

## Drymen Wine Club

July 2009

July is the month of Independence Day in the 'States so we thought we would have an evening concentrating on their wines. As Martin had demonstrated in May, California is not the only state to produce a tolerable wine, so the search was on for the good and the great of American vineyards.

Eric's back garden is secluded, beautifully landscaped and protected by two midge-eating machines. For the evening, Eric had set up a gazebo, a barbecue and sufficient stars and stripes to make you think Barak Obama was joining us for the tasting. Chairs were corralled around an enormous chimenea which pumped out so much heat it was in danger of giving us radiation burns.

There is an adage for American champagne that says "the cheaper, the sweeter". Cynthia had not been a cheapskate; and Majestic wines had assisted her with an offer on the Louis Roederer Quartet NV at \$14.99 on multiples.

Although Canadian, Bob was considered the evening's resident expert on all things North American despite acknowledging that there were quite distinct differences in customs between Canada and the USA. Bob had, however, played for two years with the Polar Valley Bears and turned up this evening with a suitably chilled rosé which scented the garden with strawberries and cream. Clear Lake California Rosé comes in at under £6 per bottle.

My personal experience of the 'States was limited to a fortnight in New England in 1997 when the Vermont Inn nearly poisoned me with warm apple juice. I don't remember sampling any wines while I was there and relied on the advice of the hairy fellow at Oddbins. The Tablas Creek Esprit de Beaucastel Blanc was a good follower for the rosé with hints of mint, lemon, honey and pears. It was over £20 per bottle and I'm not sure I tasted the value.

Bob has watched too many westerns. His American fayre consisted of clam chowder (home made and excellent; [click here for recipe](#)), guacamole, hot dogs, beans (thank you again, Mel Brookes!) and three types of cheesecake. Where was the pumpkin pecan pie, Bob?

Conversation very quickly turned to the economy which has taken its toll on the village. The changes which were proposed for the vacant sporting goods shop have not transpired. The good news is that the hotel has been sold although the identity of the new owner(s) is, as yet, a poorly guarded secret. Geoff could tell us that the electricity company will be surveying the conical hill for feasibility as a wind farm. They are proposing a cluster of twenty-three two-megawatt turbines. So that should keep us warm in the winters ahead.

Due to loss of work at the care home, Lynsey is looking for new clients, particularly around the village and Estate, so if you need your hair done at home, give her a call.

I bumped into Alistair in the wine shop. He, unlike me, knew what he wanted, a soft red wine with characteristic cherry, plum and bitter dark chocolate tones. The Parducci Pinot Noir from California (and Oddbins) leaves a hint of raspberries in the mouth and all for £8.49 per bottle.

Martin is frequently banging the organic drum and produced a wine full of cherries and low in tannins, Frog's Leap Cabernet Sauvignon. It is expensive at £26.50 per bottle and it keeps well – up to eight years. But buy it now and drink it now. Enjoy it now.

To finish the evening, it had to be Bourbon and Sally decided it had to be Kentucky Bourbon. This is strong sweet stuff. You can taste the maple syrup and the crunchy biscuits in Knob Creek Kentucky Straight Bourbon Whiskey. It is nine years old, 50% volume and £32 from [whiskyshop.com](http://whiskyshop.com)  
On its strength alone, we sailed out into the night.