

wine notes

WITH COLIN PRESSDEE



IT'S surprising how the seasons come around, for next week is the start of the game season.

Restaurants will be serving our truly indigenous, highly prized game bird, the red grouse. It has amazingly distinctive sweet, savoury flesh derived from feeding naturally on heather on open moors.

It comes at exactly the time when I begin to have a craving for some fuller red wine that will give deep satisfaction as the nights begin to draw in.

The sort of wine I am looking for is an old traditional wine, one that tells a story of a vineyard dating back generations. The wine that found me this time was from a sixth generation vineyard in Longhorne Creek in South Australia, owned by the Adams Family. It's the sort of wine that Morticia would have served to Gomez; but this wine is made by the Adams brothers Guy and Tom, and they aptly name it Brothers in Arms.

The red grape for which Australia is renowned is the Shiraz, the same as Syrah in the Rhône, France. It is widely planted in all regions, and most of the renowned producers have a Shiraz as their top wine. It is the wine of Penfold Grange and Henschke Hill of Grace.

The Metala Vineyards of Brothers in Arms also has Cabernet Sauvignon dating back to the original planting in 1891, and this provides for an approachable Shiraz Cabernet blend called No 6 at a very attractive price for the quality – the same as house wine in a pub.

The No 6 has a huge character and chunky style. It is deep in colour with crimson, maroon and magenta tinges that pack a herb and spice punch into the rich fruit that explodes on the palate, delivering black currant and bramble with a firmness of tannins. The Shiraz is a wine to dream of: multi layered, supple, complex and savoury. They are real food wines.

Take some Welsh mountain lamb from the similar terroir as the grouse. The impregnation of heather shoots, herbs, wild grasses and berries gives the lamb a deep complex flavour over the sweetness of the young meat. Roast a leg, keeping it pink, and serve with the No 6.

BEST BUYS

2005 Brothers in Arms No 6 Shiraz Cabernet, £12.20

2005 Brothers in Arms Shiraz, £22.40

● Available from Tanners Wines – highly recommended

CHICK PEA AND LAMB CUTLETS (for 4)



PUREE OF AUBERGINE

500g cooked aubergine flesh (about 3 aubergines); 2 to 3 cloves of garlic; juice of half a large lemon; half tsp ground cumin; 1 tbs tahini; 100ml extra virgin olive oil; salt and pepper

● Grill aubergine on a solid top or bake in the oven until soft. When cool peel and leave to drain in a colander over a bowl with a plate and a weight on top for 1 hour. Place all the ingredients in a food processor and puree, slowly adding olive oil. Check seasoning. It goes well with toasted pitta bread as a dip or with some grilled lamb chops off the barbecue

Ingredients

12 lamb cutlets
2 tbsp olive oil
3 tbsp balsamic vinegar
3 dried chillies crumbled
1 tsp crushed coriander seeds
½ tsp ground cumin
½ tsp ground ginger
juice of 1 lemon
black pepper
1 red onion peeled and cut into rings

for the hummus

275g tin of chick peas, drained and rinsed
juice of 1 lemon
1 large clove of garlic
1 tbsp tahini (sesame seed paste)
about 100ml olive oil
salt
tabasco sauce
½ ground cumin

for the garnish

small bunch of coriander
1 packet of halloumi cheese
lemon wedges

method

- Put the lamb cutlets in a shallow dish. Mix all the other ingredients, except the red onion, to make a marinade. Pour over the cutlets and mix well, turning the cutlets around so they are evenly coated. Place the red onions on top and marinate for 12 hours or overnight.
- To make the hummus, blend the chick peas with the lemon juice, garlic and tahini to form a paste, then pour in the olive oil in a thin stream. Season with salt, tabasco and cumin.
- Pre-heat the griddle pan and cook the cutlets fiercely until well charred, slightly burnt but pink in the middle (obviously, if you prefer them well done, cook for a little longer).
- While the chops are resting quickly fry slices of halloumi.
- Serve on a large dish with roughly chopped coriander, lemon wedges and a drizzle of olive oil and a dusting of cayenne pepper.

bryan webb



PLANNING a feast outside with the weather of the past months has been very tricky, but this weekend is my special birthday and my hope for a barbecue and party outdoors is being adjusted in case the heavens pour down on us – I am organising dishes that will work outside as well as indoors.

One such combination is lamb chops with hummus. When we worked and lived in London, across the road from our restaurant, Hlaire, was one of the city's finest kebab shops. Susan and I would occasionally treat ourselves to kebab as a takeaway after a hard night's service, and I would always order a portion of hummus to go with them. I loved putting a spoonful inside the pitta bread holding the spicy slices of the doner kebab.

In North Wales there are no such luxuries close by but when I get the craving I cook lamb chops on a very hot griddle pan and serve them with homemade hummus, fried halloumi and

BBQ lamb is a cut above... inside or out

toasted pitta bread – a delicious combination.

Hummus is a dip that's easily made from chick peas and is very cheap. It comes from the Middle East, and dates back to ancient Egypt – hummus is the Arabic word for chick pea. You might notice some recipes call for garbanzo beans – that's Spanish for chick peas.

We also make an aubergine puree similar to hummus (see panel left), which we serve with grilled fillets of red mullet and a chilli and garlic oil.

I would strongly recommend investing in a heavy duty griddle pan, so you can cook in the kitchen the same dishes you had planned for the barbecue just in case the heavens do decide to open.

The pans may seem expensive around £60 but they last forever – mine was a wedding present some 16 years ago and it's still in good condition.

Whatever your plans for the rest of the holidays I hope you will be able to enjoy a few alfresco meals with the BBQ or an enjoyable picnic in the sunshine.

● Bryan Webb is owner/chef of Tyddyn Llan, Llandrillo, near Corwen