

Here are a few old dishes for you to have a go at, taking a little journey back in time. I wish we saw these on menus more often as they really are delicious – like prawn cocktail and suet puddings, they are classics for a reason – because they are so good that you simply do not tinker with them

Welsh rarebit

Ingredients

4 pieces of buttered toast
25g butter
½ tsp Dijon mustard
2 tbsp beer, milk or a mixture
100g cheese

Method

- Melt the butter in a small

saucepan; add the mustard and beer or milk. Mix well and bring to the boil;

- Remove from the heat and cool slightly. Add the cheese and seasoning;
- Spread the cheese mixture on the toast and brown under the hot grill.

Scotch woodcock

Ingredients

2 eggs
75g butter
2-3 anchovy fillets, finely chopped
4 rounds of toast or 4 croûtes approximately 5cm in diameter

To garnish

Anchovy fillets, cut into long strips
Capers

Method

- Break the eggs into a small bowl, season and whisk lightly;
- Melt 25g of the butter in a small saucepan and scramble the eggs in this;
- Cream the remaining butter with the chopped anchovy fillets and spread on to the croûtes;
- Spoon the scrambled egg on top and garnish with a lattice of anchovy fillets and capers.

Herring roes on toast

Ingredients

450g herring roes washed and patted dry
4 pieces of buttered toast
2 tbsp oil
75g butter, cut into small cubes
2 tbsp parsley, finely chopped
1 lemon, cut into wedges

Method

- Heat the oil in a frying pan.
- Season the roes and then quickly fry in the oil until they start to colour;
- Add the butter to the pan and cook the roes, basting them with the butter until golden and tender;
- Add the chopped parsley to the pan and finish with a squeeze of lemon;
- Serve on buttered toast.

TANTE MARIE

Culinary Academy

Your partner in wine...

With the classic British savouries, John recommends Blaufrankisch 2009, Weingut Erwin Tinhof, (£11.95, www.savageselection.co.uk).

BRITISH savouries. What is that all about? Scotch woodcock, herring roe on toast and Welsh rarebit came the answer.

So what red wine would handle such an amazing array of flavours?

Austrian Blaufrankisch that's what. I will give you a clue – I am a big fan of Austrian reds.

Austria is not a winemaking nation that automatically falls from our lips but that may be about to change as the 'new kid on the block' Leithaberg region has sights on a shelf near you.

Leithaberg's (Leitha Mountains, pronounced Letaberg), south-facing vineyards slope gently to the shores of the Neusiedlersee, Austria's famous inland lake about an hour's drive south-east of Vienna in the province of Burgenland. For geography nuts, the lake is about 45 kilometres long and 11 kilometres wide but no more than two metres deep; intriguingly, its southern shores dip their toes into Hungary.

Blaufrankisch is the top red grape of the Leithaberg region by the way. The other 'Austrian' red grapes to look out for are Zweigelt and St Laurent. Happily, the grape varieties are proudly announced on the front labels of Austrian wines, which makes for far easier shopping.

Weingut Tinhof's Blaufrankisch has crisp black fruit in abundance, balanced with attractive tannins, (the stuff that comes from the grape skins and dries your mouth); a toasty blackberry finish also helps to get the best from the savouries, especially the woodcock and the Welsh rarebit. In case you are wondering, weingut is Austrian for winery.

Leithaberg's limestone and schist

rock vineyards rise to about 300 metres above the Neusiedlersee. From these cool elevated sites you can spy on Hungary on a clear day and view the extent of the Leithaberg D.A.C. (Districtus Austriae Controllatus, Austria's status for special regional Quality Wines) from Jois to the north of the lake to Morbisch and Zagersdorf in the south.

If you looking for a little musical history while sipping the reds, you can pop into the majestic church nestling in the vineyards overlooking the lake, where Franz Joseph Haydn famously composed for many years.

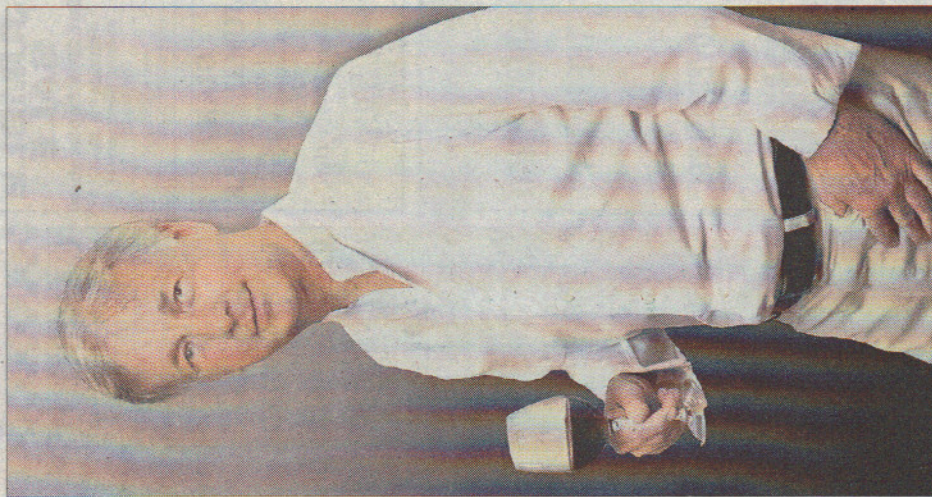
The Leithaberg vineyards are also well suited to white wines and for those of you who would prefer a rich white with your British Savouries, especially the herring roe, look out for Gruner Veltliner, the variety that is making a name for itself and lifting Austria's reputation as it goes.

The other white varieties that are allowed to carry the Leithaberg D.A.C. label are Pinot Blanc (known as Weissburgunder in Austria), our old mate Chardonnay and the little known variety, Neuburger.

Back to the savouries, Leithaberg Pinot Blanc also goes well with the herring roe on toast, (crack open a 2012 from Familie Priefer, £17.45 at www.clarkfoysterwines.co.uk).

For all you wine tourists, there is far more to Leithaberg than the wines as it has long been a favourite with visitors who flock to enjoy the impressive Schloss Esterhazy castle, in Eisenstadt and the lakeside music festivals at Morbisch and Sankt Margarethen.

It is rumoured that Haydn enjoyed dining out during his illustrious time in London; always the superstar he probably brought a few cases of Leithaberg wine with him to match these British savouries that were as popular in the 1790s as they are today.



■ John Downes, one of only 300 Masters of Wine in the world, is a speaker, television and radio broadcaster and writer on wine. Check out John's 99 second cartoon video story www.johndownes.com.