

Drymen Wine Club

April 2009

The positioning of Easter in the calendar baffles me. I thought it conformed to a formula but apparently governments can move it around for nefarious reasons. I use the above to cover up the fact that I missed the slip backwards from April to March and so Drymen Wine Club was celebrating the Easter meeting one month late. The Easter Bunny would never notice.

We were meeting at Cynthia's cottage which was a squeeze for the 22 die-hards who braved torrential rain to get there.

Nancy had just returned from a seminar in London and I was hopeful of an offering from the great metropolis. She poured glasses of streaming golden bubbles like vintage champagne. Flowery, hints of apples and honey, crème moussante, long dry finish. Berry Bros & Rudd's Blanquette de Limoux at £8.75 a bottle could easily pass for champagne.

Hans fooled us again; following his October offering of non-German white, I thought he had to bring in a Rhein white or, at the very least, an Alsace. And it's funny how you can make yourself believe you are tasting something which isn't actually there. Citrus, peach and oak, rolled into a creamy mouthfeel, Oyster Bay Chardonnay from New Zealand (and Majestic Wines) was a bargain at £6.49 - £2.50 off the usual price.

John & Sylv had agonised over their choice, Sylv eventually getting her way. It was an excellent follower to the Oyster Bay, clearly another Chardonnay with hawthorn, hazelnuts and barley-sugar flavours. Naudin Tiercin White Burgundy from Wine Rack at half-price, £7.49 had a rich flavour – possibly to match the usual £15 a bottle price tag.

Cynthia is a chocoholic. We had no idea until tonight. The only dish on the table not covered in chocolate was a Simnel cake; sugar by another name should taste this sweet.

Julie, who by her own admission is not one to gossip, could tell us that the sporting goods shop was closing down due to a lack of demand for Kalashnikovs. I was surprised to hear this as it is next door to my shop. Three local B&Bs were up for sale. The hotel had a price tag of £2.6 million although bookings for the summer were good and the leisure club had 24 new members. There was about to be a pharmaceutical war in the village although Julia could/would not elaborate. And the single mum who operates the checkout in the mini-market is expecting baby number five from father number three. I put this outpouring down to the chocolate and hoped we had some bold reds to deal with this sugar rush.

Jamie was in redemption mode after his last cheapskate offering. Fruity and spicy, a big red served cool, the epitome of a Beaujolais Cru. Georges Duboeuf has been producing Fleurie long enough to be an expert and, at a £2 discount to the usual £10 sticker, Majestic was making this quite a bargain.

Another good piece of anticipation came from Margaret whose choice of blackcurrant and cherries smoothed out the bitterness of the dark chocolate. She was also having a little bit of a laugh with this one. No one was going to identify the blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot in the Arrogant Frog Vin de Pays Ribet Red - £8 from Threshers although there are always deals for multiples.

The options for the closing wine had been many. Alistair had phoned me every day for the last week with suggestions. It was, Alistair, ultimately your choice. Or perhaps those friendly chaps at Woodwinters? Toffee and fudge flavours finished off an evening of sweetness and prepared us for the trek home. Malvasia Barbeito from Portugal is £20 a bottle but the Easter Bunny in Alistair was feeling generous.