

Dear wine lovers

As some are able nudge cautiously towards some easing of the lockdown, food seems to be the most reliable marker of the passage of time. It can be the highlight of the day! Hence some thoughts on food/wine pairing as an antidote to lockdown tedium, with thanks to Decanter magazine where you can see the full article.

Whetting your appetite ...

Breakfast

The green shoots of recovery (remember when we thought those were on the horizon?), or the green spears of asparagus are a versatile addition to breakfast or brunch.

When steamed, asparagus could be accompanied by sauvignon blanc or an English bacchus with its complimentary green flavours. Alternatively an Italian pinot bianco will complement it when chargrilled or barbecued, whilst a Spanish rose may be called for with roasted asparagus.

However if you intend to start the day with a poached egg and asparagus, then consider a New World sparkling chardonnay, or NV champagne (Majestic have some for £16.99 as part of mixed six, see below).

Lunch

Spring lamb is so very English (or Welsh), but partner with a German pinot noir (Spatsburgunder) or a New Zealand pinot.

Afternoon tea

How quintessential! Latterly trending as a popular social celebration for all occasions, especially when served with champagne. For offers see below.

Topical evening (or any time) cocktails

Brandy Alexander

(as Boris is properly known)

80 ml brandy
50 ml creme de cacao
50 ml double cream
Ice

Pour the brandy, crème de cacao and double cream into a cocktail shaker, then add a generous handful of ice. Shake until the outside of the shaker is very cold. Strain into two small coupe or cocktail glasses. Add prepared garnish.

Garnish with

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 1 tsp golden caster sugar | Mix the sugar, nutmeg and cinnamon together and sprinkle on top. Serve. |
| 1 tsp ground nutmeg | |
| 1 tsp ground cinnamon | |

Tom Collins (for Captain, now Colonel, Tom Moore)

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| 50 ml gin | Build the drink over plenty of ice 25 in a Collins glass, stir gently. Garnish with a slice of lemon, or raspberries/twist or orange. |
| 25 ml lemon juice | |
| 25 ml sugar syrup | |
| 125 ml chilled soda water | |
| Serve. | |

Dark and Stormy (to reflect the pandemic)

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| 50ml dark rum, preferably Gosling's | Put all the ingredients in a Collins/highball glass over lots of ice, stir gently. Garnish with a wedge of lime. Serve. wedge of lime |
| 25ml fresh lime juice | |
| 2 dashes of Angostura bitters | |
| 5ml sugar syrup (optional) | |
| 100ml chilled ginger beer (a fiery variety) | |

Penicillin (bicentenary of the birth of Florence Nightingale, who had links with Farnham)

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|---------------------------------------|---|
| 20 ml blended Scotch whisky | Add ice and all ingredients except the Islay whisky to a cocktail shaker, then double strain into a chilled glass with more ice cubes. Using a bar spoon, gently float the Islay single malt whisky on top. Garnish with candied ginger. Serve. |
| 20 ml fresh lemon juice | |
| 20 ml honey ginger syrup | |
| 10 ml peated Islay single malt whisky | |

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| For the honey ginger syrup | Stir the honey, sugar and water in a small bowl. Juice or grate the ginger and strain through a cheesecloth. Add 45 ml of the juice to the honey water mix and stir until |
| 45 ml honey | |
| 15 ml water | |
| 2 tablespoons of white sugar | |
| 1 large piece fresh ginger | |

dissolved. You may need to heat the mixture ever so briefly to dissolve the sugar.

English garden

(because most are getting lots of tending whilst we are in lockdown)

St Germain elderflower liqueur 25ml
75 ml apple juice (not concentrate)
10 ml lime juice
Cucumber ribbons to garnish

Shake all the ingredients, except the cucumber, with ice and strain into a tall glass filled with fresh ice. Garnish with cucumber ribbons and serve.

Old fashioned

(definitely not a reference to the U3A! It's the number one favourite cocktail)

1 thick slice orange peel
1 maraschino cherry with stem
1 tsp sugar syrup (or gomme syrup)
2-3 drops whisky bitters
ice cubes, as necessary
50ml/2fl oz Scotch or bourbon
twist of lemon peel, to garnish

Take the orange peel and squeeze it with your fingers. Rub the peel around the insides of a whisky tumbler, then place into the glass. Add the cherry, sugar syrup and bitters, together with three ice cubes. Add half of the scotch or bourbon and stir for about ten seconds. Add more ice and the remaining scotch or bourbon and stir, again for 10-15 seconds. Garnish with lemon peel and serve.

With acknowledgments to BBC Good Food, cocktailsandbars.com and olive magazine.com

Shopping around

Majestic

Canard-Duchene Brut NV champagne [£19.99 for mixed six]
Clean and fruity with baked bread and bruised apple notes.

J. de Telmont NC champagne [£17.99, for mixed six]
A family owned vineyard. These bubbles are soft and fruity, with a medium body.

Nicholas Courtin Brut NV champagne [£16.99. for mixed six]
Very good value. With notes of citrus, toast and golden apple.

Sainsbury's

Fizz : a couple good offers on champagne (Lanson and Mumm), Cremant de Loire and Chapel Down sparkling white wine.

Santa Julia Uco Valley Malbec [£6.50 from £10]
Full bodied, with plum spice and vanilla on the palate.
Hand picked, classic fermentation with 20 day maceration and 10 months in oak.

Fairtrade Carmeniere Taste the Difference [£7 from £8.25]
Powerful with complex flavours of berry fruits plus vanilla and peppery spice.

Pignioletto Brut Taste the Difference [£6.75 from £9]
Fresh and vibrant with gentle bubbly froth. White blossom on the nose, and zippy green apples and soft white peach on the palate.

Faustino Rivero Albarino [£10 from £12]
Fresh in the mouth, hints of citrus on the nose and floral notes with an elegant herbal background on the palate.

Waitrose

Many offers with 20-25% off

Luis Felipe Edwards Bin Series Merlot [£5.99 from £8.99]
Comes from a multi award winning wine producer.

Waterfront Chardonnay Voignier [£5.99 from £7.99]
Juicy tropical fruits. Reviewers regarded it as good quality wine.

Melini Chianti reserve [£6.99 from £10.79]
Ripe cherry aromatics, bright fruit character. Classic style and elegance.
Partial ageing in oak for 8 months.

San Leo Nerello Mascalese Rosato NV

[£6.99 from £10.49]

Fragrant and fruity with a gentle mousse. Delicious with fresh strawberries.

Tasters and snippets

LVMH have released Krug's Grande Cuvee Edition 168 Krug have released a prestige cube every year since 1843.

Based around the harvest of 2012 – a vintage heralded as one of Champagne's greatest this century – the blend comprises 198 different wines spanning 11 years, with the oldest being a pinot noir picked in 1996 from the grand cru village of Verzenay, winemaker Julie Cavil reports. She went on to say that due to the extensive use of reserve wines from older harvests, the multi-vintage blend always contains a mix of flavours from *“fresh fruit, to dried fruit, and a drop of the antique shop.”* This one comprises 52% pinot noir 35% chardonnay 13% pinot meunier

Austria's Wachau region awarded DAC status

[Decanter magazine]

The unusually warm winter in Germany has caused the ice wine harvest to fail for the first time. Temperatures failed to drop to the -7C required in any German wine region prior to picking and pressing the frozen grapes used to produce this year's vintage.

German ice wine only accounts for less than 0.1% of the harvest so experts fear that it will become even more of a rarity.

There have been repeated warnings from scientists about the potential effects of climate change on wine production, with up to 85 per cent of vineyards at risk.

[The Independent]

Sales of boxed wines have increased in French supermarkets during the lockdown. The question is whether this will continue in the hospitality industry post lockdown. Eric Lanxade, sales director for Caves et Vignobles du Gers in South-West France, which produces 400,000 hectolitres of bulk wine (PGI Côtes de Gascogne and Vin de France) annually, certainly thinks so.

“It will not be business as usual and a return to the way things were before the Covid-19 crisis. Permanent disinfection measures for potentially infected surfaces will cause a sea-change in people's spontaneity towards others and sharing a glass of wine”. After all, he continued, to provide wine by the glass, *“a bottle goes from one table to the next, from one hand to another and could be a vector of the virus”.* An alternative is to use 5, 10 or 20-litre wine boxes

which can provide a wine by the glass service better suited to the new situation.

In other developments, the Comité Européen des Entreprises Vins, which represents a majority of European wine producers, has joined an initiative to promote glass recycling. It hopes to achieve a 90% recycling rate. It will be interesting to see whether glass does indeed prevail.

[vitisphere.com]

Tesco is to launch a new canned wine brand into stores this month : Hun. This new brand, which has a tagline of “Great Wine in a Can”, is the brainchild of “millennial wine enthusiast” Mark Woollard, who said he enjoyed the convenience and environmental benefits of cans but had been unable to find the same range of quality and taste associated with the bottled wines. The new company, which has secured an investment from former Formula 1 driver David Coulthard, has teamed up with Origin Wines to launch Hun, which is aimed at a younger wine drinker. The range includes a pale rosé, a sauvignon blanc and a low-calorie sparkling rosé with just 69 calories per can.

The company has teamed up with Origin Wines, a South African wine producer with vineyards in the Stellenbosch region, although the wine will be canned in the UK. Proceeds from every case go towards supporting The Origin Wine Fairhills Fairtrade project, which is one of the largest Fairtrade wine projects worldwide.

[Drinks retailing news]

Wine for Fun Zoom meetings

If you want to join these, please get in touch with either Mr T or me.

None of us yet know how long current restrictions/easing will last and I hope this round up of wine related news will help bridge the gap until we find our new normal and hopefully can meet together. If anyone wishes to make suggestions or contributions such as wine recommendations, books, films, or comment on the format, please let me know. It is a fluid concept!

And finally I came across this Dr Seuss inspired poem

I will drink wine on a boat
I will drink wine with a goat
I will drink wine on the train in the rain
I will drink wine with a fox
I will drink wine from a box
I will drink wine with a mouse
I will drink wine in a house

Sips and tips

Number 3

I will drink wine here or there

I will drink wine everywhere

Stay safe, keep alert and appropriately socially distanced

Cheers

Jane Moberly

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