

Drymen Wine Club

May 2009

Whoever suggested a theme of holiday wines put the shivers down my spine. I had visions of jugs of Sangria, cheap acidic Cava and those corner shops in Benidorm where you could fill your own container which had to be glass because anything plastic would melt before you got back to your hotel!

We met at Vince and Nancy's high-tech home. It's all underfloor flat-screen downlighters with sensor-controlled ambient concealed integral knick-knacks. If you hadn't already guessed, I'm jealous.

We were very happy to have Charles back with us after six-months playing golf across the 'States. My jealousy moved to a whole new level. Charles ended his tour in California and brought home a six-bottle case of sparkling wine. (I don't think they're allowed to call it champagne.) Slightly spicy and nutty, it was superior to a Chardonnay or blanc-de-blancs. This was a Roederer Estate Brut from one of the most famous champagne houses in the world.

Martin wanted a reminder of a holiday he took three years ago in Texas. Apparently in the Texas Hill Country are the Becker Vineyards. From the many varieties, Martin chose Provencal, a crisp dry slightly-rose white with hints of strawberries.

We headed in the opposite direction for the second white. Paul and Sally had had a winter week in Budapest where the temperature stayed below 2°C and icebergs floated down the Rhein. (Sally, didn't you mean the Danube?) Paul poured golden nectar into our glasses. It was a no-brainer. Hungary's gold medal offering, rich like Burgundy, a dry Tokaji, £8.49 from Laithwaites. Paul didn't stay for the whole evening. He is project manager for one of the buildings for the Olympics and, I got the impression, all is not going well.

One of Vince and Nancy's clients is a delicatessen in Bearsden who had provided the evening's fayre – a cosmopolitan display of hams, sausages, salamis, cheeses, pickles, fish, pastries, pastas – a veritable smorgasbord – and, my favourite, breads of every description.

While spooning down pasta, Jennifer made a plea for some new blood into the village basketball team, where numbers have dwindled following a season of annihilation in the district league. I guess no one wanted to be on the losing side.

As there were no takers, and to save our blushes, I asked if anyone would like a stray kitten. One of the neighbours had brought a litter of six into the shop and I am desperate to find homes for them. (email tom@drymen.eu) I issue the warning that these delightful, playful little furballs are part feral, part wildcat and the remainder reminds me of Stripe from Gremlins. Not that I want to dissuade anyone!

I know we had this marque in March but I'm a sucker for a full-bodied red and this does remind me of a French holiday. On Tesco's higher shelves you'll find Chateau Lapelletrie Saint-Emilion Grand Cru. This is a soft, warming wine with all the dark berries of autumn and at £14.99 is not a grand price for what you get.

When Jennifer, now recovered from the basketball rejections, said that she wanted to re-experience her Spanish holidays, I thought this was going to herald in the Sangria. My apologies. Jennifer delivered glasses of red-berry fruit from oak barrels. The Cune Rioja Reserva was a beautifully rounded wine at £10.50 from winedirect.co.uk

Roger had drawn the straw for the closing "wine". For years Roger has ended each evening (of his holidays) with a glass of port, so he brought along Taylors First Estate Reserve. It came with the history lesson that this is made at the first property purchased by Taylors in 1744. It is really dark, almost black, and very complex with an enduring sweetness. At £8 a bottle it is everyman's port and available everywhere.

If you're going on holiday soon, enjoy it, have plenty of wine and send a postcard.