who had taken the local dishes and redeveloped and refined them to the highest standards. A few years later, a young chef, Jean Sulpice arrived at the newly built Oxalys aparthotel at the head of the valley. He came from Aix les Bains at the other end of the Savoie. His mother was a hotelier and his father a farmer, and from the age of 16, he had worked in the kitchens of a number of top restaurants all over France and overseas. He already had something of a reputation, and his cooking, whilst faithful to the local ingredients and culture, was remarkably inventive and well prepared. When he received his first Michelin star, a few years later, he proclaimed that at 2,300 metres, he had “the highest star in Europe”. And this year when he received his second star at the age of 31, he was the youngest chef to achieve this distinction.

So when we discovered that he was offering a *Cours Gastronomique* during the summer season, it seemed like too good an opportunity to miss. The format was simple: arrive at 9.00am, prepare a three course lunch from his menu, and eat it out on the sunny terrace, served by the restaurant staff with matching wines. One slight snag – it was all in French. We can read it well enough, but our command of the spoken language is distinctly limited. Fortunately it did not turn out to be a major problem.

His kitchen was impressive – not very large, but full of modern technology which enabled him to run it with quite a small staff. The first course was a mushroom mousse, served with garlic, parsley, mushrooms and a poached egg. Sounds straightforward, but this one was different. The mousse was prepared in a Thermomix blender, and frothed in a NO₂-powered siphon. And the eggs were cooked for 90 minutes at a temperature of precisely 64 degrees C. This ensures that the whites are

completely opaque, while the yolks remain soft.

For the main course we prepared a *filet de boeuf en croute*, with a herb sauce and broad beans. This was one of the best that we have tasted – most impressive were the techniques used to ensure that, by controlling precisely the weight, shape and cooking conditions, every fillet was perfectly cooked, with crisp pastry and a pink centre. This is one that we are going to try at home.

The dessert was a *millefeuille des fraises des bois à la biere*. Again the soda siphon was much in evidence in preparing the beer mousse and strawberry sorbet, and the *mille feuille* were slices of bread, cut very thin with a bacon slicer, and dried in the oven between sheets of greaseproof paper.

All in all a most worthwhile experience, and we came away with a book of recipes which can thankfully be reproduced in our more humble home environment.

Alan Shepherd, London Branch



Global Society Website – Register now!

1. Please look at your “address label” on *this* delivery of ‘Food & Wine’ to determine your Usernames and Passwords

	Example Usernames:	SmitJam4327
		SmitDi4327
	Example Passwords:	4327-484
		4327-484

<p>Usernames are composed of:</p>	<p>the first 4 letters of your surname (or all of the letters if you have less than 4), including any spaces or apostrophes, but excluding full stops</p>	<p>plus the first 3 letters of your first name as shown (or all letters if you have less than 3). Where there is a single letter, or no letter, please use just that</p>	<p>plus the 4 digits of your Membership Number shown in the first line of your label</p>
<p>Passwords are composed of:</p>	<p>the 4 digits of your Membership Number shown in the first line of your label</p>	<p>plus a hyphen “-”</p>	<p>plus the 3 digits of your Branch Number shown in the last line of your label</p>

- While your initial Passwords within a membership are identical, you are encouraged to change your passwords, and to make them different, during your initial sign-in to the website. You can change them later through the Control Panel.
- The **only** opportunity you have to change your Username is during the initial sign-in. However Usernames must be unique across the whole website so, if the alternate Username you select is already in use, you will be asked to choose a different one.
- Usernames are not case sensitive, so you don't have to worry about using capital letters. However Passwords, if you change then to include letters, are case sensitive.**
- Your Branch Contact has a copy of your Usernames and initial Passwords just in case you need any help in signing on.
- Where your first name is just an initial, or is missing, you can amend this through the Control Panel.
- When you amend your records please ensure that your e-mail address and postal address are both correct and fully up to date, as we shall soon be using this information for our communications with you.

2. Use your internet browser and go to: www.iwfs.org

Tabs on the Home Page provide public access to common topics and non-restricted information in the Regions. Now you are ready to register as a Member and sign in:



"By clicking on the 'I CONSENT' button I confirm my consent to the collection, storage and processing by the Society, its regions and its branches of personal data relating to me, subject to it doing so in accordance with the appropriate data protection legislation in my region of the Society."

Member Name:

Login Name: You will use the name to login

Password: Choose a password

Password: Retype your password

1. Enter your Username and Password as above, under Member Sign In, and then click on:
2. Scroll to the bottom of the Registration screen, change your Login Name (if you wish), and enter your new Password in both boxes
3. Click on:
4. You can now explore the Members' pages or, if you wish, you can click on Control Panel to edit your details (see Section 4 overleaf)

3. Explore the Members' Pages

Member sign in unlocks much more content, including access to the Secretariat tab. The site recognizes members upon sign in and opens their session on their Region's "News" page.



Click on a Branch name in the drop down menu and access the content posted by that Branch, organised for viewing by the public, IWFS members or Branch members. Branches with external web sites can create links to them.

The Contact feature sends e-mails to the Society, Regional or Branch Contact, depending on the menu from which sent, while preventing their e-mail address from visibility on the internet. Special attention should be paid to the Branch Event scheduling and reporting feature. A calendar of events may be posted, with content added as each event is firmed up. Following each event, photos and reports can be added for viewing. Unless reserved for Branch Members only, events are consolidated and can be viewed by Region and by the Society as a whole. Well worth reviewing before your next trip away from home!

Europe / Africa - IW&FS

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EVENTS

Please use this calendar to review Branch events held from 2010 onwards as well as future events planned:

October 2010						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

October Events

Theme: A Game Lunch
Venue: 4 Windrush Heights, Sandhurst, Berks GU47 8ET
Location: Sandhurst, Berkshire
Date: 31 Oct 2010
Time: 12.30 for 1pm

Keth and Sheila have kindly offered their home again for our October event. The event has been devised around a venison dish that Bernard Lamb has offered to prepare for us with a matching w... [more info](#)

4. Access the Control Panel to update your details

In the Control Panel you can manage your Password, e-mail addresses, primary address, other addresses, contact preferences, 'phone numbers, etc. These are accessible by your Branch for member lists, invitations and administration. Just click on [control panel](#)

Welcome Back John W [control panel](#)

LOGOUT

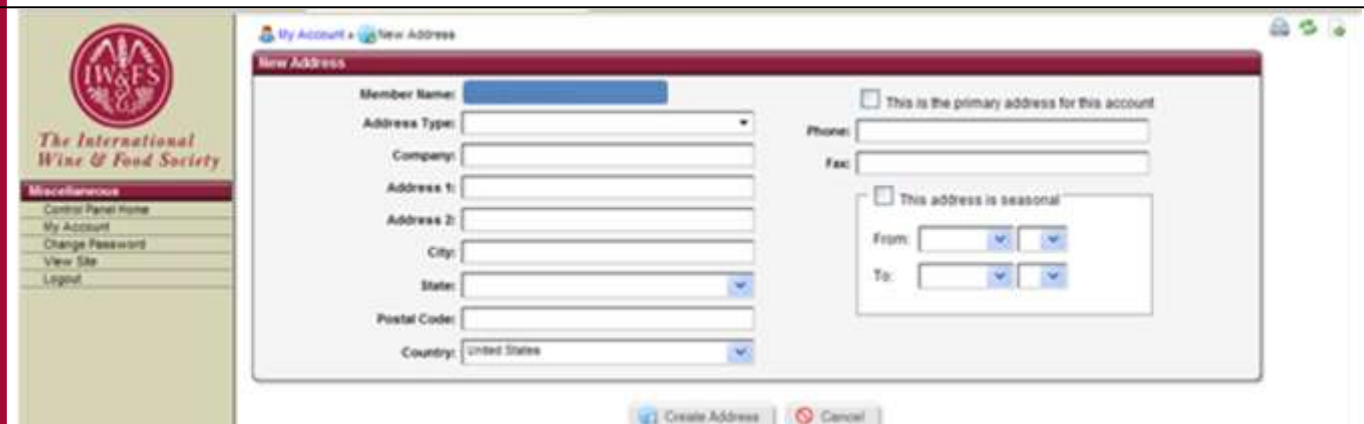
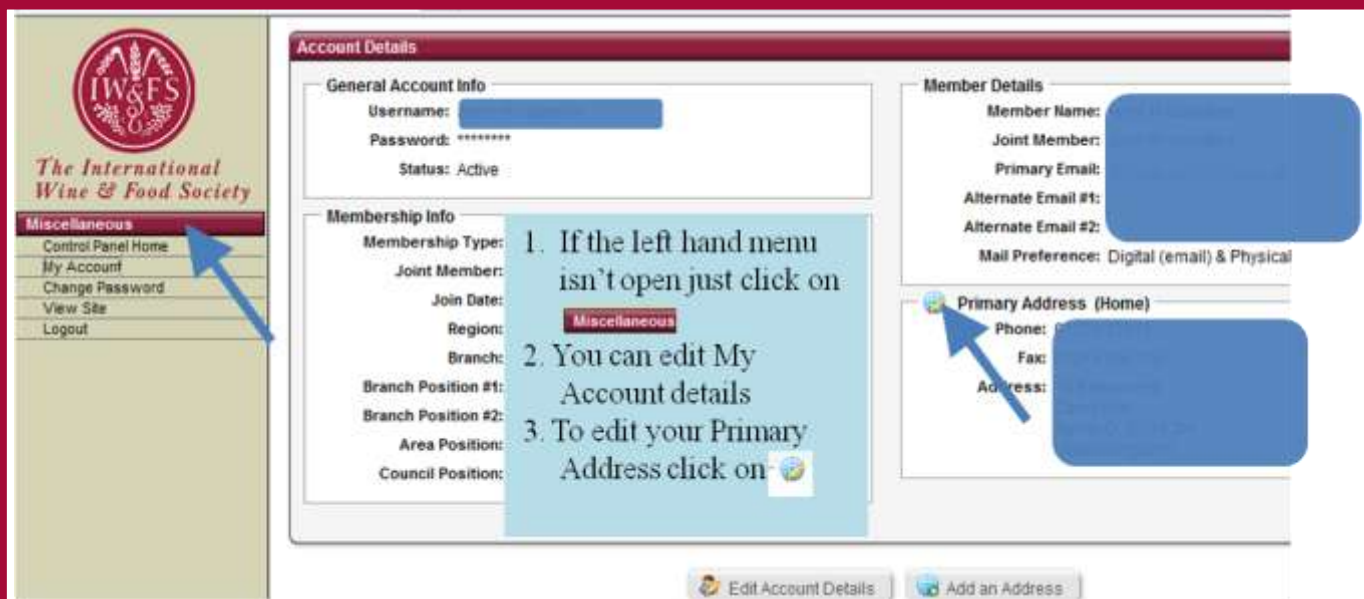
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UK, LONDON ST JAMES'S MEMBERS ONLY OVERVIEW

Click on “Miscellaneous” to expand the menu if necessary.

From Control Panel, click on “My Account” to see your basic account information. From this screen you can “Edit Account Details”, edit existing addresses (see 3. in the light blue box below), or “Add an Address”. Because of the variation in use of Postal Codes across the EAC Region, we are using the “Postal Code” for the fourth line of your address. Please ensure that there is an up to date e-mail address in “Primary Email”. Click on “Save Changes” whenever you complete the entries on a page.



From the “Miscellaneous” menu, you can use the “Change Password” feature – don’t forget to “Save Changes” after doing this! There is no need to “Logout” if you plan to return to the Members’ pages.

5. Keep Information Current

This is your Wine & Food Society. The organisation and web site exist to enhance your enjoyment. Please update your contact information whenever it changes. We want you to receive the most up-to-date information and announcements.

What's next?

This site gives you access to the International Wine & Food Society’s worldwide resources. Now, your Branch can add its own web presence, at no cost, for displaying its heritage and informing its members. This is an IWFS Membership Benefit, and only the beginning. Additional features and content are being developed as you read this.



Monarchs on the Menu

by Alan F Harrison



The French nation learns history at the table and that history includes many monarchs (plus equivalents and retinues) within many countries. Our source of the culinary information is the *Répertoire de la Cuisine*, a small book originally published in France and London in 1914, which is available in updated form in English and French. It gives many hundreds of garnishes and dish names with a brief content/technique list for each. The last article in the series (June 2010) suggested that the *Répertoire* was created by and for chefs and *maîtres d'hôtel* in French and British cities, chiefly London. They regarded the book as the main reference work relating to garnishes and dish names.

Let's begin with a look at garnishes and dish names. *Léopold* is a dish name. Léopold I (1640—1705) was Holy Roman Emperor etc and fought France. Léopold II (1835 - 1909) (pictured) was King of the Belgians and was in European high society. He is more likely to have had dishes named after him. *Poulet Sauté Léopold* - chicken pieces sauté without colour with chopped shallots, the dish is garnished with braised endive. *Poule au Pot* or Chicken is associated with Henri IV of France. *Poule au Pot Henri IV* is the dish name.



The *tournedo* is a steak cut from the middle of a trimmed fillet of beef. The thinner *noissette* is cut from a boned saddle of lamb. They can be fried and garnished. Moving to generic royalty, *Noissettes d'Agneau Princesse* are finished with globe-artichoke-bottoms filled with asparagus tips and *Pommes Noisettes* (small balls of potato) finished in the same pan as the *noisettes*. The *Répertoire* has a section for garnishes and *Princesse* applies to *tournedos*, *noisettes* and *sweetbreads*. The garnish gives the dish its name. *Poularde Princesse*, is a poached boiling fowl covered with a roux-based chicken and asparagus sauce. *Pommes Duchesse* (piped potato) are part of the dish, shaped as nests and filled with asparagus tips. The *Répertoire* then says that *quenelles* (small egg-shaped portions of an *appareil* or mixture— in this case chicken and asparagus) are placed on top.

Let's look at Henri IV (1553 – 1610) in more detail. Henri was nicknamed Henry the Great (*Henri le Grand*), and is also called *le bon roi Henri* ("the good king Henry") or *le vert galant* ("the green gallant"), references to both his dashing character and his attractiveness to women. One of the most popular French kings, both during and after his reign, Henri showed great care for the welfare of his subjects. "I want there to be no peasant in my kingdom so poor that he is unable to have a chicken in his pot every Sunday." Grilled kidneys in Henri IV style are filled with Béarnaise sauce and accompanied by double-sized *pommes frites* or *Pommes Pont Neuf* (New Pope or Bridge according to your stance). Béarnaise sauce is Hollandaise sauce with tarragon and is selected to acknowledge Béarn as Henri's birthplace. Chicken *escalopes* (slices) in his style are sauté and served with asparagus tips and Béarnaise sauce. *Oeufs Mollet Béarnaise* are soft boiled eggs in puff pastry tartlets napped with Béarnaise sauce and they will be our last celebration of Henri IV.



Louis XIV, known as the "Sun King" began his reign at the age of four. It lasted over seventy-two years and is the longest documented reign of any European monarch. Louis began personally governing France in 1661 after the death of his prime minister, the Italian Cardinal Mazarin (who has his own garnish). Louis continued his predecessors' work of creating a centralised state governed from the capital. *Sole Louis XIV* is poached and finished with a shrimp sauce containing finely diced vegetables (*brunoise*). *Rognons* (kidneys) *Louis XIV* are grilled with slices of ham and finished with watercress.



Dishes including *Catherine* are inspired by Catherine II (1729 – 1796) - Catherine the Great. Catherine took power after a conspiracy deposed her husband, Peter III, and her reign saw the high point in the influence of the Russian nobility. She found it impractical to improve the lot of her poorest subjects. There wasn't even 'Beetroot in the Pot Catherine style'. She reigned as Empress of Russia from 1762 until her death thirty-four years later. Catherine can be thanked for *hors d'oeuvre*. French cooks came to her palace with visiting monarchs and nobles and noticed the small food items which began the meal and which were prepared outside the main kitchen. They were also eaten before entering the dining room. Perhaps one translation of *hors d'oeuvre* is 'outside items/works'. *Noisettes d'Agneau Catherine* or *Tournedo Catherine* are sauté and presented on fried potato cakes made from baked potato insides. *Demi-glace* or Brown Sauce flavoured with white wine, shallots, thyme and bayleaf is then poured around the meat.



Let's cross the Channel with Marie Stuart - Mary, Queen of Scots (1542 – 1587). Scottish Queen Regnant from 1542 to 1567. In 1558, she married Francis, Dauphin of France, who ascended the French throne as Francis II in 1559. She has good menu-currency with the garnish *Marie Stuart* - tartlets filled with turnip purée, slices of bone marrow and served with entrées. Then there's a chicken soup, a sole dish with lobster sauce and truffles, and a salad. Finally, she ranks as a *Dauphine* (being married to the Dauphin) and that garnish applies to large joints. In the next issue we will look at a more recent British queen.

There is a table of many more garnishes at <http://www.gastronomyafharrison.co.uk/page6.php> and more narrative in the first chapter of *Gastronomy* via the same page.

1970 Château Coutet Grand Cru Classé Saint Emilion

A Wine with a History

Château Coutet Saint Emilion, not to be confused with the Château Coutet, Premier Grand Cru Classé, Barsac.

The Coutet estate is situated on one of the hillsides at Saint Emilion, overlooking the picturesque Dordogne valley, with land which is highly favourable to the vines.

The estate comprises over 14 hectares, 12.5 of which are vines and has belonged to the same family for over 400 years. Thomas d'Augereau, mayor of Libourne in 1601, was owner of Coutet, he married Marie David, daughter to Aimery David the previously mayor of Libourne. At the beginning of the 20th century Grand Coutet wine was served on grand tables all over the world, from Tsar Nicholas II to the Grand Khedive of Egypt. It was acknowledged Grand Cru Classé at the first classification in 1954, only to be demoted in 1985.

Today Alain & Xavier David Beaulieu manage the vineyard and intend to bring Coutet back into the circle of the Saint Emilion Grand Cru Classé wines when the reappraisal of the classification is made in 2016 so as to pass on the torch to the next generation.

The 1970 Coutet we are drinking has a fascinating history. We purchased it in 1980 from a auction house in Ipswich who were selling it on behalf of the creditors of a négociant in Bordeaux who had gone bankrupt. There were several hundred cases, abandoned on the quay in Bordeaux. We went to Ipswich for a tasting and decided to tender for the Coutet and several other chateaux wines. I think our original tender was for 20 cases of Coutet at £30 a case. The auctioneer rang to say we had got our 20 cases - how many more would we like? We decided to stick with 20 but another phone call a few days later offered us as many as we liked at £20 a case. That was when we decided to increase the quantity to 50 cases. The wine was unapproachable for a long time, the shaking up in the cattle truck on the way back from Harwich had dispersed any heavier sediment. After several years it was softening but still had little sediment. Talking of it to Jeffrey Benson, he said that many vineyards at that time were filtering out the heavier particles that would normally carry the finer lees down. We felt that must be the case as even today there is no heavy sediment in the wine. I have now e-mailed Château Coutet and this was their reply:

Dear Madame,

Thank you very much for the feedback. We are happy that you tasted well our old Coutet. I asked my father who made the wine and he confirmed me that at this time, he didn't filter the wine; only "collage" with whites of eggs.

If you or your friends would come to Saint-Emilion, we would be very happy to show you our beautiful place in our family since more than 3 hundredth !

Best regards,

Xavier DAVID BEAULIEU

Chateau COUTET www.chateau-coutet.com

We still have a few cases left but we don't decant it any more. For the past few years the wine has been much better when shaken before pouring! This gives it a pleasing bouquet and a good fruity flavour, if decanted it is flat and lifeless, a strange phenomenon.

Xavier's father's comments have made us even more puzzled about this intriguing wine but in retrospect we definitely should have bought a 100 cases.

Pam Brunning



Merseyside Festival 14th to 19th June 2011

Your chance to meet members from around the world.

The Festival is sold out and there is a waiting list.

But.....there is still space on individual events and for the post festival trip to the Lake District.

For further information contact

Val Brookfield karnak.fvb@btinternet.com or Ron Barker ronbarker@hotmail.co.uk

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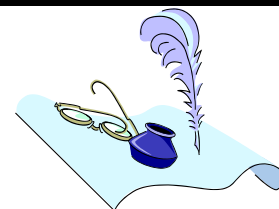
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Readers' Letters



Dear Editor

I was most interested to read about Nunsmere Hall in the latest edition of the magazine. The Merseyside and Mid-Cheshire branch had a sad experience there, as we did.

Years ago (I mean about 20 plus) it was good, and we returned there earlier this year for an anniversary. Oh dear!

Our table had clearly been used by someone who had tipped the crumbs from the sideplate on to the carpet. These were not our crumbs. The next morning at breakfast the crumbs - I mean hundreds of them - were still in the same place. No-one had bothered to vacuum the carpet.

Then there was the bathroom, which was dirty. The Venetian blind was particularly disgusting. I would guess there were months of grime there.

To crown it all, when I arrived at the desk to pay and offered my credit card, the receptionist was about to take it out of my sight into a back room. I remonstrated, asking her to settle the transaction in my sight.

We agreed to differ, so I had to write a cheque.

We will not be going there again. I'm sorry to see the place hurtling down hill like this.

Josephine Jackson, Manchester

Dear Editor

Connoisseurship

Within our Society, we have numerous members who may not profess to be connoisseurs but, as with all members, know what they like and know what is good. While any of us could be a *Master of Wine* if we followed the correct procedure, there are, none the less, many with high levels of expertise. Branch events sometimes import an MW to talk on a specific topic and many more members could do the same with suitable encouragement. Other events draw upon culinary expertise from the hospitality industry as well as the members. As you thumb through *Food & Wine*, you are forever impressed at the sheer volume of expertise, talent and even modesty across a wide range of topics, within this noble Society of ours.

Connoisseurship includes the matching of food and wine and more than one branch has held events on this topic. I am researching the wider concepts of connoisseurship. You may have had or would like to have a branch event on food and wine matching or other aspects of connoisseurship. You know members or others who are not members with lots to offer. You remember a guest speaker at a branch event and can send contact information. Please make contact with your views and recommendations. The aim is a *Food & Wine* article of interest to all members.

Just send an email to avrf23@dsl.pipex.com, or letter to Glen Dawr, Ross-on-Wye, HR9 7HR, or phone: 01989 567001.

Alan F Harrison (Prof) Independent Member

around the branches - Members Entertain at Home



THE LAST OF SUMMER IN THE SURREY HILLS



The most perspicacious of you will recognize the words "Starters & Puds" from other issues of *Food & Wine*. This is the nineteenth year we have held this event. No middle course but four of each of the "Starters & Puds". This time the starters were Broccoli and Stilton Soup, Mousseline of Scallops, Feta and Melon Salad and Terrine *Fin de Pignon* which means *Gable End*, the name of the house where it was made, nothing to do with pigeon at all! The Puds were, a Chocolate Pudding, Raspberry and Apple Brown Betty, Tarte Tatin and a Raspberry and Banana Fruit Sorbet. Our team of talented chefs were, in alphabetical order, Pam Brunning, Marjorie Cocksedge, Bernard Lamb, Helen Mills, Susie Punch and Stephanie Shepherd. The wines were Valdo *Prosecco* Marco Oro from Sainsbury's - £9.99: Quinta de Azevedo *Vinho Verde* 2009 - £6.87 : Fairhall Cliffs Marlborough *Sauvignon Blanc* 2009 - £7.99 : Régnié Les Cotes de Saint Cyr *Beaujolais* 2009 - £9.99: Gerard Bertrand Domaine de L'aigle *Pinot Noir* 2008 - £9.99 and Chateau Les Sables *Montbazillac* 2006 - £8.15. All from Majestic except the *Montbazillac* which came from Waitrose. The wines were ably served by our sommelier of the day, Kip Punch.

As in a number of IWFS Branches this event presupposes that we have a venue maybe a home or a garden where we can do our own cooking etc. In this instance we are most grateful for Kip and Susie Punch's delightful garden. Kip had erected two large marquees for the thirty people who attended, which was just as well because the heavens opened a couple of times and we had to negotiate the rain spots between the kitchen and the tents!

Two thousand and eleven will be our 20th Anniversary of this event and this year we had, as guests, a past secretary of Surrey Hills Viva Lloyd and her husband, David a past Treasurer, who first dreamt up the idea of "Starters & Puds" all those years ago.

Helen Mills

... AND THE SUN SHONE ON MANCHESTER BRANCH



If it's August it rains and it must be time for our Garden Party. As usual, to protect us from the rain, we booked the marquee from our regular supplier well in advance. The Branch Committee spent much time deciding on a menu which we (with the aid of spouses or partners) prepare. Long standing members had offered their garden set in the heart of leafy Cheshire. So all was well.

Cheshire is, by reputation, not only the home of some very good cheese making but also an important producer of gooseberries, or so the theory goes. In the event our gooseberry dessert had to be changed because in spite of wide-ranging searches no gooseberries could be found - it seems they are "out of fashion" so the growers have stopped producing them commercially. Never mind - we just changed the menu!

In unbroken sunshine our members, forty six after two last minute cancellations, were welcomed with a glass of Codorníu Pinot Noir

Rosé N.V. from Penedès, to the wonderful and extensive gardens of Marie and Raymond Gould.

Our starter was smoked trout and smoked eel with a mustard and dill sauce and baby salad leaves. The smoked fishes were sourced from the Cheshire Smokehouse at Wilmslow and were successfully accompanied by Falanghina 2009 Terredora from Campania, Italy. The wine had plenty of citrusy fruit and faint notes of apple and quince, with the merest hint of nutty complexity from 3 months' lees ageing before bottling.

Having opened more of the side walls of the marquee to let in sunlight and fresh air, we moved on to the Summer Ham with a Citrus Sauce, New Potatoes with Parsley, and Mixed Salad. Although we had chosen a Bourgeuil wine from the Loire, it proved to be out of stock so we had to manage with the substitute, Volnay A.C. 2006 Labouré-Roi, which was greatly enjoyed.

The cheeses were from a highly regarded local cheese-monger, The Cheese Hamlet in Didsbury. Our taste buds enjoyed Swaledale Farmhouse, Horns Dam blue, Swaledale Organic Farmhouse, Appleby's Cheshire and Organic Creamy Lancashire. We continued to enjoy the Volnay with the cheeses. Our Treasurer, Bob Lloyd, chose and sourced all the wines.

The dessert was mixed berries macerated in a fruit liqueur and served with crème fraîche. To our surprise and delight a member (who wished to remain anonymous) pressed on the assembled company some delicious Brown Brothers Late Harvest Muscat 2008 to accompany the dessert as a gift. We certainly didn't look this gift horse in the mouth. Luckily it had only an ABV of 10%!

David Chapman

around the branches - Members Entertain at Home



A SAVOIE LUNCH IN CAMBERLEY FOR LONDON BRANCH

Alan and Stephanie Shepherd have been regular visitors to the Savoie region of France for some years, and have hosted Savoie food and wine events for IWFS on a number of occasions. This time it was a lunch for the London Branch, at their home in Camberley.

Whilst previous events have tended to favour traditional Savoie recipes, this time they looked to what some of the younger Savoie chefs are doing, inspired in part by their visit to Jean Sulpice at Val Thorens, reported elsewhere in this issue.

The aperitif was a Brut de Savoie, from Les Rocailles, a vineyard near the village of Les Marches. This is a blend of local grapes and Chardonnay, and was thought by many of those present to stand up well against Cremants from better known regions such as Bourgogne and Alsace.

The starter featured towers of haddock and crushed potato, served with whipped cream and chives, and a spinach and tarragon coulis. It was accompanied by two white wines - an Apremont Prestige from Les Rocailles, and a Cuvee Shiste from the Coteau de Cevins, Domaine des Ardoisieres. Apremont is a well known local wine from the Jacquere grape, but this one is somewhat unusual. It comes from Vielle Vignes, and is somewhat more refined and without the slight 'petillance' associated with most Apremont. The other is very much a boutique wine; a blend of Jacquere with Roussanne and Pinot Gris, and much admired by local chefs such as Sulpice.

The main course was a Sulpice recipe – rack of lamb, baked in a sage bread crust, served with a herb jus, carrots and green beans. This was accompanied by a Mondeuse Arbin from the Cave de Cruet, and Cuvee Amethyst from the Coteau de Cevins, Domaine des Ardoisieres. The latter is a blend of Mondeuse and Persan, a grape found more often in the Northern Rhone, which is not that far away. The former is an up-market commercial wine, the Amethyst again a biodynamic locally-admired boutique.

For dessert, Stephanie prepared caramelised pears, served with a coffee egg custard, hazelnut crisp, coffee ice cream and whipped amaretto cream – another Sulpice recipe. This was accompanied by a 'vendange tardive' Roussette from the local Altesse grape – 'Seduction d'Automne', Les Rocailles, which went down very well with the pears although it is not nearly as thick and sweet as most dessert wines.

The event was a great success socially, and conversation continued late into the afternoon.

Alan Shepherd

HARARE BRANCH ENJOY TAPAS IN THE SUN

Harare branch, after a slowish start to the year, has now had a flurry of events. A young Spanish chef, Simon Gonzalez, brought to Zimbabwe by the Spanish Embassy, demonstrated how to prepare and cook some classical tapas dishes at a members house. This was combined with an olive oil and olives tasting, a local supplier brought along her range of home produced pickles and an assortment of South African wines that they import, it was a very popular event with every seat available occupied.

We also visited a new Brazilian restaurant called Mojo's, only 8 members attended this function, mainly due to cost. Our latest function was the reopening of a private Spanish restaurant, La Finca, which the Society has supported for over 15 years. They are the only restaurant that we have awarded a restaurant award to, (our own award, predating the International Society awards). Twenty four members and a few guests attended, it was a Tapas style lunch with members taking their own wine as La Finca is unlicensed.

Our next event is a lunch and wine tasting, the committee has assembled a mixed case of unusual wines, for example a white Merlot, a Roussanne, a white Pinotage and various other palate confusing varietals!

We will finish off this year as we did last year with a Christmas cocktail party at a members house. The committee will do the snacks, and any residual funds will be spent on food and wine.

Vicky New



around the branches - Members Entertain at Home

A TRULY 1970 VINTAGE CELEBRATION AT CAPITAL BRANCH



Sid accumulates odd bottles of wine like a squirrel accumulates nuts. He is loath to open the last one or two from a case. 'We will save them to see how they last'. So, on August 21st, as we had a special occasion to celebrate I decided it was about time we found out.

Twenty members gathered at Brunsden Farm to welcome our chairman Ron Barker and his wife Val to present long service awards to John & Ginette Gray. Longstanding members, John & Ginette of Merseyside & Mid Cheshire, now live in Windsor consequently they can be found 'moonlighting' to Capital whenever possible. We also welcomed their friends Paul Bishop and Val Brookfield who joined us from North Wales to partake in the celebrations.

The evening commenced with a celebratory air provided by an aperitif of Carpentier Brut, the branch Champagne. Bought from Tesco about five years ago it is ageing with grace. *The colour was straw and the mousse was lively, with streams of small bubbles which kept coming. With its excellent flavour, it proved very popular.* This was accompanied by Spam Fritters, to get us into a 1970 mood for the dinner which was to feature some of Sid's odd bottles of 1970 clarets. Great fun was had by all, particularly those that rose to the occasion and donned the appropriate apparel, cat suits, platforms and flares!

An amuse bouche of pea velout e was served while Ron presented John & Ginette with their medals. This was followed by a scallop p ate accompanied by a seafood hollandaise and Melba toast. With this we drank a **1971 Wiltinger Kupp Auslese**, one year out for our theme, but we let Sid off as it drank superbly. *Made by Bisch fliches Priesterseminar of Trie, a wine from a good vineyard in the Saar; Riesling, from a great year. Sid told us that this was delicious when young. It was gold, with a good bouquet, with no petrol smell. Sweetness was medium, with a good balance. It had kept well and suited the scallop p ate.*

We cleansed our palate with a Sorbet de Marc. This was very popular and there was a request for the recipe to appear in Food & Wine, see facing page.

For the main course I had chosen to serve saddle of venison steaks with matchstick potatoes, green beans and sauce Bercy. My supplier of wild venison, Hampshire Game, has not let me down yet and this time was no exception. I had ordered 5kg of boned loin. In the past this quantity has been in two or three pieces. This time I was presented with one joint and asked very hesitantly, 'Is that alright?' Well, I surmised, it was either a well grown young beast or a big old stag. If the latter I was going to have to sort out a slow braised venison dish. It had a good coating of fat so maybe it was a youngster. After I had trimmed each loin out I had over one and a half kilos of waste. We flashed a steak under a hot grill to try it - it melted in the mouth. The next try out was the matchstick potatoes. These de-

pend very much on the starch content for crisping, if the starch in the potatoes is turning to sugars they won't crisp before they caramelize and burn. I used Maris Piper and made the matchsticks the day before. I then soaked them for several hours to remove as much starch as possible, dried them thoroughly and laid them out on trays over night in the fridge. When cooked they were very dry and crisped beautifully.

With the venison we drank a **1970 Ch teau Cos d'Estournel, St-Est phe, 2 me Cru Class .** *This Chinese-looking ch teau has wines known for longevity. This was red-black, with no brown even after 40 years. It had a fairly big bouquet, and like so many St-Est phe wines, had lots of grip and tannins. There was fruit, but on its own it seemed austere. It improved when tasted with the venison. Our second wine was 1970 Grand Vin de L eville-Las Cases, St-Julien 2 me Cru Class .* *This was red-black with some brown. It had an excellent bouquet, classic blackcurrant and cedar wood. It was fruitier than the Cos, with a deeper, more complex flavour. There was still a slight austerity to it, but it went very well with the venison. This wine and the previous one had come from John Avery some years ago.* This wine is still available from B.B.&R. at  215 a bottle.

A selection of ripe French Cheeses comprised -  poisses, Comte Haut Montagne Artisan, Pave d'Affinois and Le Conquerant. With these we drank two St Emilion's. The first was a **1970 Ch teau La Tour Figeac, St- milion Grand Cru Class ** *which is situated between Ch teau Cheval Blanc and Ch teau Figeac near to Pomerol. This wine was red with pale edges but no brown. The cedar wood bouquet was good and the flavour was pleasant, fruity, with some blackcurrant.*

Finally a **1970 Ch teau Coutet St- milion Grand Cru Class .** *This was red still tinged with purple, with a pleasant bouquet, a good fruity flavour and some length. It had the concentration to go with a strong cheese.* This wine has an interesting history, see page 24.

A Dessert of Meringue Chantilly with Raspberry Ice cream was followed by coffee and chocolates.

Wine notes, in red italics, kindly written by Bernard Lamb.

Pam Brunning

around the branches - Members Entertain at Home

CAPE TOWN HOLD A DE TRAFFORD WINE TASTING & BORDELAISE DINNER

Cape Town members have a robust interest in rare tasting opportunities hosted at member's homes, followed by a repast prepared by our finest, the resident food committee.

David Trafford is the owner/winemaker of De Trafford Wines who left the precision of architecture for the art of winemaking on the family farm in the mid-Nineties. Subsequently an astute wine committee put away bottles of various vintages of his Cabernet Sauvignon, as well as Pinot Noir, Shiraz and Straw Wine, for future delectation.

Considering them well rested, current management was able to entice David to venture down from his Helderberg heights, with Silwood Cordon Bleu Cookery School graduate and fine-artist wife Rita, to lead the tasting himself.

To set the Bordelaise theme, we stimulated the palate on arrival with the be-medalled

Cape Point Vineyards 2005 Semillon after which David led us through a vertical tasting of

De Trafford Cabernet Sauvignon 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2001 & 2004 with the rare **2001 Pinot Noir** and **2005**

Shiraz offered as counterpoints.

Two points were made: Firstly, with proper cellaring, South African red wines do indeed have legs to develop and, secondly, so-called 'weaker' vintages such as the 1996 are rather relative.

David then introduced two wines from his new 'Sijnn' Malagas project at the mouth of the Breede River – unchartered vineyard territory – to accompany dinner:

Sijnn 2008 Rose & Sijnn 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon

The talented, imaginative and tireless food committee, led by Marilyn Mori and Sharon Ball, then treated us to

Terrine de Faisan en Gelée

Entrecôte Bordelaise

Pommes Truffat

Haricot Verts à L'ail

Crêpes Suzettes

Coffee

As a grand finale, we sipped, that's all available quantities allowed, **De Trafford 2006 Straw Wine** with dessert. Unbridled generosity, in the spirit of the Society, meant we were able to offer this remarkable evening for only ZAR350 (£31.80) per person.

UNE DÉCENNIE D'CHAMPAGNE... SO TO SPEAK

A 10-year vertical tasting of bubbly was led by the effervescent Allan Mullins at sparkling Leigh de Decker's Cap Classique home – the original Welbeloond Farm House in Constantia.

A 'Champenoise' aperitif (Pierre Jourdan Ratafia) was matched with: *Parmesan rounds, Caviar Mousses on Pastry Stars, Balsamic Caramelized Onion Tartlets*. Allan then led us on a vinous journey through time and place with:

2004 Le Mesnil Blanc de Blancs Grand Cru

2003 Drappier Millesime Exception Canicule

2002 Colin Cuvee Blanc de Blancs Grand Cru

2001 Villiera Monro Brut

2000 Tribaut

1999 Cattier

1998 Charles Heidsieck

1997 Jacquesson Rose

1996 Bruno Paillard

1995 Jacquesson Grand Vin Signature

Following the tasting, the Food Committee presented a lunch of note:

Italian Courgette and Basil Soup with Grissini Sticks

Lamb Tagine with Chickpeas and Mang Served on a bed of Taglirini

Lemon Tart with Homemade Gelato

Wines accompanying lunch were unassuming, but of interest:

Springfontein Estate White of Sopiensklip 2009

Neil Ellis Cabernet Sauvignon 2004

This was an exceptional day in the heart of historic Cape winelands.

David Swingler



Chairman David Swingler at head of table

Le Sorbet de Marc

This is an unusual sorbet that is excellent served as a refresher at a hearty meal. This recipe makes a good quantity but it keeps well in the freezer.

Sugar Syrup

400g - (14ozs) sugar

1 litre - (1¾ pt) water

Combine in a saucepan on medium heat, stir to dissolve sugar, bring to the boil then remove from heat - this makes a 15° syrup. Leave to cool.

Sorbet

750ml - (1pt) orange and grapefruit juice mixed 2 parts to 1.

400g - (14ozs) sugar

275ml - (½ pt) semi sweet white wine

75ml - (3floz) red wine

150ml - (¼pt) Kirsch

Add sugar to all ingredients and stir well. Leave for an hour, stir again and combine with the cooled sugar syrup. Freeze in an ice cream maker and store in the freezer until required. To serve scrape with a metal spoon - it should not be too hard as the alcohol will keep it soft.

around the branches - Celebrations

ST JAMES'S PRESENTATION OF RESTAURANT AWARD TO L'ORANGER



On Friday 11th June the St James's Branch held a dinner at L' Oranger at the end of which John Valentine, a member of the EAC Award Committee, presented Chef Laurent Michel, Sommelier Lucio Pietra and Maitre d' Nordine Mohamed with the Society's Award for Excellence for the magnificent dinner they had served us on 15th March (see full write-up of this dinner in the May Food & Wine). After a delightful pre-dinner reception, al fresco on the restaurant's terrace, we were spoiled with yet another superb dinner of six courses and six accompanying wines which, if anything, was even better than the award-winning March dinner! L' Oranger has, so far, been our Branch's greatest discovery this year, and we shall no doubt return there before long. *Ari Sofianos*



Poivrade artichoke ravioli, jabugo ham and summer truffle petals.



Meli-melo of shellfish, leeks with saffron flavour



Chicken supreme stuffed with wild mushrooms, green asparagus and potato fondant.

SUSSEX BRANCH 75TH ANNIVERSARY AT SUNDIAL RESTAURANT



This year marks the 75th anniversary of the inauguration of the Sussex branch. Our enquiries indicate that it originated in 1935 as the Brighton and Hove branch, the second to be created by the Society. To celebrate this landmark anniversary, 32 members accompanied by 10 guests attended a dinner in August at their favourite restaurant, the Sundial in Herstmonceux. Since the weather was somewhat inclement, the planned rendezvous in the garden was abandoned and we gathered in the bar area for our aperitif of Cremant de Bourgogne which was served with an appetising selection of canapés. However in spite of the cool temperature some members did venture out onto the balcony to enjoy the lovely views of the South Downs.

Our meal began with a delicious amuse bouche consisting of asparagus mousse topped with a beetroot foam. This was followed by a choice of pan fried king scallops, chicken carpaccio salad or fish and vegetable terrine all of which were beautifully garnished. The scallops were sweet and cooked to perfection whilst comments about the alternatives were equally complimentary. Braised brill fillet, braised rabbit loin filled with crayfish or roast lamb sirloin in a herb crust were on offer for the main course, all with mouth-watering accompaniments. The brill was again perfectly cooked and prepared in a Provencal style whilst the rabbit was served with a most delicious and well-balanced morel cream sauce. Those members who chose lamb were also very impressed. Prior to this, gin and tonic sorbet had been served as a palate cleanser between courses. Baron d' Arignac blanc 2006 and Cote de Brouilly 2007 both of which matched the food perfectly were in plentiful supply throughout.

The desserts of apricot tart tatin, crispy red berry millefeuille or chocolate indulgent mousse cake, all accompanied by various sorbets, creams and fruit coulis, were complemented by a glass of Muscat de Rivesaltes, with a selection of cheese being an alternative to the dessert. Coffee and an assortment of attractive petit fours and mignardises completed this repast.

Service throughout was, as usual, impeccable and the standard of cuisine exquisite. Vincent Rongier, the owner and chef, and his wife, Mary, who fronts the house, surpassed themselves to give us a most enjoyable evening which they brought to a grand finale by presenting us all with a complimentary glass of champagne. Despite it being Friday the 13th our celebrations were completed without a hitch and our thanks are extended to Vincent, Mary and all their staff for making this such a memorable occasion.

Dave and Lesley Berry

around the branches - Celebrations

THE PRESENTATION OF THE LISBON CHARTER



The Lisbon branch, which was founded in October 2006, was presented with its Charter by EAC Chairman Ron Barker at a superb dinner held at Restaurante Alma in Lisbon on Saturday 18th September.

Ron & Val Barker and Chris & Sue Bonsall were kind enough to travel to Lisbon for this important event. Our branch had been inaugurated during Chris Bonsall's term of office as EAC chairman before he became Chairman of the Society.

Restaurante Alma was selected because of the innovative approach the chef/owner Henrique Sa Pessoa has towards his modern international Portuguese cuisine. This has made him one of the most sought after chefs in Portugal. We were not disappointed.

On arrival we were served a Portuguese sparkling wine, Espumante Soalheiro, made from the Alvarinho grape, in the traditional methode champenoise style. This refreshing crisp dry wine accompanied our starter of Squid and prawns sautéed in chilli and garlic with cherry tomato compote, rocket and parmesan salad. All the flavours were in complete harmony and complimented each other perfectly.

Our second course is one of the chef's most famous recipes, Roast fillet of salted cod with chickpea vinaigrette and oven roasted tomatoes. A superb dish of Bacalhau (salted cod) de meia cura, in which the cod only goes through a very brief period of 4 hours salting and drying. The outcome is a succulent cod which is served on a chickpea vinaigrette with dried tomatoes, producing the most incredible flavours in one's mouth.

The sommelier chose a Douro white wine, Azeo 2008, made by a very talented young but already well established winemaker, João Brito e Cunha. This wine is made from the Portuguese varieties, Viosinho and Rabigato and has forthcoming aromas of peach and ripe apples and a freshness on the palate with good acid balance. Perfect for the cod.

For the main course a Douro red wine made by the same winemaker proved to be the table wine of the evening. Quinta do Couquinho 2006, made from the Touriga Nacional and Tinto Roriz cultivars, has fruity and floral aromas on the palate, is mouth filling with ripe red fruits and a long persistent finish. A delicious wine aptly suited to accompany the Lamb tenderloin with asparagus 'migas', garlic cream, roasted tomatoes and clam and mint jus. The tender New Zealand lamb was excellent with the asparagus migas - an Alentejo delicacy which uses dry bread as its base with coriander.

For the dessert we were offered the choice of Pear and almond tart with goat cheese ice cream and spiced caramel or Lemongrass and raspberry crème brûlée with coconut tuille. A very difficult decision, seeing that both were incredibly 'yummy'. The accompanying wine was an easier decision. I had the pleasure of donating from my cellar, a wine from my place of birth, Madeira. A Terrantez 1976, Blandy's Madeira. The wine was served blind and it was interesting to hear the comments around the table.

Ron Barker was heard to say that it reminded him of a Madeira from the past.

A wonderful wine with spices and dried apricot aromas and a fruity and crisp palate with a long aftertaste. Sadly there are very few wines left of this cultivar.

All in all a very enjoyable evening made all the more special by the attendance of our illustrious guests.

Our very special thanks to the chef, Henrique Sa Pessoa, and his team for making this a thoroughly enjoyable and memorable event.

Rui Mendonça



around the branches - Celebrations

LONDON BRANCH'S PRESENTATION OF AWARD TO L'AUTRE PIED

It's not often that disaster turns into triumph but when it does it's well worth celebrating. In the spring London Branch found itself having to cancel a dinner at very short notice. What to do? Forty-odd people were expecting to go out to dinner and we had nowhere to take them. Fortunately former chairman, Andrew Brodie, thought he knew a solution so, at the last minute, we all set off for L'Autre Pied hoping for the best.

The evening got off to an auspicious start. The front of house staff could not have been more welcoming, coping deftly with members, meeting, greeting and chatting in our usual convivial fashion, while attending to the needs of their other clientele. L'Autre Pied is a relatively small establishment, and, although broken up by a central bar, is essentially one large room, so this was a feat in itself. The meal fully confirmed Chef Marcus Eaves' reputation and his Michelin Star. Members agreed it was the best evening we had enjoyed for some time.

London Branch doesn't often give Awards, but this time we thought it more than justified so we returned in October to make the presentation and enjoy more of Marcus' cooking. We were not disappointed. The evening started with a glass of Ayala Brut Nature zero dosage, a soft, fresh, but distinctly dry champagne. An excellent prelude to a Taste of Autumn' Dinner.

Fishcake Lollipop (amuse bouche) was followed by Mini Game Pie, Pan Fried Halibut, Ratte Potatoes, Cornish Oyster with Chive Velouté, Roasted Loin of Venison, Saute of Chanterelles, Choux Farci, Celeriac and Thyme Jus, Vanilla Pannacotta, Apple Puree, Cinnamon Foam, Warm Emulsion of Gingerbread, Quince Ice Cream, Crispy Honey Comb.



Accompanied by 2009 Reuilly "Les Sables" domaine Cordaillat, a crisp dry Sauvignon Blanc from the area around Sancerre. 2005 Cotes de Bourg "Chateau Tayac", Rubis du Prince Noir, 80% Merlot 20% Cabernet Sauvignon from the confluence of the Dordogne and Garonne rivers and 2008 late harvest Riesling, from Miguel Torres in Chile.

The food was delicious and well complemented by the wines, the only complaint heard all night being that several of us could have coped with another serving of the game pie. To be honest quite a few members would have had seconds of everything – out of greed, not need. For once the photographs do not lie. It's easy to feel jealous of that level of skill. It was a very appreciative group which presented Marcus and the front of house team with their awards at the end of the evening. If you're planning a visit to Central London, L'Autre Pied should definitely be on your list of places to try.

Stephanie Shepherd, Secretary.

DEVONSHIRE BRANCH

PRESENTATION OF THE ANDRE SIMON BRONZE MEDAL TO PHILLIP REDHEAD

The Devonshire Branch held a prestigious black tie Dinner at the Orchid Room, Torquay to honour their long standing Treasurer, Phillip Redhead, with the presentation of the Andre Simon Bronze Medal by the EAC Awards Officer Mr. John Legg, who was accompanied by his wife, Eve. We were much indebted to them for their attendance and company throughout the evening.

An aperitif of Lanvian Champagne was accompanied by canapés of gougons with an appropriate dip. Thirty six members and guests then sat down to enjoy a delightful dinner with beautiful views of Torquay's seafront and moonlit sea. A Hawkes Bay Verdelho accompanied the unusual starter of home cured salmon, grain mustard ice cream and marinated vegetables. Saddle of venison, cooked pink, was served with duck fat roast potatoes, parsnip fondant, garlic butter and liquorice and green vegetables. This was accompanied by a Elementos Shiraz Malbec. A choice of vanilla pannacotta with Muscat gelee, raspberry sorbet or a cheese plate of Exmoor jersey blue served with batholivers and homemade chutney followed, and the meal concluded with coffee and petit fours.

Serving on the committee from 1995, Phillip was appointed Treasurer on 21st July, 1996. He has been an enthusiastic and efficient Treasurer since that time, exceeding his duties in many ways. Together with his late wife, Irene, he represented the branch at the European AGM in 1996 and attending the Society's 75th Anniversary Celebration and Dinner at Claridges in November, 2008. He

attended many of the Great Weekends and Weeks away arranged by other branches, including visits to Rhineland and California. He has arranged many foreign visits, often to France, the most memorable being to Carteret Normandy when he arranged for the Society's Restaurant Award to be presented to Le Marne at Carteret the following year. Visits to Cherbourg, Honfleur, Amsterdam and Guernsey's Gastronomic Week followed in subsequent years.

He has been an outstanding member in many ways, arranging each AGM and Xmas function for our members, but also aiding many charities in the locality by arranging wine tastings and similar events – altogether a pillar of our society, and the Society!

June Rallison, Secretary.



Photo - Pyramid Torbay

John Legg Phillip Redhead

around the branches - West Yorkshire

BORDEAUX GREETES THE WEST YORKSHIRE BRANCH

Earlier this year, nine hardy adventurers set off to visit some of the world's most famous wine estates, and sample some of the exceptional cuisine of the Bordeaux region. All arriving independently, like a wine 'gumball rally' - rail from Leeds via London and Paris, some flying from Geneva, others the ferry from Cherbourg.

We began on Thursday evening by dining at La Tupina in Bordeaux. The superb meal represented the region's cuisine very well. Next day we boarded the tour bus and headed north to St Julien, to Chateau Branaire-Ducru, a 4eme Grand Cru Classé estate since classification in 1855. After a meeting with the owner, M. Patrick Maroteaux, we looked round the vineyard before inspecting the barrel cellar and tasting area. A real highlight was that we were lucky to be there to observe the racking of the 2009 vintage and to taste it straight from the barrel!

Then a long lunch at a typical local brasserie. No prior booking but they just happened to have, for 9 people, game paté, confit du canard and lemon tart. Bottles of house red and white for €18 - "Vive la France"!



“Racking at Chateau Branaire-Ducru”



Let loose in the cellars of Lafite Rothschild”

slightly late for our afternoon's activity of an organised tour of the village of St. Emilion itself. We explored the catacombs and history of this ancient village that is the centre of the wine region. A slightly exhausted band of travellers now headed back to the hotel.

What could possibly get these tired tourists livened up and roaring to go again - the grand dinner and tasting at Chateau Kirwan, classified 3ème Cru Classé de Margaux. After a very interesting talk about the estate's history, interspersed with tastings and canapés, our host escorted us into the private dining room of the owner. A candlelit dinner followed with different Kirwan vintages with every course, with an explanation of the rationale behind the pairing.

A fabulous end to two very hectic days exploring Bordeaux and the great wine estates that surround this wonderful city. A very weary, but highly exhilarated, group gathered back at the hotel in the early hours of Sunday morning.

The group that met for breakfast and goodbyes were a lot wiser about great French wines and the regions of St. Emilion, Margaux and Pauillac. This was a fantastic learning experience for the nine of us, hopefully the first of many similar journeys for the newly invigorated West Yorkshire branch.

Jonathan Naylor

The afternoon surpassed our expectations. We travelled the short distance to Chateau Lafite Rothschild. A real thrill for all of us, especially when we were taken to the cavernous cellars, where concerts are often held. We had the place to ourselves – together with a king's ransom of the 2009 vintage. Each barrel contains 300 bottles, and at current en primeur prices of about £13,000 per case, each barrel would be worth now about £325,000, and so the whole cellar at upwards of £30-40 million.

The history and heritage were almost overwhelming, but the guide kept us grounded by providing a bottle of the 1996 vintage to drink. Of course the private cellar was out of bounds but we did peer into the passages to see the many vintages from about 1820 laying there, bottles, magnums and jeroboams. What a privilege to be allowed to wander round this fabulous chateau.

Back in Bordeaux, four of our party were lucky enough to get tickets for the Opera. The other five explored the shops and restaurants of the city centre, meeting up for a coffee and Armagnac at approximately midnight. We retired to bed to reflect on one of our branches most memorable days. Could Saturday be better?

A lovely sunny day dawned and our very excited party took off to visit Chateau Franc Mayne, St Emilion, for another tour and tasting. Unlike the other estates, Chateau Mayne uses natural caves for cellaring the wines. The exit is up some steps into a beautiful wine shop, a very clever idea, and yes we all bought something there.

Next stop was Chateau Laniote, a small family-run estate, where we had arranged for a small lunch to be served with the Chateaux wines of five different vintages. What a feast awaited us. A superb selection of charcuterie, local cheeses, salad and home made cakes, all served in the owners' dining room.

We enjoyed ourselves so much that we were

around the branches - Malmö



TRIO in MALMÖ

Some of the best restaurants in Malmö have, probably because of the recession, been sold, changed concepts or both. One of the restaurants that has not only survived but rather gone the other way is the former Trappaner. They had a total make over, changed their name to Trio, refurbished their premises, strengthened the team, sharpened the fine dining concept and are now one of the top 10 restaurants in Sweden. Our branch started the autumn season there and was served the following delicious five course menu after an amuse bouche. Slices of carrot in three colours, trout roe and carrot scented yoghurt accompanied by a glass of an excellent typical Muscat Grand cru Spiegel 2007, Dirlar-Cade.

MENU

*Raw shrimps, frozen cucumber, dill and beach purslane
Champagne Blanc de blanc Brut Nature NV, Laherte Frères*

*Back, roe and fried skin of cod, dillisk and rhubarb
Riesling Grand cru Spiegel 2008, Dirlar-Cade*

*Poached egg, hazel nut, chanterelle, spelt, mushroom and onion stock
Vacqueyras Blanc Mélodine 2009, Dom. de Montvac*

*Fillet of calf, pickled onions, fried yellow and red onions and leek ash
Côtes du Rhône Village 2007, Dom. de l'Amauve
Gevrey-Chambertin Vieilles vignes 2006, Dom. Bachelet*

Blackcurrants, blackcurrant "snow", fresh goats cheese sorbet and wood sorrel



The Blanc de blanc with its apple tone matched the shrimp and cucumber nicely. The cod was done in oven at 40 degrees for a good while, it was almost transparent but cooked to absolute perfection and was a very good partner to the clean and elegant Riesling. The egg was a sensation; it had been "boiling" for two hours (!) at 60 degrees. It was creamy all through and together with the other ingredients and matched well the aromatic white Vacqueyras with its exotic fruit and smokiness.

The calf was superb with the elegant fruity Burgundy as well as with the stylish Côte du Rhone whose fruity sweetness went perfectly. A Chenin blanc, with its sweetness and matching acidity, coped well with the black currant and the unusual sorbet. With the coffee we enjoyed, very surprisingly, candyfloss covered with cowberry powder!

All the dishes were beautifully presented with clean tastes of all ingredients put together in great harmony without too many spectacular elements.

Service was excellent, two super efficient and discreet staff members served twenty-eight guests to our full satisfaction, normally the restaurant seats only 16! A very enjoyable evening and the staff received well-deserved congratulations after the dinner.

Rolf Fransson Photos: Birgitta Buxrud

www.triorerestaurant.se/

DEVON BRANCH - SUNDAY LUNCH AT THE SALTY MONK RESTAURANT

On a glorious sunny autumn day 22 members of the Devonshire Branch enjoyed a morning coach trip to Sidford where a sumptuous Sunday lunch awaited them at the Salty Monk Restaurant.

An abundance of delicious canapés were served with an aperitif of Kingston Black cider.

A choice of terrine of chicken with melba toast and crab apple jelly or salmon and scallop mousse with smoked salmon and lemon butter sauce served with a Sauvignon blanc from the Casablanca Vineyard, Curico Valley, Chile. The main course choices were roast confit of duck with slow roast belly pork and a timbale of couscous cooked in stock, honey and spices or Catch of the day from Exmouth fish dock. Zinfandel from the Ravenswood Winery, California was the other choice of wine. The dessert course had choices of sticky toffee pudding with clotted cream or Irish whiskey and drambuie flavoured crème brulee or cheese board.

In conclusion tea or coffee and petit fours were served by delightful very young staff.

June Rallison, Secretary



around the branches - Cape Town

WEEKEND AWAY IN THE RIEBEEK VALLEY

Unable to make the journey South-East to the concurrent Sydney Festival, Cape Town members headed ninety minutes north to the Riebeek Valley for a 'weekend away'. Host to some of the oldest estates in the winelands and nestled against the Kasteelberg (Castle Mountains), the charming villages of Riebeek West and Riebeek Kasteel entice with their wineries, museums, arts and crafts, and fabulous eateries. The area is also well-known for its prolific olive production, and Riebeek Kasteel is South Africa's emerging country cuisine capital.

Thirty five adventurers started their sojourn on the Friday evening with an Asado-style 'braai' (barbeque) at the home of fellow members and locals, Maria Tierney and Francois de Sornay. Eugene Mori, Branch Cellarmaster, doubled as 'braai-master' while conjuring exotic flavours from succulent kid goat slow-roasted alongside coals on a steel contraption Eugene designed and hand built for the event. This was supplemented with delicious salads and fascinating wines members had brought to show each other.

We gathered the next morning at a family-run boutique epitomizing the collective spirit of the Swartland: Chris and Andrea Mullineux opened their cellar to colleagues from Annex Kloof, Babylon's Peak, Roundstone, Sadie Family, Sequillo and Badenhorst Family wineries to share a platform to show us their wares. The 'common thread' – ripe Med-Blend whites and shiraz-mourvedre based reds – was evident, as was much wine buying!

We then strolled down to Auntie Pasti (not misspelt me dahlings!), an intimate, rustic Italian Bar and Eatery. Maestros Coenie & Johan had on the table: Vitello Tonnato, Melanzane, Roasted Beetroot with Goats Cheese & Pine Nuts, Caprese Salad and home baked bread with a chickpea paté and a pesto sauce, followed by Grilled Baby Spatchcock on a bed of baby greens, asparagus & leek salad with a lime and garlic aioli.

A 'get-a-bit-of-exercise'-type walk and, for some a nap, prepared us for the evening's Gala festivities. Bartholomeus Klip, a working wheat and sheep farm with 4000 hectares of nature reserve, is home to the geometric tortoise, one of the world's rarest creatures.

Here we were welcomed with a tasting of Lammershoek wines – "lambs' corner" – originating from the fact that ewes with their young lambs sought shelter in the forests surrounding the farm when threatened by the Black Eagle, known as the *Lammer-vanger in Cape Dutch*.

We moved to the Deck House at the same establishment – an eye-watering venue on the water as the sun set behind regal mountains – for another feast:

Crisp cheese ravioli with fresh tomato and basil dipping sauce
Ross Gower 2007 Pinot Noir MCC

Sauté of Crayfish on cauliflower puree, king oyster mushrooms,
beurre blanc and fresh herbs
Lammershoek 2009 Roulette Blanc

Grilled lamb rack with parsnips, broad bean, lemon and anchovy, and natural jus
Oak Valley 2004

Caramel pear terrine with praline crisp and homemade mascarpone ice-cream
Axe Hill 2003 Cape Vintage Port

After a fresh Sunday awakening and a good breakfast, we met at The Olive Boutique, home of Michael & Juliana, to attend an Olive & Wine Tasting together with a representative of their wine partner, Swartland Wine Cellar.

We tasted seven different olive preparations with their matching wine, including Green Olives in Lime Dressing, Cracked Tsakistes soaked in olive oil, lemon juice, garlic & coriander, Kalamata Olives in Blueberry and Rosemary & Garlic Dressings, Tapenade, Roasted Kalamata Olives with Lavender and White Truffle oil, and an Olive Chocolate Salami with a desert wine.

One last stop: Café Felix, for a light lunch where fountains and lavender sprawl alongside the pebbled garden. Sustenance to guide the way home started with Fresh Figs, Feta and Pine Nut Salad or Pan-fried Tom Yum Prawns, watermelon, goat's cheese croquettes with a chili and mint dressing. A plate of Roasted Chicken Roulade with risotto, vegetables & a spicy peanut sauce or a Café Felix Lamb Burger served with tziziki, fries and a cumin mayonnaise, or Steamed black mussels in a garlic, white wine and cream sauce, led onto various deserts. Wine was by now to 'own account' and despite the weekend's activities, many were enticed by an interesting list.

We checked out of our various characterful accommodations and took the slow road home, more replete in being Captonian, and a whole lot better fed and watered

David Swlinger, Chairman



Organisers-in-Chief
Marilyn Mori, Sharon Ball and Eugene Mori



The Deck House

around the branches - Berkshire

WINES OF CHILE

We were very pleased to welcome back Duncan Ross of Berkmann Wine Cellars for a tasting of wines from Chile. This time he was aided and abetted by Ronnie Janssen, European Operations Director for Casa Lapostolle, one of the top Chilean wineries.

Casa Lapostolle is owned by the Grand Marnier Group and was set up from scratch in 1994 to take advantage of French know-how and best practices on Chilean terroir. They are Organic and use horses to drive the machinery. Being organic is easy in Chile because the climate is dry and dependable with very little variation. Temperatures are lower at higher altitudes but this means only going up 200 meters or so. Lapostolle plant vines at high densities and double green harvest – one cut back to 4 bunches per vine and a second cut to the shoulder and tail of the vine.

Highlights were a 2010 Organic Sauvignon Blanc from the Chilean winery, De Martino. The nose delivered peachy aromas, grapefruit and citrus in the mouth, a classic set of flavours which scored highly. The Casa Lapostolle Cuvee Alexandre Chardonnay 2008 is made from “relaxed” grapes picked at night. It is a classic, rich, chardonnay, aged in wood and with the potential to improve in the cellar. Excellent!

The top reds included the Casa Lapostolle Estate Carmenere, 2008. The Carmenere grapes are the last to be picked in the vineyard as this variety requires to be very fully ripened in order to produce top quality wines. This in turn means high sugars and high alcohol levels, hopefully balanced by rich fruit in the mouth. Although described as a single varietal, in Chile up to 15% of other grapes may be included in the cepage and here we had 85% Carmenere and 15% Merlot. Deep red colour, very slight earth on the nose with tannin driven, fruit covered flavours and very long. Good with strong meats such as venison. The Casa Lapostolle, Cuvee Alexandre Merlot, is in fact 85% Merlot and 15% Carmenere. This 2007 was the vintage of the decade and was fermented and aged in oak barrels. This wine can take significant aging and benefits from double decanting. Finally we were able to taste, courtesy of Ronnie’s own cellar, the Casa Lapostolle, Clos Apalta 2007. Produced only in the best years, this wine is made from 61% Carmenere, 24% Cabernet Sauvignon, 12% Merlot and 3% Petit Verdot. The colour is rich red/black, tobacco & earth on the nose, fills the mouth with fruit around the edges and is long at the back of the mouth.

Charlotte Turner produced a typical Chilean menu of chicken and chorizo empanadas served with a pumpkin and bean stew and a chopped salad, followed by crème caramel. An interesting and enjoyable evening demonstrating that Chilean wines are of a quality to compete with anywhere in the world.

Chris Graham



WESSEX BRANCH LUNCH AT THE MUSEUM INN



In September members Phyllis Packer and Sheila Matthews joined forces to organise an excellent lunch for us at The Museum Inn in the small Dorset village of Farnham, near Blandford. It gets its name from being the 17th century hostelry of the nearby Pitt-Rivers Museum, which ultimately evolved into the Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology, part of the University of Oxford. From being a favourite country pub it has now been completely refurbished and transformed into a popular restaurant and bar. The new head chef, Ben Streak, has previously worked in a number of prestigious hotels and restaurants around the south of England.

We were made very welcome by the owner, David Sax, who personally served us with the aperitif, a Marquis de la Tour rosé from the Loire valley. This was a fresh and lively sparkling wine made from the Gamay and Cabernet Franc grapes with the acidity nicely balanced by the red fruit flavours. Lunch was served in an annexe to the main building known as The Shed, which used to house the former skittle alley and has now been converted into

an attractive dining room. To start we had a choice of seared Lyme Bay scallops with kedgeree, parsnip espuma and crispy shallots, or warm mustard and herb crusted ham hock with a poached duck egg yolk, pea & mint purée, and pea shoots. I chose the scallops, which were excellent, and the ham hock was equally well received.

My choice for the main course was a roasted Ashcombe Estate red leg partridge, very succulent and tender, served with savoy cabbage, smoked bacon, root vegetables, wild mushrooms and a game jus. The alternative was fillet of wild Portland sea bass with samphire, clams, mussels and roasted scallop cream, which was attractively presented and much enjoyed.

To finish we could opt for lemon tart with fresh raspberries and chantilly cream or a hot valrhona chocolate fondant with hazelnut parfait, poached cherries and a sour cherry sorbet. The tart was just as it should be, fresh and tangy, and the rich and indulgent fondant also proved a great treat.

The white wine with the meal was an aromatic Domaine de la Janesse Viognier from the southern Rhône, a soft, rich wine but with a freshness that went well with the scallops and fish. The red was the Wine Society’s Exhibition Savigny-lès-Beaune, Nicolas Potel, 2005, a pinot noir with aromas of black cherries and bramble fruits which perfectly complimented the ham hock and partridge.

The meal was rounded off with coffee or tea before we all left, well satisfied, to drive back home through the pleasant Dorset countryside.

Joan Cardy, Secretary.

around the branches - Leicester

AUTUMN IN NORMANDY



Farm de la Ranconniere

Roger Austin, our chairman, arranged a visit to the 13th century Ferme de la Ranconniere at Crepon in Normandy.

We enjoyed wonderful hospitality and four excellent dinners provided by the chef, Bruno Champion.

We arrived in Crepon, by coach, at 7.30pm to enjoy a warm welcome and an excellent dinner. Fish soup, garnished with crème fraîche, followed by an apple and calvados sorbet as served each evening to celebrate Normandy produce. The main course was perfect piece of fillet steak with a fruity sauce followed by a selection of local cheeses and delicious bread. We drank a Menetou Salon and a Lussac St Emilion 2005, which was soft and a point. A bigish wine suggesting the body of Cabernet with which the Merlot had blended well, a good follow through.

Next morning we drove to Bayeux to see the wonderful cathedral miraculously undamaged during the war and the museum containing the Bayeux tapestry. We

lunched at Le Pommier, a green painted restaurant near to the cathedral - fish soup with garlic mayonnaise followed by supreme of guinea fowl with a delicious creamy sauce. We went on to view the Museum of the Normandy Invasion

Dinner was a starter of smoked and marinated salmon with scrambled eggs and cream served in a little glass, then slices of duck breast with chestnuts and mushrooms and afterwards a hot apple tart. With this we drank a Petit Chablis 2007. Steely and crisp with a hint of oak, though not of the body of a cru wine but good flavours. A Brouilly Chateau des Tours 2008 was solidifying well with still some sappy fruitiness. A wine for keeping.

On Wednesday we drove to Livarot, south of Lisieux to tour the Graindorge fromagerie. The tour was rather disappointing as it featured tape recordings describing the processes which we hadn't time to listen to. We drove north to Pont l' Evêque to the Calvados distillery of Père Magloire. The establishment includes a restaurant where we lunched at tables inside huge barrels. The rather touristy menu was disappointing, a peasant salad - mostly potato - cheese fondue with pieces of cooked chicken and rilette to dip into it and an apple tart with calvados. We toured the distillery and enjoyed an excellent tasting where I learnt to enjoy twenty year old calvados. Dinner started with a hot cheese terrine followed by red mullet with mango sauce and chocolate ganache cake. The wines were Samur Champigny vieilles vignes Domaine Filliatreau. The 'ligneous' quality of the vv's was very evident but the C. Franc still had good underlying fruit. This was followed by a Riesling d' Alsace Leon Beyer 2008 We tasted this with him in Alsace some years ago and this was typical of his very dry style which rather suppresses the flowery fruit but adds character.

On Thursday our driver, due to the strikes, had to queue for two hours to get diesel, whilst we explored the Châteaux at Caen. We lunched in the restaurant there, Café Mancel - great ambience and service. We enjoyed sliced pork fillet with a creamy pepper sauce and a pineapple cheesecake. Roger had arranged a wine tasting at the Agence Mesnil at Creully and was rather dismayed to find the tasting was in a large draughty warehouse. However we were warmly welcomed and tasted some excellent white wines from the Loire with walnut bread and a gruyère type cheese.

Before our Menu Gastronomique on our last evening we drank an excellent champagne. We enjoyed two fish courses, a haddock mousse and scallops with prawns and a lobster sauce. Followed by a Rossini beef fillet with a slice of warm duck liver, then a Normandy cheese selection before a plate of three little puddings. Roger had chosen all the wines and with this we drank Gigondas Domaine Grand Morane 2002. The biggest and darkest Gigondas Roger said he had ever tasted [Alc 14%] Probably a Syrah backbone but the 'southern' grapes fleshing up the body. The fullness matched the Rossini very well

Our journey home on Friday was highlighted by lunch in Montreuil in Restaurant Le Jéroboam in the Hermitage Hotel. The choice was pumpkin soup with hazlenuts or marinated salmon with a coffee sauce for the first course, then a parcel of fish or roast duckling, followed by apple crumble or chocolate gateau. It was a superb meal and fitting end to our special holiday in Normandy.

Mary Jewell, wine notes by Roger Austin

ANNUAL LUNCHEON AT HAMBLETON HALL

For Friday 17th of September John Nisbet had arranged our annual Luncheon at Hambleton Hall. It was a lovely day and we were able to enjoy an aperitif - NV Varichon & Clerc Blanc de Blancs, Method Traditionnelle - and canapés on the terrace above the formal garden. We took over the main dining room, sitting at circular tables. Aaron Paterson's food was as good as always and all the dishes were beautifully presented. The wines were 2007 Pouilly Fumé La Rambarde Domaine Landrat - Guyollot and 2006 Clos Fantine Faugères Languedoc, which I thought was rather rough but it was good with the lamb. We paid £48 - excellent value.



Chicken Terrine Hambleton



Braised Lamb



Fruit Cocktail with Panacotta



H IBISCUS

29 Maddox St
London W1S 2PA
Neighbourhood: Mayfair
020 7629 2999
www.hibiscusrestaurant.co.uk

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e have fond memories of visits to Hibiscus in Ludlow. Popping in for lunch on the way back from Wales or enjoying an excellent dinner after a day at the Ludlow Food Festival organised by our esteemed IWFS Chairman. Ah, those were the days, a restaurant with flair and imagination at a reasonable price.

Three years after Claude & Claire Bosi moved to London we decided to look them up. For a few hours we saw how the other half live. We didn't stray on to the a la carte at £75 for three courses, we settled for the set lunch with a glass of wine and coffee at £38 a head. Mind you if we had chosen chicken - sorry 'Label Anglaise Chicken' - there would have been a £10 supplement. I asked what was so special about the chicken that it could warrant such a supplement. 'Ah, you see madam it is a very special chicken, slowly grown to full maturity and fed on organic corn for extra flavour and it is stuffed with foie gras.' I nearly asked if it sported a Little Red Tractor but felt such flippancy would have been looked down upon in such hal-
lowed surroundings.

A pot of excellent olives and our two slices per head of sour dough arrived. My husband is a little deaf these days so when he commented that he had read in a review that you only got two half slices of bread each, the rest of the restaurant were made aware of this phenomenon. At least our basket was refilled as soon as it was empty.

The freebee was the same as we had at Ludlow five years ago - a liqueur glass that combined watermelon juice and strawberry. It tasted good but the surprise was rather gelatinous berry pieces hidden at the bottom of the glass.

A starter of tureen of rabbit with foie gras was prettily presented and of good texture but very bland, the small portion was not memorable. A half a crown size pâté, a quarter of an inch thick, of blue ewes milk cheese was served, forlornly lost in a large soup bowl then a small jug of hot broccoli velouté was reverently poured around it. It did look attractive and was pronounced good. We had an excellent soup course when we were at Ludlow but as you can see from the photos they used to fill the bowls up in those days.

Much of the time we found people watching more interesting than the food. The four young men opposite could have stepped out of one of the more bizarre fashion magazines. The highlight of the quartet was sporting black designer pants visible above very low slung jeans that were in danger of falling down each time he left the table to go down stairs to the gents.

A bottle of champagne had disappeared by the time they started on their £75 a head a la carte menu. There was much hilarity when a scallop arrived accompanied by a pork pie sauce. The waitress explained that a large pork pie was made then when completely cold it was cut into sections and blitzed in the blender to make a tasty sauce.





My piece of silver mullet was from a large fish so had a good firm flakes and was cooked perfectly but, in my opinion, it could have been fresher. Served with a few crumbs on top for texture it was singularly uninspired, accompanied by a few pieces of red, yellow and white beetroot. Himself's thin slice of mutton moussaka was treated with the contempt it deserved. Meanwhile the next table had demolished a bottle of white burgundy and were on to the red Burgundy (which was £80 a bottle plus) with their grouse (£10 supplement). From the portions size that we could see I should think one bird served the four easily.

Dessert was possibly my best course. A creamy vanilla ice cream with blueberries was served with two tasty hot blueberry Madeline's - crunchy on the outside and meltingly delicious inside. White peach parfait was a half peach sliced, with a dollop of ice cream on top and was pronounced 'not bad'. I could have produced it at home for pence. We each had a glass of a red Loire which was included in the price and just one glass of Alsace Riesling/Pinot Gris at the extortionate price of £11 a glass. Cappuccino coffee was hot but not very strong and the accompanying petit fours were very ordinary. The only one standing out, but not particularly desirable, being the 'smoked' fudge. As we paid our bill of £99.36 the young men on the next table were deciding on digestives. Let us hope there are plenty of their ilk to keep the upmarket Hibiscus in business.

When eating out I look for three main things, inspiration in the dishes, quality in the ingredients and hopefully value for money. We found all three at Hibiscus, Ludlow, sadly they are all lacking in London. Even the ambiance, with cold air conditioning blowing down your back, in this dull parade shop in Maddox Street is not inspiring. I remember our daughters would say of Ludlow that there was a hushed reverence in the restaurant compelling them to whisper, but there was always a bright, cosy, friendly atmosphere to be enjoyed.

Claude Bosi had two Michelin stars at Ludlow. When he came to London three years ago he lost one, then regained it in 2009. To quote Hardens guide, 'the food often "creates no excitement" in this "soulless air ... all of which makes Michelin's award to it of two stars somewhat baffling"!

The moral - read your guides before you enter these overpriced shrines to 'haute cuisine'.



Maybe this would be a better alternative when dining in W1. Taken from: *The Week* - 18th September 2010

Mooli's 50 Frith Street, London W1
0202074949075

This "hip glass-fronted cafe" serves a highly successful take on Indian street food, says

www.squaremeal.co.uk. The "eponymous *moolis*" are sensational "savoury wraps with zingy fillings" such as spiced chicken with mint chutney, asparagus with cumin potatoes, *paneer*, Keralan beef, or Goan pork with pomegranate salsa (they even serve goat). Splash out on a "luscious mango *lassi* spiked with ginger" and finish with a "dense, creamy" *kulfi*. Dinner around £10 a head with wine.

Horseradish

Cochlearia Armoracia Rusticana

By Pam Brunning



Priestess of Delphi
by John Collier (1891)



Horseradish (*Armoracia rusticana*, *Cochlearia armoracia*) is a perennial plant of the Brassicaceae family, which also includes mustard, wasabi, broccoli, and cabbages. The exact place of origin seems to be obscure. Some considers that it is possi-

bly a cultivated form of *Cochlearia macrocarpa*, a native of Hungary, other authorities consider it indigenous to the eastern parts of Europe and western Asia. Growing up to 1.5 meters (five feet) tall it is mainly cultivated for its large white, tapered root which is popular around the world.

Legend has it, the Delphic Oracle - The Priestess of Delphi told Apollo, "*The radish is worth its weight in lead, the beet its weight in silver, the horseradish its weight in gold.*"

The Egyptians talk of using horseradish as far back as 1500 B.C. Early Greeks used it as a rub for low

back pain and an aphrodisiac. Cato discusses the plant in his treatises on agriculture. A mural in Pompeii shows the plant and horseradish is probably the plant mentioned by Pliny the Elder in his Natural History under the name of Amoracia. Both root and leaves were used as a medicine during the Middle Ages. John Gerard (1597), author of "*Herbal or General History of Plants*", who describes it under the name of Raphanus rusticanus, states that it occurs wild in several parts of England. After referring to its medicinal uses he goes on to say, '*the Horse Radish stamped with a little*

vinegar put thereto, is commonly used among the Germans for sauce to eat fish with and such like meates as we do mustarde,' but at this time the custom was unfamiliar to his countrymen. In 1657 Parkinson describes its use as a sauce, and adds, '*and in our owne land also, but, as I said, it is too strong for tender and gentle stomaches,*'. The French adopted this method of preparation as is proved by their old French name for the condiment, Moutarde des Allemands.

By the late 1600s, horseradish had become the standard accompaniment for beef and oysters among most Englishmen. The pungent root was

grown at inns and coach stations, to make cordials to revive exhausted travellers. Early settlers took horseradish to North America and began cultivating it in the colonies. It was common in the northeast by 1806, and it was growing wild near Boston by 1840.

Its present botanical name, *Cochlearia Armoracia*, was given it by Linnaeus, *Cochleare* being the name of an old-fashioned spoon to which its long leaves are supposed

to bear a resemblance. The popular English name, Horseradish, means a coarse radish, to distinguish it from the edible salad radish (*R. sativus*), the prefix 'Horse' being often used in anything large and coarse as in Horse-Mint, Horse mushroom. In Europe it could refer to the old method of processing the root called "hoofing". A process whereby horses were used to stamp the root tender before grating.

Cochlearia Armoracia contains potassium, calcium, magnesium phosphorus, sulphur and some very volatile oils which make it quite a pungent plant. It is a stimulant, aperient, rubefacient, diuretic and antiseptic. A powerful stimulant, whether applied internally or externally, it is a laxative and it has antiseptic properties. Taken with oily fish or rich meat, either by itself or steeped in vinegar, or in a plain sauce, it acts as an excellent stimulant to the digestive organs, and as a spur to complete digestion. It is a very strong diuretic, and was employed by old herbalists for gall stones and similar afflictions.

It is useful in the treatment of dropsy, an infusion for dropsy is prepared by pouring 1 pint of boiling water on 1oz. of horseradish and ½ oz. of Mustard seed, crushed. The dose is 2 to 3 table-spoonfuls three times a day.

Culpepper says, '*If bruised and laid to a part grieved with the sciatica, gout, joint-ache or hard swellings of the spleen and liver, it doth wonderfully help them all.*' A poultice of the scraped root can be used instead of a mustard plaster. If applied to chilblains and secured with a light bandage it will help to cure them. It

is said that its stimulating pungency and the sulphur it contains, when infused in milk, makes an excellent cosmetic for the skin that is lacking in clearness and freshness of colour. Horseradish is still planted and harvested mostly by hand. A piece of root needs to be planted at least 30cm deep and must not be allowed to dry out. Being a voracious grower it has a tendency to take over the garden so it is often advisable to plant in a deep pot.

Sales of bottled horseradish began in 1860 and some consider it one of our first convenience foods. It is added to some pickles to add firmness and bite. As it has only 2 calories a teaspoon, is low in sodium and provides plenty of dietary fibre it is a useful flavouring for all types of dishes.

Germans and Danish brew horseradish schnapps. The roots strong highly aromatic flavour when steeped in vodka for 1 - 2 days gives a very enjoyable and warming schnapps.

'Horseradish, the crisp ivory root that grows like topsy in garden and grass verge alike, is invariably treated as a one-trick pony, inevitably lumped with roast beef or smoked fish. It deserves more.'
Nigel Slater



Cochlearia wasabi, is a close relation that is made into a pungent paste. In some restaurants the paste is prepared as needed by the customer using the root and a grater directly. Once the paste is prepared, it will lose its flavour within 15 minutes. In sushi preparation, wasabi should remain covered until served to protect the flavour from evaporation, and for this reason, sushi chefs usually put the wasabi between the fish and the rice.

