

Drymen Wine Club

June 2009

For June's meeting, we were looking for the fruitiest wines; wines where you could taste individual constituents of the fruit basket. We wanted more than the usual red-berry, plum and cherries concoction. We wanted the complete Carmen Miranda head-dress.

We were also welcoming two new members to the group, Marcia and Bob Loinsigh, the Canadians who joined the community just before Christmas. Marcia's mum was originally from Bathgate and married a Canadian GI during the war. They expect to be here for a couple of years – longer if their girls settle down to Scottish life. This may work as Sam & Robin are being treated like goddesses at the local secondary.

Consuela opened proceedings with a sauvignon blanc which emitted tones of grapefruit and lychees. There was even a hint of pepper in the intense flavour. This was a Marlborough SB Prestige which sells at £15 a bottle.

Our second wine came from Macedonia (via winedirect.co.uk), another SB with a pale yellow colour and a banana aroma to match. We were certainly fulfilling the brief for the evening and, at £7 for the Popovakula Sauvignon Blanc, at no great expense, Margaret's research had paid off.

Travelling still further afield, Lynsey gave us a South African SB from Stellenbosch and everyone.co.uk. Hints of gooseberries roared from this wine. Price was under £6 for the Welmoed SB Stellenbosch which, along with the previous wines, proves that the internet case shippers can give quality at easy to afford prices.

Hans and Gretchen do a good double-act in the kitchen, much in the way of Fanny Craddock and Johnny who, unlike The Brueckners, were not a couple. Hans finds, lifts, carries, measures, mixes and cleans while Gretchen orchestrates from the island in the middle of their farmhouse kitchen. The Aga, which sits majestically against the gable-end wall, is always on and could comfortably centrally heat a cathedral while cooking for a battalion. To avoid confusing our taste buds with fruit, Gretchen produced a selection of savoury and salty bites, a strong hint of her native culinary background coming through.

Attention was heavily focussed on the Loinsigh's and how they were finding life on the Estate. Marcia felt it was a trifle cramped and admitted that they were already looking around for somewhere else to lease. By the look Bob threw at her, I'm guessing that this has little to do with the close proximity of the houses. The girls are doing well at school, making lots of friends although, Bob remarks, running up the most horrendous phone bill keeping in touch with everyone in Ontario. He says the ice rink has a gradient which I think refers to the uphill battle he sees ahead of him/them. I get the impression that Bob is up for the challenge.

Reds which were strong on fruit but avoided the characteristic red-berry flavours, I thought, would be a tall order, but our selectors had pulled out all the corks.

I am always amazed when our foreign nationals select something unpatriotic although I should be used to it by now. Amelie shocked me with the cherry-coloured rosé with a distinct strawberry jam tone. Ino Grenache Rosé comes from central Greece and is under £5 per bottle. This would be a lovely accompaniment to a summer salad.

Charles loves his reds. He likes them big, deep, cut them with a knife and eat them in slices. So no surprise when he produced bananas, cherries and marshmallows in a glass. Aan de Doorns Pinotage is a complex confection which finishes with vanilla toffee fudge and you don't want to let the finish end.

A wife and husband team, opening and closing, seemed a reasonable prospect and, as they have been together for a million years, they would be able to avoid divorce in the process. Geoff (may be I know you too well, but I could have predicted this) brought bottles of calvados. You could taste the apples ageing in your mouth from a young fragrant bouquet to fully mature. And the alcohol content gave it a warmth and a kick. This was Normandy's 15 year old Chateau de Breuil and, Geoff, it blew the evening's budget but I don't think anyone who tasted it would complain.