

Drymen Wine Club

November 2009

If last month's ramblings were not rushed enough ...! This month I apologise for the tardiness of the report. No sooner were the glasses put back on their shelves, then I was off for a fortnight in the sun. I like to have a holiday before the Christmas rush, not that I am expecting much of a queue outside the door this year! And I do like to be back before pestered parents come to the shop to arrange a little furry something for Dylan's or Emily's stocking. To use the well-worn line, pets are not just for Christmas. Quite honestly, why any woman would want to carry around a white hedgehog in her handbag absolutely defeats me. And as for the current reptilian phase ... well it comes around every ten years or so. Put a pond in your garden and let nature provide the entertainment. To the wine mobile, Robin.

We had never been to Julia's before so it was quite the adventure for the evening. Her house, if you can call it a house, has been all manner of accommodation over the years; a dwelling, a boy's school, a centre of operations during the war, and, prior to Julia's purchase, a care home for the elderly. It is not short of space and we were having our evening in, what was once, the ballroom. It still has the chandeliers – yes, plural.

The theme for the evening was white and rosé. We had considered bubbly and pink but that was open to too much interpretation. Besides, unless it says "wear a sheriff's hat", people do pretty much what they like!

Jamie was under strict orders not to be a cheapskate and, I think, he took it to heart. Slightly amber in colour, from pinot noir grapes, there were strong red fruit flavours and we were left with a prevalent strawberry taste. This was a redeeming champagne. Lallier Brut Rose from barrelsandbottles.co.uk at £23. (I found in my research that some places sell this at £30 so b&b's offer is a bargain.) Jamie, you're off the hook.

It was unfortunate that the sweetness of the champagne gave Geoff's choice a harsh bitterness of unripe green apples. Had we started with the Ponte Pietra Trebbiano, it might have tasted altogether more palatable. This is a lovely, perfumed white wine, very fresh tasting, leaving the mouth tingling like you have just brushed your teeth. If you were drinking only white wine, this is a bargain at £4.85 from Slurp.

In contrast, Bill brought in the perfect compliment, a pale South African with pineapples and melons, still yielding that dry acid finish. Robertson Chenin Blanc is even more of a steal at £4.49 for multi-buys at Majestic.

Julia was in her element: socialising. She could have written the book about power schmoozing, the ability to say just the right thing at the right time. She flitted from group to group like the proverbial butterfly, staying long enough to pollinate a few thoughts and moving on. Catering is not her thing, not the floury part anyway. Catering is her thing when it comes to organising the

delivery of tasty food. She had brought in City Treats from Gartocharn and they, in turn, had brought in fine eating finger food that melted on the tongue. If you ever use them, make sure they bring the strawberry cheesecake. And remember to invite me!

We all remarked on the battle of the Christmas lights which seems to be getting waged by the hotels. Every square foot of frontage has an illuminated something on it. Geoff wanted to know the relevance of the Easter bunny overlooking the village green. Martin suggested it was an early Cadbury's advert.

Bob and Marcia are going to be spending their first non-Canada Christmas. Bob has a big game during the break and the girls have found reasons to spend the holidays in the Drymen-Balfron area. Possibly more Balfron, added Marcia knowingly. And they will be moving in the new year, leaving the estate for a property in Balmaha overlooking the water. They said it was more like home.

Talking of water, a number of signs appeared around the village, mainly to direct supply vehicles for the building of a water feature. As one of the signs appeared in my garden I phoned the main contractor, Calum Gordon of Splash Gordon Water Garden Design. He sounds like a really nice guy and his website is worth a look (www.splashgordon.co.uk) if you were contemplating a pond or a stream or, indeed, anything to do with water in your garden. No, I'm not on commission! Just supporting local business. And talking of local businesses, The B Arms has regular squads of workmen from the new owners company (www.wgygroup.co.uk) so they must be confident about the hotel's future. Now, if we could just get a room

Snacks over, reluctantly, we continued on the fruity trail with a very vivid rosé from Spain. This was an amazing melee of strawberries, cherries and brambles, a completely Oh Wow wine. Martin picked up Gran Feudo Rosé from Oddbins at £6.99 per bottle.

Continuing the theme of strawberries-are-us, Amelie gave us pink wine but with more blackcurrants coming through. This was a light wine. Grantfort Rosé Cinsault. With regret, it was not a great hit with the members, possibly overshadowed by the Gran Feudo.

Charles, still grumbling about the golf club joke, brought us a liqueur whisky. The taste of honey immediately gave it away. Bruadar used to be called Scottish Highland and is a blend of single malt and honey, the sickliness of the latter being tempered with the addition of sloe berries. Bruadar is Gaelic for dream and, I'm sure, we all slept well that night.