

The Pipe of Port

Wine bar

84 High Street, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS1 1JN. Tel. (01702) 614606.
www.pipeofport.com e-mail; info@pipeofport.co.uk

NEWSLETTER October, 2011.

Greetings one and all,

As I type away, the weather outside is blisteringly hot! It is the 1st of October and we should be wearing gloves & scarves for goodness sake. This might salvage the English grape harvest. They suffered all through the July that patently forgot to do its job and make the sun shine.

I wrote last time about my cycling endeavours. I'm still cycling away most days to work & back. If I have to bring my car, I do feel a bit cheated. I'm even cycling up pier hill without getting off. The hope I had that it would slowly shave a few inches from my rather rotund midriff is not happening. But I'll continue to pedal away. A month or so ago, as I pulled away from my house in my car, a rather fetching lady in billowing white and flowing blonde hair, gave me such a terrific happy smile. What a treat I thought. And me at 61 as well. Fifty metres further on I looked in my rear view mirror ... I was wearing my cycle crash helmet having got into my car by mistake. She was not smiling at me, she was laughing at me. God what a fool I felt. I turned around and went back for my bike but as I got out of the car I perked up a bit. The good Lord had spared me serious blushes for had I have got out of the car to speak with the said flowing lady, she would have also seen my bicycle clips. That would have been serious.

I also wrote about the traffic engineers and the seafront. As it became busier, the absence of crossings and a cycle pathway becomes confusing. That is exactly what we want cry the traffic engineers!! It's the latest trend among these twilight people. They seem to inhabit a world where they never associate with anyone outside of their world of traffic calming areas, traffic lights with metres of fences to shepherd us in the direction they want us to go. If they did associate with normal folk, they could be diverted from their task. The argument goes something like this ... it is a "shared area". Cars pedestrians and cyclists will share the space. Confused people will be more cautious they say. Not so sure about that theory, but if that's what very expensive consultants say and traffic engineers sign up to, then it must be right mustn't it?. Hmm .. in my world, confusion creates *chaos* if I am not mistaken. I know because we have too much of it here. Chaos is not good and neither is this idea.

We spent decades teaching kids to cross at zebra & pedestrian crossings. It worked and kids lives were saved. I am not so sure that telling kids these rules don't apply anymore, or expecting the average 10 year old to judge whether they apply or not, is not a good idea in my opinion. Apparently, our elected councillors cannot stop this very expensive experiment because if a crossing is put in and a kid is run over because they didn't cross at the correct spot, then they will be held to account for ignoring the consultant and council officers. Wonderful isn't it?

I try very hard not to cycle on the shared pavement as I (quite rightly) get looks from parents who are unhappy with an old bloke teetering along unsteadily on a bike. But cycling along the seafront on the road is dangerous. There is just no room. All that money spent now and it will be some years before it will be changed back to something more sensible. It should be changed right away, but who is going to admit that it is an experiment gone wrong and change it?

I hear that a brave town in Holland is having some great results with this sort of experiment. But they have done away with all the traffic lights throughout the town. They have a series of mini round-a-bouts with filter entry and straight forward zebra crossings. The critics point to the increased bumps at junctions, but the supporters point to the fact that the bumps are very minor ones (no speeding up to catch the lights) as everyone approaches the junction with "caution" the bumps result in little or no injury and no deaths.

Courage dear traffic engineers. Get rid of all the traffic lights in the town. Now that would be interesting.

Just after I sent out the last newsletter, I got a call to ask whether I would be interested in having two female winemakers here on a Friday night. They were Vanya Cullen & Stephanie Toole. Not only are they great winemakers, but they are just good fun to be with as well. Vanya is a very gifted winemaker with a huge understanding of nature and how grapes grow. Some of her ideas are a bit cooky to some, but there is no doubt, she does make iconic wine. She takes a cow horn, stuffs it with pregnant cow dung (or something like that) and buries deep in the vineyard for some months. When it is dug up, she dilutes it down with water and sprays it on the soil after harvest. Anyway, the evening was lovely. The kitchen worked very hard with 45 for the wine dinner and another 50 on normal Friday night menu. We were very fortunate that the UK agent supported the evening. We served a tasting of 4 top wines, then another 5 with dinner. The wines were extraordinary. It was so good of Vanya & Stephanie to come to Southend to the old crusty dusty Pipe when they could have been at a smart west end emporium. But they like you lot. They have both been here twice now. We are very lucky in that respect.

It has been a very slow long summer for us. The VAT hit us very hard. When the VAT went down to 15%, of course our prices had to reflect this. At the same time, fresh food prices rocketed, as you will know yourselves and just have not stopped going up. When the VAT went up to 20%, we added a bit of it, but that was more than taken away in food increases. On the wine side, we had two lots of duty thrown at us as well. With the VAT increase alone, we have calculated the chancellor has taken close to an extra £50,000 from our little business this year. That is a bugger. No business this size can cope with those sort of hits in such a depressed market. But I guess we will survive. Just as well I've got my old boneshaker bike Eh?

We are having a run of pregnancies here at the Pipe. Over the years, we have had a few young women give birth whilst working here (not literally!) and come back. It's good. We also have had the children come here and work as they came of age. There is a possibility that the granddaughter of Julie Bell who worked here for decades, might come and be the first 3rd generation to work at the Pipe. How good would that be?

Our manager Sally has just come back after having her first, plus Jessie is away on maternity leave at the moment. Then we have Mina, who works on the bar, and then my delightful elder daughter Layla who also works on the bar, both pregnant. I am to be a grandfather. Goodness me. I am not ready for grandfatherhood. I'll have to ban anyone who refers to me by that title. I will accept "superpappa". I think that will do me for a year or so until I get used to the whole thing.

All right I'll shut up now.

Its ME!
Super Pappa

It is important that you send your cheque, payable to the Pipe of Port with the application.
Please note; for all events arrive at 7.30 for a 7.45 start.

Please reserve the following places:

Monday 24 th October	South Australia	.....places @ £13	Total £.....
Tuesday 8 th November	Steak Night	.....places @ £42	Total £.....
Thursday 17 th November	Its Beaujolais Nouveau	ring & book pay as you go	
Monday 14 th November	Lighter Reds	.....places @ £12	Total £.....
Monday 28 th November 7pm / 7.45 / 8.30	Cellarmans & Bin Ends (please circle your time choice).	.....places @ £8	Total £.....
Saturday 24 th December	Christmas Eve Dinner	see separate booking sheet	
Saturday 31 st December	New Years Eve Black Tie Party	see separate booking sheet	
Monday 9 th January, 2012	Chianti	.....places @ £15	Total £.....
Tuesday 24 th January	Robert Burns	.....places @ £30	Total £.....
Wednesday 25 th January	Robert Burns	.....places @ £30	Total £.....
Tuesday 7 th February	Mid Winter Blues Supper	.....places @ £37	Total £.....
Saturday & Tuesday	St VALENTINE'S DINNER	see separate booking sheet.	
		GRAND TOTAL	£.....

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

.....

TEL NO. DAY.....EVENING.....

e-mail address.....

It is important that you send your cheque, payable to the Pipe of Port with the application. Or
E-mail your completed form and we'll call you up for your credit card details if you prefer.

Please note; for all events arrive at 7.30 for a 7.45 start.

*THE PIPE OF PORT NEW YEAR'S EVE BLACK TIE CHAMPAGNE PARTY,
DECEMBER 31st 2011*

THE BOOKING FORM

The Place	The Pipe of Port Wine Bar
The Date	31st December 2011 at 7.45pm
The Price	£80.
Deposit	£50
Balance	1st December 2011.

BLACK TIE (a kilt or two would be welcome)

Deposit Terms: In the event of you having to CANCEL after paying your deposit, the following terms apply. Before 1st December all monies refunded. Between 1st and 10th December, the deposit will be withheld. After the 10th December, the full amount is payable. Of course if we are able to sell your tickets we will refund all monies paid to us.

The Price Includes

2 flutes of our Brilliant House Champagne with the canapies, 2 x 175ml glasses each of red or white wine with your dinner (beers and soft drinks if you prefer) There will be 2 choices of red & white, A New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc and Chablis, the reds will be a choice of Rioja Reserve and Australian Shiraz.

Canapies from 8pm at the tables. The Grand Hot & Cold Buffet from 8.30pm until 10.30pm. *(includes Luxury Seafood Thermidor, Fillet Steak with caramelized Onions, our Thai Chicken Curry, Hot Honey Roast Ham plus Poached Salmon Asparagus salad, etc)*

- * Iain our Piper and our top notch Disco Man
- * Party Hats, streamers and such things one has at a party.

What the price does not include!

- * Pre & Post dinner drinks
- * Requests of illegal or unnatural behaviour. (negotiable)
- * Familiarity with the serving staff other than between midnight and ten minutes after.

Please tear off and return to the Pipe of Port 84a High Street, Southend on-Sea SS1 1JN

BOOKING FORM

Please reserve mePLACES @ £80.00 (£50 deposit) TOTAL £.....
Cheques made payable to The Pipe of Port

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

..... TEL NO..... EVE.....

If you have reserved and no longer need your table, please telephone and cancel now.

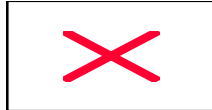
Valentine's Day 2012

Saturday or Tuesday 11th /14th February

If music be the food of love, play on.

William Shakespeare

On Arrival ... A flute of Pink Champagne



Large Prawns Grilled with Chorizo Butter Roasted Red Pepper & Tomato Fritada

or

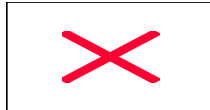
Lightly Curried Cream of Parsnip Soup with Parmesan Parsnip Crisps

or

Deep Filled slow roasted Cherry Tomato Shallot Tart with Mozzarella & Balsamic Vinegar

or

Warm Salad of Crisp Fried Slow Roast Belly of Pork Slices with Honey & Soy Dressing



Rib Eye Steak with cafe de Paris Butter Dauphinoise Potatoes and Rocket Salad

or

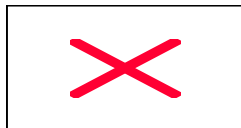
Pan fried fillet of Sea Bream with Pea Broth & Pancetta

or

Malaysian Spiced Breast of Free Range Chicken on Stir Fried Shitake Mushroom & Noodles

or

Filletted Lemon Sole with White Wine Sauce Spinach & Creamy Potato



Orange and Passion Fruit Cheesecake

or

White chocolate & Raspberry Crème Brulee

or

Orange & Ginger Steamed Pudding with Custard

or

A Selection of Artisan Cheeses

Coffee and Chocolate Truffles

£40

CIRCLE SERVICES

PRINT INSTRUCTIONS

Please print pages 1 to 4 back to back.

5, 6, 7 & 8 singly as they have to be returned to us.

All on white except page 6 which should be light green, page 7 to be light blue, 8 to be deep pink all approx)

We will need 850 copies collated and stapled.

Any problems call the Pipe and ask for Sally, Steve or Janet or Steve's mobile 07762 245 701

Thank you.

Steve Jones