

Drymen Wine Club

November 2008

In an incredibly magnanimous gesture, Loch Lomond Golf Club put on an amazing firework display on the evening of our November meeting. Well, actually it was for their own party but we adopted it. We were spending the evening at Consuela and Geoff's place which, in fairness, is outside Drymen's city limits, but Consuela is such a phenomenally good cook and Geoff is the epitome of the host with the most, how could we turn them down?

Everyone entered into the spirit of fireworks and volcanoes ... some with more success than others! I know it sounds ungrateful, but Jamie brought along a few bottles of Cava which he had stolen from the BBC canteen at Christmas – which year, we're not very sure. It was less pop and fizz and more damp squib!

I'm always concerned when it's Bill's turn to choose a wine as he usually uses it as an opportunity to advertise the supermarket which he manages. Not so this time, although I'm sure it would come from the shelves. Young and peppery with flavours of herbs and berries, then soft and smooth with a rounded finish. Pico Alto Merlot from Chile and a good supermarket near you!

Club rules (not that we actually have any) forbid the host from picking a wine but Geoff was adamant that he had the perfect match for a fireworks night. Couldn't agree more. They had just returned from a week in Lanzarote, the volcanic island home to the devil's volcano, Timanfaya, with bottles of El Grifo Rosado. Personally I found it a bit thin on taste but I'm told that if you closed your eyes you could imagine that you were tasting the hot lava in a spicy version of raspberry-ade. And as it is not commonly available in the neighbouring shops, it is no great loss.

Consuela's kitchen table heaved under the weight of a harvest thanksgiving. Among more dishes than I have space to entertain here, there were two which deserve mention. Actually they deserved a prize, they were soooo good. Her Chicken Dijon should be eaten outside in January. It is a cure for or an immunisation against hypothermia. And, if you wanted to prep your tongue for the Olympics, the apricot and orange chutney was just the workout. (Email if you want recipes.)

Lindsay, who never eats much because she is always watching her figure – so are most of us guys – kept the party spirit going with her usual monologue of recent events. Apparently there will be an announcement soon that the local hotel has gone bust and will be up for sale. You see, guys, if you had just let us use one of the public rooms, you might still be solvent. No, Lindsay assured us, it was going down for millions. Although that could be hairdresser speak! Our resident financial guru advised us that problems lay south of the border and that our local inn was just an unwitting casualty of corporate war. Lindsay cut Vince off in mid-sentence before we all dropped off to sleep.

The new family on the estate is a Canadian ice-hockey coach, his cheer-leading wife and similar teenage daughters. They came from Ontario and have decided to set up home and benefit from a somewhat milder climate. Sam & Robin, the teen girls, are still searching for like anything that's like interesting? Clearly the Drymen Show will have to pull out all the stops next year. Rah rah!!

Our most recent member, John Masters, a local joiner and cabinet maker, who is a handy person to know (although this is not meant to be an advert for him) brought along a cool dry "white" wine with a very interesting colour which changed from honey to green as the glass emptied. Unlike the spicyness of the reds, this had a soft and fruity finish. We were all stumped. Definitely Italian but beyond that ...? Falanghina Campi Flegrei comes from Campania and benefits from, now long past, volcanic activity. So we understood the connection, John ... eventually, even if the wine, easy drinking as it was, did miss the fiery mark. £11.70 from Everywine.

Roger used his trade connections to surprise us with his choice. A light, fruity, fragrant white with crushed apricots and peaches. The finish was flowery petals and we were torn between savouring the lingering floral notes or taking another sip. Symphony Dry from Hawii's Volcano Winery is just not available in this country; Roger had to bribe and threaten the brewery rep to get this.

Nancy wanted to end the evening on flaming Sambucas. I found Geoff in his study reading his home insurance policy. Nancy, I assured him, had been joking. She had brought along a couple of bottles of Chambord Liqueur, a most generous way to end the evening. This is a combination of raspberries, honey and vanilla which forms a great base for a cocktail but, drunk in thimblefuls, rounded off the night beautifully.