



CYPRUS GOURMET WEEKLY



Editor Patrick Skinner

Sign of the Times?

I am happy to be PR'd when the incoming information is well written and presented (not very often, I am sad to report), and when I am told about something near to my heart I am even happier. In a country with a budget deficit and lean times for all producers, I am against importing bananas from 10,000 miles away when – albeit for only a season, we have exceptionally tasty local ones. As I am not in favour of asparagus from Peru or garlic from China. It is probable, that like other countries (USA, Britain and most major European countries), that people in Cyprus will turn to locally grown produce, be it farmed fish, meat, fruit or vegetables. For various reasons – “food miles” (distance travelled by imports), cost, freshness and, importantly employment.

So hurray for the Thalassa Restaurant and Conference Centre at Governor's Beach for organising a local food festival this coming Sunday. I am happy to promote it. I have a feeling that this is just the start of a growing movement by people who want to get back to some local, rural basics, aided and abetted by customers who are fed up with factory farmed food, over-fertilised/pesticised vegetables and fruit and additive-riddled packaged foods.

Patrick



5-STAR TEA (BAG) SERVICE

*Thank God for tea! What would the world do without tea?
How did it exist? I am glad I was not born before tea.*

Sidney Smith, quoted by Hesketh Pearson in *The Smith of Smiths* (1934).

I've been a tea drinker as long as I can remember. English style for most of my life until a few years back, quite strong with milk. But I've had it with and without in many places – with and without sugar, or lemon, or mint. I had brown tea, green tea, black tea. I have it in thick large white Royal Air Force issue mugs, in thin tea glasses nestling in silver holders in Iran, tiny little Japanese cups and fine china cups and saucers. But wherever I have drunk it, I have always thought of England as the “home” of tea, even though not a leaf grows there. Clearly it wasn't, isn't, and it would seem centuries before it came to London it was popular in many forms in China, Japan, Tibet, India and elsewhere. But the English needed it... took to it... made it their own a few hundred years since.

Tea had come as a deliverer to a land that called for deliverance; a land of beef and ale, of heavy eating and abundant drunkenness; of grey skies and harsh winds; of strong-nerved stout—purposed, slow-thinking men and women. Above all, a land of sheltered homes and warm firesides - firesides that were waiting waiting, for the bubbling kettle and the fragrant breath of tea.

Agnes Repplier, *To Think of Tea!* (1932).

I've always preferred tea made from tea leaves. So many of the teabags you buy contain little more than dust and produce a bitter, brown brew that I dislike intensely. Last week I was taken along the road to conversion from leaf to bag at a tea tasting led by Ralf Janecki, senior tea taster and managing director of Althaus, Bremen-based tea producers (*pictured*).

Mr Janecki is an interesting chap. All his working life has been spent in tea, including 20 years with a tea firm in Britain before returning to Germany and, becoming prime mover in this relatively new company.

Althaus make tea-bags. But, mercifully filled not with dust, but genuine tea leaves, of many provenances and styles. Their wide range of teabags is now coming to Cyprus through the agency of Antoniou & Panayiotou General Trading Ltd., and their target is up-market hotels and restaurants. Having endured the dusty stuff in many a hotel bedroom or restaurant, I think they will succeed.

Did I get all the way down the road to conversion? Not totally. I think I shall still make my early



morning pots of leaf Orange Pekoe and afternoon Gunpowder Green, but I have to say these are the best teabags I have come across. And they are handy because all you need is a kettle, water, a cup and off you go.

Space permits more detail here – I shall expand on the tasting and the philosophy behind the product on the Cyprus Gourmet website www.cyprus-gourmet.com. Meanwhile, anyone interesting in stocking or buying Althaus tea should contact Antonis Antoniou on 2582 3258.

For here now, in the space of a few hours I was a dull and amiserable, a clever and a happy mortal, and all without the intervention of any external cause, except a dish of green tea, which indeed is a most kind remedy in cases of this kind. Often

I have found relief from it. I am so fond of green tea I could write a whole dissertation on its virtues. It comforts and enlivens without the risks attendant on spirituous liquors.

Gentle herb! Let the florid grape yield to thee. Thy soft influence is a more safe inspirer of social joy.

James Boswell, journal entry, 13 February, 1763.



HAPPENINGS

Sunday 29th November – Mediterranean Food Festival at the Thalassa Restaurant and Conference Centre, Governor's Beach

The Thalassa has created a fascinating programme of gastronomic interest offering a day of food experiences, featuring some of the island's finest local produce. The organisers promise new and unique taste sensations and to learn how to take advantage of Cyprus' bountiful seasonal products, whilst enjoying a delicious and relaxing buffet lunch in Thalassa's restaurant-by-the-sea.

The Thalassa taste experience - featuring first-press organic olive oil of the region served with charcoal-grilled kapira bread infused with fresh oregano; olives; freshly-made; organic village Halloumi and pourekia; plus a rich buffet lunch of Mediterranean specialities, pasta and seafood, prepared using local olive oil and newly-picked seasonal produce.

- Olive Oil seminar - learn more about the local products, take part in a professional tasting session and find out how to select the best oil for your kitchen.
- Taste a selection of boutique wines from the Constantinou winery of Pera Pedi with expert guidance on the ideal products to complement your winter dishes.
- Discover the distinct flavours of organic Halloumi, freshly-made at the event.
- Be inspired by a fresh fish and olive oil cookery demonstration by Thalassa's Chefs.
- Enjoy traditional music performed by guitarist and singer Michalis Mozoras.
- Browse a selection of local products available to buy on the day.

• Take in the stunning local scenery with a relaxing walk to nearby 'White Rocks'.

PLUS: guests can enter a free draw to win a luxurious one night stay for two, including breakfast, at the Thalassa Restaurant & Conference Centre. Special rate accommodation is available on Saturday, 28th November at just €48.00 per person sharing a double room, including breakfast and lunch.

The festival program begins at 11 a.m. with lunch served from mid-day to 3 p.m.

All activities are included within the price of the Mediterranean buffet lunch (excluding drinks) €22 per adult / ?11 per child (aged under 12 years).

To reserve your place at this exciting and unique Mediterranean gastronomy event call 25 632 314 / 99 620 237 or email: info@thalassacyprus.com, www.thalassacyprus.com

Saturday, December 5, from 11a.m. to 2p.m. and 4-7p.m. at Oak Tree Wine Cellar, Larnaca (Tel: 2481 5044 / 9962 7037). Tasting of Bordeaux wines from Chateau Rauzan Segla, 2nd Growth, 1885, and Chateau Canon St. Emilion, 1st Grand Cru Classé, presented by their owners Ulysee



Cazabonne, Bordeaux Wine Merchants, whose general manager, John Kolasa will be in attendance. Readers wishing to attend either of the two fascinating tasting sessions should contact Sergios Katroditis director of their agents.

Saturday, December 5 at the InterContinental Hotel, Aphrodite Hills. The 2009 Cyprus Sommeliers' Competition. Starting at 9am, the competing sommeliers will have to perform a number of written, verbal and hands-on tests, before the entry number is whittled down to three. All this takes place in private, but at around 4pm the public may observe the final stages, which is live on stage. The three candidates, taking half an hour each, will be judged on:

- Taking the order, choosing and advising on the most suitable wines for the courses selected by the customer;
- decanting of red wine and service of Champagne;
- Blind tasting of two wines with analytical commentary;
- Identifying 5 spirits from black glasses;
- Correcting a wine list;
- Their efficiency, professionalism and social/selling skills will be judged.

This will be followed by a Champagne reception hosted by Louis Roederer at 8.30pm and the Four Course gala dinner at 9pm. The cost for members of the public is ?70.00 per person including selected wines matched with the menu, SODAP, KEO and ETKO, and Hennessy Cognac.

For those wishing to stay overnight the hotel offers Pool and Garden View rooms at €110 per room per night.

Καταλογος Δωρων 2010
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