

# Sunday Sankey

## The Drink Recommendations



Keeping focus in a world of distractions”, East Hampton 2016

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## Introduction – “If By Whiskey...”

*“My friends, I had not intended to discuss this controversial subject at this particular time. However, I want you to know that I do not shun controversy. On the contrary, I will take a stand on any issue at any time, regardless of how fraught with controversy it might be. You have asked me how I feel about whiskey. All right, here is how I feel about whiskey:*

*If when you say whiskey you mean the devil's brew, the poison scourge, the bloody monster, that defiles innocence, dethrones reason, destroys the home, creates misery and poverty, yea, literally takes the bread from the mouths of little children; if you mean the evil drink that topples the Christian man and woman from the pinnacle of righteous, gracious living into the bottomless pit of degradation, and despair, and shame and helplessness, and hopelessness, then certainly I am against it.*

*But, if when you say whiskey you mean the oil of conversation, the philosophic wine, the ale that is consumed when good fellows get together, that puts a song in their hearts and laughter on their lips, and the warm glow of contentment in their eyes; if you mean Christmas cheer; if you mean the stimulating drink that puts the spring in the old gentleman's step on a frosty, crispy morning; if you mean the drink which enables a man to magnify his joy, and his happiness, and to forget, if only for a little while, life's great tragedies, and heartaches, and sorrows; if you mean that drink, the sale of which pours into our treasuries untold millions of dollars, which are used to provide tender care for our little crippled children, our blind, our deaf, our dumb, our pitiful aged and infirm; to build highways and hospitals and schools, then certainly I am for it.*

*This is my stand. I will not retreat from it. I will not compromise.”*

- Noah S. "Soggy" Sweat, Jr, young lawmaker from the U.S. state of Mississippi, on the subject of whether Mississippi should continue to prohibit (which it did until 1966) or finally legalize alcoholic beverages, 1952

## 6/26/2016 – Bloody Mary<sup>1</sup>

It's simple fact that the secret to a good Bloody Mary is horseradish, and a very large glass. Really it's a drink to be taken by the pint. A squeeze of lemon juice. Celery salt is necessary. Lea & Perrins, Tabasco, of course an actual stick of celery, aesthetically leafed. Fill at the margin with tomato juice, we know a Canadian who used Clamato, if you do, do NOT read the ingredients. No Bloody Mary should be over-iced, but rather very long on vodka, so that the first slurp makes you jerk one arm like a chicken and hiss "Gracious me sit down Satan, sit DOWN!"<sup>2</sup>

## 7/3 – Mimosa<sup>3</sup>

Thanks to our Canadian clients who talked us through the use of Clamato in not a Bloody Mary, as we suggested in our method for a good Bloody Mary, but rather a "Caesar." This week, the method for another Sunday Brunch classic, the Mimosa. The instructions for a Mimosa are as follows: "Could I have a Mimosa please? Thank you very much."

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1 The Sunday Sankey was/is a weekly publication for clients that was first sent out on a Sunday as a competitive way of gaining attention for our research when there was a tsunami of email traffic from competing Wall Street research shops, mostly banks. As oil analysts, we were facing some 30 rival active analysts publishing at times more than one note a day or more. Clients might get 300 emails in a day. We started to publish on a Sunday for two reasons. The first was that almost no research was sent on a Sunday, and we knew that clients had a nervous habit of checking for emails on their Blackberries, then iphones, then smartphones. The second was that Sunday is a day when many have to think about the week ahead, and many hedge funds may have a Sunday night call around to strategize for the week ahead. The note was designed in terms of its content to provide a weekly review and preview. However, the fact that it was/is sent on a Sunday, made me want to include some leisure aspect, and from nowhere, I recommended a drink, the Bloody Mary that became a weekly drink, and lasted for around a year. At that point I basically ran out of drinks. And that is this collection.

2 Randomly this a Jack Nicholson concept, from cult film *Easy Rider*, when the Nicholson character walks out of a police station in a white linen suit, takes out a bottle of whiskey and says by way of passing introduction to the two protagonists, Peter Fonda and Dennis Hopper "Here's the first of the day fellas to old DH Lawrence <slugs the pint> Yaaaaa nick nick nick ft ft ft (with arm gesture). Indians". The actual line I quoted just came off the top of my head re: Satan, indicating a strong drink.

3 The Sunday Sankey was written weekly and often very rushed, and the drinks and cover letter were the last thing written often on a Friday as we were desperate to get out of the office. As such, it could be pretty random. As people grew to comment positively on the weekly drinks, more effort was made, at times too much, but the first drinks were more or less throwaway comments. As the popularity grew, I never really got back to the spontaneous quick crazy drink suggestion that starts this compendium, like the Mimosa recipe. Didn't take long to write.

## 7/10 – Pimms

Our drink of the week is the British classic Pimms, which is about the softest and coolest way to get buzzed that there is. Look it was as designed by 150 years of Colonials getting buzzed. Take number 1 cup Pimms (the cup numbers depend on the base alcohol – in this case gin, it is a crazy mix of secret herbs) and admire that it is in production since 1823, the year in which an 11 year old Franz Liszt gave a concert after which he was personally congratulated by Beethoven. This is an old recipe, it must be good stuff.

Get a cucumber, a peach, strawberries, blackberries, anything berries, apple, and chop to around half an inch cubes. Shove in a huge jug. Cover the whole lot in Pimms. Get like just bushes and bushes of mint and break them and chop them and shove them in. Take a large quantity of ice and dump on top of it all. Then very carefully, judiciously, top off with fizzy lemonade, like any old nonsense, Sprite, whatever.

Take a big glass, like even a pint, and get ice, fruit pieces, Pimms and lemonade in there, and stroll holding the glass for several long minutes in the garden.

Finally, turn back towards the house, and say “I never could stand that dog.” Drink long and thoughtfully.

## 7/17 – New York Tap Water

Our drink of the week is awesome. After last week’s bizarre wander towards a glass of Pimms, this week, go teetotal. There is no finer drink in the world than New York City tap water.

There may be one city that rivals New York for the quality of its tap water, which would be Geneva, where the tap water has subsequently been branded Evian, an adjacent French town that got smart on marketing. New York should have branded Catskills direct long ago. I won’t bore you with the details, but the New York City water system makes Slate.com’s list of “Seven Wonders of the Modern World” It is that remarkable in terms of the outstanding, delicious, fresh water, that pours from NYC taps in abundance for almost no cost.

In London, looking at a glass of tap water, my daughter said to me, "this tastes strange." I said "I can say something that will ensure that you will never drink another glass of London tap water." My mother says "Don't!" I say "Every glass of water in London you drink has been drunk seven times before." Honor put the glass down, and I spent the next 3 days buying bottles of water.

How to drink NYC tap: best in a tall straight glass, lightly-chilled, with nothing else, no ice, no lemon, no lime, no aspartame. Keep it absolutely to itself, just take the warmth off, a jug in the fridge works really well, no Bud Lite mega-chill to trick taste buds here. Why do they keep fighting to tell you to keep that lite beer mega-chill??? Right. Try a lite beer at room temperature. NYC tap is just great at room temp, better lightly-chilled.

There are two things we can help you with, and life becomes a tiny bit easier and less costly. First, ALWAYS use regular gas, accept no higher priced trick blends (with the exception of a few very high performance vehicles). Second, in an NYC restaurant ask for tap water without ice. You'll get a fresh glass of one of the most remarkable engineering and social development projects in world history.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Curbed.com Have you ever wondered why New Yorkers are so snobbish about their pizza and bagels? The secret lies all in the water that makes the dough. New York City's tap water comes from three main sources outside of the city: the Delaware, Catskill, and Croton watersheds. These watersheds have limited limestone and a natural pH balance of 7.2—as close as it gets to a "pure water" pH balance of 7. It doesn't stop there. The water travels, using gravity alone, through aqueducts and a water treatment facility that uses UV radiation to kill bacteria. It's no wonder that tap water in New York has been described as the "champagne of drinking water."

Upstarter.com New York City's water has come a long way. It flows 145 miles from its furthest reservoir—Cannonsville, near the Northeastern corner of Pennsylvania—to Staten Island. It's also expanded from a few wells—at times carrying yellow fever, cholera, and typhoid—to one of the world's vastest and cleanest water supply systems. The city's water system was long racing to keep up with the demands of its mushrooming population. The first water shortage was reported in 1774, when the city had just 22,000 inhabitants. The first public well opened near Bowling Green in 1677, with more wells following on street corners. A reservoir was later made at Broadway and White Street and water pumped through hollow logs to distribute it, but with no sewer system, the water was notoriously fetid. A 1789 outbreak of yellow fever, one of several scourges attributed to the foul water supply, killed 2,000 New Yorkers, about six percent of the population. Five more major yellow fever epidemics and four cholera outbreaks followed. Ships traveling to New York carried enough water for the trip back as well, rather than fill up in the city. Regardless of the water's quality, there wasn't enough of it. By 1830, with reservoirs built out further and 40 miles of wooden pipes laid, the infrastructure still only served 60,000 of the then 200,000 Manhattanites. In 1842, a dam was built on the Croton River and an aqueduct laid into Manhattan, now known as the Old Croton Aqueduct, marking the birth of New York City's modern water system. Water quality improved, and service hasn't been interrupted for anything other than maintenance since the Croton Aqueduct opened, but shortages continued until 1890, when a second aqueduct was built from the Croton watershed. Shortages abated but new sources needed to be tapped to stay ahead of population growth. The Catskill aqueduct was opened in 1915, followed by the Delaware aqueduct in 1944, which was eventually extended with the reservoirs that still feed into it today. The city's expansion of its water system was often controversial. Following political maneuvering in the early 19th century, Columbia and Dutchess counties were bypassed, and the city's water was sourced entirely from the Hudson River's western bank. Planners tried to avoid building tunnels underneath the river, but eventually ran out of options and the Catskills had to be tapped. The Catskills line was built in 1915, crossing the river between Storm King and the West Point Military Academy, dipping 1,100 feet below sea level to pass underneath the base of Bear Mountain.

## 7/24 – Camel Milk/Kefir

Thanks to Chevron, I had the most memorably bad drink in my life in Kazakhstan, on their otherwise wickedly cool analyst trip to TengizChevroil.<sup>5</sup> Dark rumours suggest that a major investor has a shaky video of me and Ed Westlake Russian dancing together on a plane, but it has never been widely disseminated, our man is too classy. I suspect that Ed may have had one too many shandys (50-50 beer and lemonade). I am sure I was perfectly sober, although my memory of that flight as we left Atyrau is hazy.

The worst drink ever was camel milk, and I thoroughly suggest you do not have that as your Sunday libation. It is rank. Served warm and frothy, I assumed that my love of yoghurt, kefir, kombucha, and goat's cheese would combine into a life-enhancing rich and nourishing milk-of-life. Years later, watching Jerry Seinfeld at a charity gig, he was so funny I literally spat up my Diet Coke. There was nothing funny about Camel Milk, but I spat it up. The host thought it was pretty funny.

Suggested drink with brunch, to avoid alcohol, is kefir, it is a great way to start the day, maybe on cereal, maybe in a glass. Later in the day, kombucha – I like the ginger – also has highly beneficial properties, particularly for the stomach. They say the same about camel milk, but I'm never depriving a baby camel again.

## 7/31 – Rose

My sister tells the story of going to a college party, to be greeted by a young man carrying a bottle of white wine in one hand, a bottle of red in the other. He welcomes her thus: "Would you like a glass of red, a glass of white, or shall I mix you a rosé?"

Rosé is very much the swimwear of wine, everybody knows that it is only appropriate to drink it in three locations: by a swimming pool, on a yacht, or in Provence. Under no circumstances should it be taken anywhere else. By default it is purely a summer drink – none of the permitted locations are open in winter.

Ideally, you can perform the trifecta of drinking rosé in a swimming pool, on a yacht, in Provence. Then you MUST drink it. Interestingly, given the insane cost of performing such a trifecta, like swimwear compared to suits, Rosé is cheap. It does not last. If it is not chilled aggressively it is undrinkable. But by virtue of following the rules, you can be sure that rosé is the drink for the very best of times.

Recommended brands? Anything above \$10/bottle is great. There's a strong suspicion that all rosé is the same, it just comes in different labelled bottles. Certainly there is a Hamptons rosé that could strip varnish off a backyard deck. It sells out every year. As long as it's cold, enjoy!<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Covering Oil on Wall Street, one of the major companies to cover is Chevron. It is occasional for major companies to invite "the analyst community" to visit major projects that are key to the company. In this case, Chevron flew us on a requisitioned PGA tour very large private plane to Atyrau, a city that sits on the very border of Europe and Asia, at the North of the Caspian Sea. The wonder of these trips was to visit place that you would simply never under any circumstances visit. The Tengizchevroil field is a massive oil project that is enormous to Chevron's corporate value. The field was discovered from space by Soviet cosmonauts, and was by far the largest earliest investment by a major Western company in post Soviet USSR. At that point the land is so flat, that the Caspian tide runs for 10 miles inland and out, and therefore this is an area where very very few people live, and in fact giant Kazakhstan has one of the lowest population densities of any country in the world. The caviar is fantastic. The camel's milk, not so much.

<sup>6</sup> At the time, pre-divorce, I had a place in the Hamptons, and the cover photo is of me stepping into the pool of that lost wonder. The clients generally got the Hamptons joke, as far as I was concerned.

## 8/7 – Long Island Ice Tea

We've been pretty sensible with drinks recommendations recently, Rose, NY tap water, any milk but camel milk, but with vacation time starting, we thought we would step it up with a truly mad concoction that is suitable only for all day drinking summer parties where the speedy onset of slurred speech and hooded eyes will be masked by everyone else partaking and frolicking with lost inhibitions.

Be clear, if you ever drink one, or God forbid, two of these drinks anything more than exceptionally rarely, you have a problem.

It sounds by name, looks by serving, and tastes in the mouth, innocent. Yet it is the alcoholic equivalent of napalm.

It is, the Long Island Iced Tea. Be clear, this is more Ronkonkoma than Amagansett.

To cut to the point, the recipe is one shot of tequila, one shot of white rum, one shot of vodka, one shot of triple sec, one shot of cola, and half a shot of lime. Yep, five shots in one glass of 5/7ths of which strong alcohol, over ice in a tall glass.

It is dangerous, made worse by its benign name, appearance, and taste. It is better drunk standing up, as its effects can better be measured. Drinking two sitting down may result in "jelly legs". Enjoy as a "party starter"!

## 8/14 – Gin & Tonic

Our featured drink this week is the most requested drink we have received. The legendary gin and tonic, the very essence of the British Empire. As the son of a diplomat in the suffocating heat of East Africa, with a lazy fan failing to shift the soupy humidity and the setting sun descending below the yardarm, there was no finer drink, that could refresh, relax and re-invigorate. This was the beverage, as the Union flag was lowered and the pitch African night set in, that allowed you to exclaim "By George, Marcelin, that's a ruddy marvelous effort, what! I think you may almost have it right!"

Originated by the British East India company in the 1700s for its anti-malarial properties (it did not save me from malaria by the way), it was found that its two bitter ingredients combine into a quite different taste. Essentially the tonic was bitter with quinine, and so sugared, watered, and had gin, which was provided in rations to soldiers, added.

The ingredients are simple enough, but note according to Wikipedia: "The amount of gin varies according to taste. Suggested ratios of gin to tonic are 1:1, 1:2, 1:3, and 2:3." That is reminiscent of the Wood Mackenzie<sup>7</sup> travel to Asia game, which was played at the club class lounge of Edinburgh airport: how much gin can you get in a gin and tonic before it stops tasting like a gin and tonic? Stupid really, but we were young. Drink moderately.

One rant. The best modern gin and tonic uses Schweppes DIET tonic. This is not available in American bars, for no known good reason. American bar tenders will elaborately ask you your choice of vodka or gin - and then slosh some terrible high sugar gun blast of "tonic" (concentrate) into your "top shelf" choice. Strangely, DIET tonic is widely available in delis and supermarkets across the USA. But not in any bar.

So it is a drink I have occasionally, but always at home. I reckon 1:3 gin to tonic, plenty of ice, thick piece of lime squeezed and dropped in, and a truly colonial glass. Ideally you need the most expensive heaviest best quality crystal glass, possible. A massive tumbler with real weight. Lime is preferred to lemon and those who say it is served without ice are wrong. Enjoy!

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<sup>7</sup> Earlier in my career I was employed by Wood Mackenzie, a well-known Edinburgh-based global oil consultancy.

## 8/21 – Seagull Juice

It is mid-August, and so I am indulging my wander through suggested drinks with a longer recommendation, for the ladies.

We are overdue to cover a sub-category of one of the most staple summer drinks for any modern age working parent or married couple: this week's drink is Seagull Juice.

The overall category of drink under which Seagull Juice fits, is white wine, and more typically Chardonnay, and more typically California Chardonnay, and more typically priced \$12-\$20 bottle, and most typically taken by either partner during the working week, on returning home, from the local liquor store, for the nightly massive glass of cold white wine, served until the bottle is finished, and depending on the circumstances, each partner has drunk an entire bottle. And each partner is mildly buzzed and dehydrated, but relatively calmer.

For summer, I am talking about a different category of white wine. Being in a marriage raising three kids, the white wine ritual was well established. It became such a popular drink in Britain among the middle class, that on one occasion, UK Prime Minister John Major, possibly the only conservative Prime Minister ever not to have a college degree, was once asked what he wanted to drink and replied "A.B.C. Anything But Chardonnay."

But for late summer, I had purchased what had become known as Seagull Juice, a case of Ramey, an outstanding white wine from California. It is even difficult to pronounce, think gamey. So it appeals to the European wine snob in me. Despite the blatant fact that California top class wines are over-priced by stupid Wall St types buying them regardless of price, I had taken myself for a summer treat, an entire case of this stuff, currently priced at around \$50 a bottle, for an indulgent outlay of some \$600, not for the desperate work-week slug down, but for a really nice white wine to sip by the pool, and really take time over. The particular case, I remember was a great year, and was absolutely delicious chilled in a nice glass, for a <sigh> and a moment.

My sister Ann was visiting from Australia, a great lass, much missed since she went southern. My ex-wife was there. The lovely Irish Au Pair Alice was at home. I was in the city, but I headed out, as this was the good old days, on Thursday night.

I got there around 10pm, hot, tired, but happy to make it to East Hampton. The house was quiet, I went out the pool. As I opened the back door, there were crazed squawks and wails and cries of laughter at my very appearance. There was flapping hilarity and sobs of laughter. As I uneasily reached the table, I noted that two other ladies were in the flurry of feathers and general melee around the outside table - I found out subsequently they were Irish girlfriends of Alice.

There were empty Ramey bottles everywhere. I remember empties on their sides and wine spills and a smashed glass half tidied. And the cry went up "we need more white wine!!!!"

And hence, it became known, as Seagull Juice. It is a fantastic wine. Drink in moderation. Ramey California Chardonnay.

## 8/28 – Caipirinha

After the epic drone about Ramey Chardonnay last week, we can keep it short on the drink this week. With the end of the Rio Olympics, the summer drink is Caipirinha, a fantastic Brazilian drink that is absolutely excellent on the beach. My personal view, is that the drink should never be attempted at home, and the proof of this is that, bartenders hate making it as much as Mohito, because it involves fiddling with muddling limes and sugar, and ice, and if you get it wrong, the alcohol involved, cachaça, is a dreadful sugar cane fermentation that tastes almost as bad as camel milk when taken neat. On the very rare occasions I have messed with this dreadful stuff at home, I either end up with a teeth jarring lime coloured paint stripper, or a thick ooze of sugar that rots the teeth and causes your feet to go numb.

## 9/4 – L’espirit de l’escalier

This week’s long vacation week story/drink is “L’espirit de l’escalier”. It started with too much watermelon and ended in an ugly exchange of words in one of the most fashionable restaurants in Tribeca. So it comes to you with considerable emotion. The first challenge with too much watermelon. I bought the biggest watermelon in East Hampton and Cittarella sold it by weight - \$32. There are families that could get very rich selling \$32 watermelons, and I am sure the owner of Cittarella appreciates that.

Attempts to make a watermelon martini involved a lot of screwing around mashing watermelon, and a drink that was pretty poor. I realized that I have never had a good watermelon martini, and so I was struggling for a weekly drink. Watermelon as a huge glycemic index and mixed with alcohol could send a diabetic into toxic shock. So leave the watermelon to the kids.

At dinner, my companion ordered a Cosmopolitan, by this time, having shipped the damn enormous half watermelon back to the city, in a fashionable Tribeca bistro. I’m pondering the weekly drink, and thinking pink drinks. We noted that it was very pale for a Cosmopolitan, and not that good. Too sharp. Googling Cosmopolitan cocktail, I learned that the Cosmo is a 1970s drink that is based on the Kamikaze. A bartender in the MidWest - I think it was Milwaukee, could have been Minneapolis – added a splash of cranberry to a Kamikaze and the customer noted, “How very cosmopolitan” and thus the drink was born. There are other claimants to the original cocktail on Wikipedia but that is the best story. I like that story.

I commented to the waitress that the cosmopolitan was pale and not that pleasing, very politely. The waitress was a nervous girl, and in short shrift the strident, rather beautiful manageress appeared. I commented that the Cosmopolitan was pale and not that good, and she told me that this Bistro, was known to have INVENTED THE COSMOPOLITAN. The very place! They, she said, were said, to be the originators of the cosmopolitan.

You can take the analyst out of the bar, but you cannot take the bar out of the analyst, so I responded, with due fair disclosure that the source was Wikipedia – while holding up my phone – that in the multiple versions of the origin of the cosmopolitan, her highly priced bistro that serves steak and chips was not mentioned. I did not put it rudely. I did say that she could always write her own version of the origin of the cosmopolitan and save it to Wikipedia, given the bistro was totally not mentioned at all. This is how history is made! She excused herself, having delivered a Kamikaze. It was excellent.

We were eating late, Sunday night, and in due course I watched her go over to our new server, the original scared girl had gone, and say – lip reading – “Get that a\$hole out of here as soon as possible.” and then pointing over at your innocent oil/drinks analyst. Little did she know that I was watching like an eagle on an all-carrot diet.

We finished our meal with no dessert, and asked for the check, with the whole process being hovered over by a waiter that was clearly rushing us, but unaware of the Cosmo controversy.

“L’espirit de l’escalier” is a wonderful French phrase that represents the comments you should have made in a given stressful situation, but only realize you should have made as you walk down the stairs (escalier) having left the room, shut the door, and headed downstairs. I’m not sure what I should have said.

Kamikaze – 2 shots vodka, half shot of lime and half shot of triple sec to taste.

Cosmo – Add a splash of cranberry to a Kamikaze, again, all to taste.

## 9/11 – The Cream of Manchester

This week's Sunday drink is "The cream of Manchester."

Driving away last week after dropping my daughter Honor for her first day of college, my mind wandered back to my own first day at Manchester University, in 1985. Late in the process I had been accepted, possibly because my brother's best friend Layth Al-Noah, a local Iraqi youth (father exiled from Saddam), had made the brilliant decision to take me to the pub before my entrance interview, and followed it up by ordering two strong cider & Pernods, a drink, especially at lunchtime, that is right in the pantheon of idiotic beverages alongside the snakebite (half strong cider, half strong lager) and the snakebite and black (same but with a shot of blackcurrant cordial to make it a little more palatable). My performance in the interview was highly confident, even lively, and I got accepted. I just remember being asked to explain an exchange rate – I was applying for Modern History and Economics. It's much easier after one very strong drink.

Layth would subsequently introduce me to the local beer, Boddingtons, by taking me to the pub that served the cask ale the best, the Bee in Altrincham (Bees are Manchester's symbol, for their industry).

I reflected that Manchester when I arrived in 1985 was not long after the notorious Moss Side race riots, and had a distinct whiff in the air of still-smouldering tire. Yet my student accommodation, in the inner city where the riots occurred, was far superior to my daughter's dorm at NYU! Amazing, as I am pretty sure Manchester University was basically free. I am certain fees were not greater than \$5,000 per year. The same cannot be said of NYU.

It was in this industrial city, with its who-is-London swagger, that I discovered the magnificent culinary delight of chips with gravy, or for the more sophisticated, chips with curry sauce, and the finest beer in the world, namely Boddingtons, the cream of Manchester.

It rains ceaselessly in Manchester, as the city was built in a rain shadow behind where the Irish Sea hits the ancient Peninne low mountains, in order to power the watermills of this birthplace of the Industrial Revolution. The water is soft soft soft, soap and shampoo will not wash off. And the beer, is as soft and golden as Manchester is not. When I arrived, Manchester United were average and managed by "Big" Ron Atkinson, having not won the league for 20 years, and the true local favourite Manchester City had the look and playing style of a pub team. By all appearances the team was paid in meat pies and hot Bovril. City's squad was entirely British/Irish players, Man Utd was entirely British/Irish but for the mercurial Norwegian, Jesper Olsen.

It is with sadness that I read that the Boddingtons Stangeways brewery, also local in the inner city, has shut, and the beer is no longer available in cask. Smiths fans may get confused, the Manchester band's album "Strangeways here we come" refers to the notorious Strangeways prison, again in the same area, where they also had huge riots. Then, Strangeways sat between Moss Side, location of Manchester City's old stadium Maine Road, surrounded by brick terraced houses (where Morrissey grew up, Joy Division were formed to later rock the Hacienda, the lads from the Stone Roses wandered), and the notorious Hulme Crescents, known to be the worst public housing scheme in British history, built in 1972 and demolished as uninhabitable just 20 years later, it might have been the grimmest place I have ever been.

Aaah, those were the good old days.

The beer of this rainy, gritty city, was ironically celebrated in a famous series of ads, this is a couple of them, there are joking on the local "Manc" Lancashire accent, and the no-nonsense local people, who are magnificent. "Salt of the earth." Boddingtons remains by far my favourite beer.

## 9/18 – The Fibonacci

We continue with another drink, lending to the unfortunate impression that I spend the entirety of my free time surrounded by bottles of alcohol, in the effort to research a better Sunday drink for my clients.

Look, summer is not over until September is done. Only fools and horses work. It is the best month in the Hamptons. Here's one for all my clients, and lots of my former Wood Mac colleagues, who have freaking retired. Head to the Hamptons right now. It's the best time of year there. The working jerks have gone and the fish are arriving. This week's drink is the "The Fibonacci."

The Fibonacci Margarita opposes conventional wisdom that suggests a Gulf Coast 321<sup>8</sup> – Three shots tequila, two shots triple sec, one shot lime juice, represents the best, or at least most pure, Margarita.

Like the GC321 refining margin indicator, that is not a fully satisfactory recipe. In fact, make it like that, screw up your face and get heartburn. Unless you have the finest sipping tequila, in which case, probably don't mix it anyway. Ask for a Margarita mixed like that in a Midwest airport bar, and you will be in even worse shape than usual by the La Guardia scramble for a car "Where's my ride to end this now? PLEASE!" 10pm desperation run. You will be double-visioned with alcoholic pain.

Our drinks source, website Wikipedia – the "facts as you invent them" - that caused controversy with the Cosmo by not mentioning Odeon – see earlier Sunday Sankeys - gives "history". The site suggests that the Margarita was invented maybe by Carlos "Danny" Herrera, who first made this drink in 1938 outside Tijuana. There is little other substance. Or maybe that Hussong's Cantina in Ensenada made one in 1941 for Margarita, the daughter of the German Ambassador to Mexico (was she a Nazi?). Or possibly the first Margarita was made in 1942 by Tommy's Bar in El Paso-Juarez by Francisco "Pancho" Morales.

The best story according to Wikipedia is that Margarita was likely a Nazi. Or the daughter of one. Otherwise, if it was Pancho Morales, it's quite charming, Wikipedia reports that the alternate inventor had a further career despite coming up with one of the biggest drinks of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and beyond. "Morales later left bartending in Mexico to become a US citizen, where he worked as a milkman for 25 years." Let's just hope he never had to deliver any camel milk.

The story is reminiscent of the Mexican fisherman who discovered oil in his nets and urged the government to look into what became Cantarell, the largest oilfield ever discovered in the Western Hemisphere. He didn't make a lot from it either – got a tenure at Mexican State oil company Pemex and that was it.

Thankfully, your correspondent not only researched this issue, much as he has the relevance of the GC321 (which for all its faults basically predicts Valero's earnings) but also made a major mathematical application breakthrough that must have Fibonacci, Italian mathematician (1170-1250) slapping his forehead in his grave.

The Margarita should be made with 1 shot simple syrup, 2 shots lime, 3 shots of triple sec, and 5 shots of tequila, add 8 slices of lime and 13 ice cubes, for a jug. This recipe perfectly represents the Fibonacci ratio that we all know and love. It makes a great Margarita, after that naughty Nazi.

As I said, Fibonacci is slapping his forehead in his grave, this is a realisation. This is capture.<sup>9</sup> Yo Leonardo WOOT. Not so smart now right?

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<sup>8</sup> The Gulf Coast 321 is a standard refining margin measure. The 321 represents the price of 3 barrels of crude oil, subtracted from the price of 2 barrels of gasoline and 1 barrel of diesel. Very approximately, this represents the configuration of a classic refinery, taking 3 barrels of crude oil, boiling it, and producing 2 barrels of gasoline, and one of diesel. It is the standard refining margin for Wall Street oil analysts looking at prevailing refining industry profitability.

<sup>9</sup> We refer to a refiner's reported profitability per barrel refined vs the Gulf Coast 321 as "capture."

## Special edition 1/25/17: Irn Bru

Quotes of the Day: "Some hae meat an canna eat,/And some wad eat that want it; But we hae meat, and we can eat, And sae let the Lord be thankit." Selkirk Grace by Robbie Burns.

It would be remiss of a former Wood Mackenzie analyst based in Edinburgh for eight years, whose three children were born at the Simpson Memorial Hospital, not to recognize the 25th of January as Robert Burns birthday. The day is traditionally celebrated by Scots with a massive celebratory dinner (first dinner held in 1801

by friends of Burns five years after his death, the longest contiguous dinner also started in 1801, a month before Thomas Jefferson was elected President, and is still held annually to this day).

In the good old days, the Deutsche Bank Edinburgh office (DB at the time owned Wood Mac) would host a full formal Burns night dinner at the Caledonian Hotel, black tie or kilts formal, featuring the piping in guests, the Selkirk grace (above), welcome speech, soup, haggis, the address to the haggis, three more courses, toasts, the immortal memory speech for Burns, the address to the lassies, the reply to the laddies, and a vote of thanks to close.

It was a riotous evening, that started with pints of heavy (Scottish "bitter" beer, champagne, white wine, scotch whisky both in glasses and poured over the haggis, red wine, port with cheese, and whisky with cigars to close. The result was the worst of all hangovers, to be cured the next day with Irn Bru.

What is Irn Bru? It is a violently orange coloured Scottish fizzy soft drink that, legend has it, is "made from girders." Kind of a Doctor Pepper on the "what flavour is it?" spectrum, insofar as it has a unique, robust, metallic tang to the usual bubbling mouth feel of a carbonated drink. More importantly, it is approved by no less than the Scottish nation, as a hangover cure.

## 9/25 – Mother-in-law/La Belle Mere

This week's drink is the "mother-in-law." "La Belle mere." It is a beauty.

In 1990 I left college, like every college student ever, in a jobs recession. I ended up in Paris at the IEA because it was in Paris and tax free. (US citizens - not). So I was launched into oil.

By 1992 my girlfriend - later ex-wife - and I went on vacation to Bordeaux with her parents. Awkward. We visited a wine merchant in Saint-Émilion and tasted wine. They were showing the 1990. This was possibly the greatest year in the history of Bordeaux wines.

Winecellarinsider.com reports: "1990 Bordeaux wine remains one of the top vintages of the 20th century. All great Bordeaux vintages spring from hot years and the 1990 Bordeaux vintage was no exception. In fact, it was the second hottest year of the century. Only 1947 was warmer. 1990 also offered vintners more sunlight as well. The year was only surpassed by 1949 for the amount of sun the grapes received. Interestingly, 1990 set another second place record. It was the second wettest year on record for a hot vintage. Only 1989 surpassed it for rainfall."

At the tasting, there was a wine that was mind-glowingly good to my Boddingtons-trained palate. I agreed with the tasting guy that it stood out in the price range. I spoke a little French by then. He felt it was a wicked deal. He was enthusiastic.

Being English tourists, I believe the construct was that we would taste as many wines as possible and leave drunk having spent as little money as possible. But I declared I would buy a case of the Cos d'Estournel 1990. The price would be some 4,000 francs for the case. I guess that was around \$800 at the time. I reckon my monthly rent for a sixth floor walk-up apartment on the Place De La Sorbonne on the Left Bank was around 3,000 francs back then.

My mother-in-law was not thrilled by this idea. Indeed if the wine had come in cans we could have opened one with her face.

As we loaded the shameful case - how could we be so taken by a conniving trickster wine salesman! - not only had the wine tasting process immunized me to subservience to a holiday with the in-laws, furthermore I became repressedly furious that my mother-in-law could question not only my wine-tasting skills but also my very investment skills.

Sure we were living in sin in a tiny apartment for a monthly rent less than the case of wine! But did she not consider that this was a long term investment? That the price by 2016 of the same wine would be equivalent of 4,000 francs per bottle, and all we had to do was keep in the wine in its case? No brainer!

Was my mother in law seriously furious because she imagined this long-term investment was just some short-term booze thing? Did she seriously think we would take the case home and within three days, break it for one tasting bottle to highlight to a friend how amazing our long-term wine collection was? Was she seriously proposing that we would “tidy round down the case to ten bottles” in order to recheck the wine and ensure that the remaining ten bottles were worth keeping for the long-term? Was she implying that we would drink three bottles in a night at an impromptu wild party at our tiny top floor apartment that very summer? How mean could she be to think that this serious investment would be gone by the summers’ end?! The insult!

Au fut et a mesure...<sup>10</sup>

Postscript: for my 40th birthday in 2007 I bought tickets to the Rugby World Cup semi-final in Paris, even though the bracket clearly showed that we would be watching Australia vs New Zealand. By the Gods of Sport, England upset Australia, and France upset New Zealand, and so two friends and I watched England vs France in Paris in the Rugby World Cup semi-final, and England won. Fantastic. The night before, as a celebration, they took me to dinner at the Ritz. We drank a bottle of Cos d’Estournel 1990. I would guess the Ritz charged \$1,000 for the bottle, they paid so I do not know. It was fabulous - tasted just like excellent red wine.

One notable sensation I remember was a strong overtone of fresh cut grass, wonderfully evocative for an Englishman “à la recherche du temps perdu.”

It will be my 50th next year, and a bottle will be opened. It is a weak year for global sport, with only the Lions Tour of New Zealand to consider. Too far to go. But I am really looking forward to that Cos d’Estournel 1990.

## 10/2 – Arnold Palmer

This week's drink is one of the very few well-known drinks that are named unquestionably after one person. It is non-alcoholic, as regular reading clients have kindly expressed concern that I spend my life surrounded by broken cocktail glasses and empty wine bottles. That is only partly true, and to underline the point this week perhaps somewhat predictably, we have the “Arnie’s wife”, after the “mocktail” Arnold Palmer, named for the recently departed golf legend.

First mixed by his wife, arguably the drink was named not by Arnold Palmer, who liked the mix of iced tea and lemonade, but the woman in a golf club who heard him order the mix that he drank at home, and then asked for “an Arnold Palmer” as HER drink. Thus the name was born.

Strangely, the popular version of the drink – a “50-50” mix, that is also the blend shown on the cans of Arnold Palmer sold by Arizona Ice Tea, in partnership with Palmer, is not the mix Palmer liked. He clearly stated that the mix should be predominantly iced tea, with around 25%-30% lemonade. Given it was originally homemade, we think it should be natural unsweetened classic iced tea, combined with all-American homemade sugar + lemon juice lemonade.

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<sup>10</sup> Little by little in French, one of their phrases that are better than the English equivalent. I always felt that French was summed up by the advert for their State jackpot lottery: “100% des gagnants on tente leur chance.” Literally “100% of winners tried their luck”. At the same time, the UK Lottery slogan was “You got to be in it to win it.”

Arnold's golf record included 62 PGA titles and seven majors. By all accounts, the man, known in golf as "the King", was something special. Beyond being exceptional at golf, much of his popularity was his down to earth and modest personality. Born in 1929 in Latrobe, Pennsylvania, a working-class steel mill town, he learned golf from his father, a polio sufferer who was greens-keeper at Latrobe Country Club. Palmer attended Wake Forest College on a golf scholarship. He left upon the death of close friend Bud Worsham [in a car accident after a party that Palmer had randomly decided not to attend] and enlisted [in shock] to serve three years in the US Coast Guard, after which Palmer returned to college and competitive golf. In 1954, aged 25, he turned professional on winning the U.S. Amateur in Detroit, stopping the job he had at the time of selling paint. At his first tournament, the Waite Memorial tournament in Shawnee-on-Delaware, Pennsylvania, he met his future wife, Winifred Walzer, and they would remain married for 45 years, until her death in 1999.

She would mix the first Arnold Palmer, when it was called "Hey, babe, I've got an idea. You make the iced tea and make a big pitcher, and we'll just put a little lemonade in it and see how that works." – Arnold Palmer on ESPN 30-for-30 on the drink.

It is a 9 minute short: [Story of the Arnold Palmer](#)

Years later, Jay Leno asked Palmer about the legend of Johnny Carson and his wife: "'Leno: ... apparently Johnny said, 'Is there anything your wife does to bring you good luck?'"

Palmer: "No... Johnny said, 'Does your wife kiss your balls before you go to play?' and I said, 'I don't even go to bed without pajamas.'"

Much loved, and highly successful in business, not least from his Arizona Ice Tea partnership, Palmer was a humble man. Philly.com reports him saying:

"I was embarrassed to ask for an Arnold Palmer. I'd always say, "Can I have an iced tea and put about a third of it in lemonade." They said, "Oh, you want an Arnold Palmer!" I won't fight the battle anymore. I'll just ask for an Arnold Palmer [and] think maybe they won't know who I am."

Arnold Palmer died aged 87, September 25th this year. Here, Lee Trevino describes his last competitive round of golf.

### [Lee Trevino after dinner on Arnold Palmer](#)

There are few other famous drinks named for individuals. A Shirley Temple is named after the child star of the 1930s, who retired from films aged 22 and became a senior diplomat/Ambassador in her 40s. It is traditionally made with ginger ale, a splash of grenadine and garnished with a maraschino cherry. Modern Shirley Temple recipes substitute lemonade for ginger ale. The drink should be shocking pink and sweet as cotton candy. Served in sufficient quantities to children under the age of 10, it acts as a detonator for crazed behavior.

Wikipedia adds, that quite unlike the Arnold Palmer: "Temple herself was not a fan of the drink, as she told Scott Simon in an NPR interview in 1986: "The saccharine sweet, icky drink? Yes, well... those were created in the probably middle 1930s [when Temple was a 5 year old film star] by The Brown Derby Restaurant in Hollywood and I had nothing to do with it. But, all over the world, I am served that. People think it's funny. I hate them. Too sweet!"

Evidently adding an ounce and a half of vodka or rum produces a "Dirty Shirley", sounds abysmal.

By the same token, adding vodka to an Arnold Palmer gets you a John Daly. The John Daly seems to be quite well known.

Another "mocktail" named after a person is the Roy Rogers, but I barely know who he was – a cowboy of some sort - and the drink is Coca-Cola and grenadine, obviously, quite simply, repulsive.

## 10/9– Earl Gray Tea

I am beginning to feel the weight of expectations on this damn Sunday drink thing. Every client I see is like - “Hey! The drinks guy!”

A major UK hedge fund suggested that as the “drinks analyst” I should carry a flask of the drink of the week with me, so we could discuss and taste live. He reached out to me once over the past three months - he is a player in oil long/short in London<sup>11</sup>. Why? To recommend Fever Tree tonic as the solution to my NY tonic-from-a-gun woes. He strongly suggested Peroni as this

week’s drink. Talk about talking your book.

If it was one or two comments, sure, but every single meeting: “Hey the weekly drink guy! You should do Pimms!” I smile gamely, because we did Pimms like six weeks ago in mid-summer. Every meeting, I arrive on time with my oil presentation, and it’s “Hey! The weekly drink guy!”

Loyal readers may remember a Morning Sankey rant about the inability to get a decent cup of tea outside the UK. The issue is no-one boils the water. France, Europe, Brooklyn, you ask for a tea, they turn to the catering urn of hot water, pour it in a cold jug, and then seek and eventually drop a Lipton’s tea bag in. They may then serve with one of those little plastic containers of something that is white and “creamy.” Dreadful.

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<sup>11</sup> This was American Tiger Craft, one of my all-time favourite clients, then at hedge fund monster GLG in London

This week's drink is Earl Grey tea, which you make in a warmed pot, put in the tea, "one spoon per person and one for the pot." Hit with totally boiling water, it should be served in a porcelain cup with English whole milk which will be splashed in. Many will argue that milk goes in first or second. Some say, milk first to gently cook it. Others say that milk is only put in first by commoners to protect their cheap china from breaking with boiling tea, and second is the correct way. I go second, to judge a light splash to give me a perfect light brown. The little finger should not be raised when lifting the cup to the mouth. You can sip, and then exhale "ah... that's better" on drinking.<sup>12</sup>

According to Wikipedia: Earl Grey Tea is flavored with bergamot, which was used to imitate the more expensive types of Chinese tea, and has been known in England at least since the 1820s.

Bergamot is a citrus fruit the size of an orange, the color of a lemon, from which Bergamot oil is extracted. Excessive consumption of the fruit can be toxic.

Earl Grey is assumed to be named after Charles Grey, 2nd Earl Grey, British Prime Minister in the 1830s. According to one legend, a grateful Chinese mandarin whose son was rescued from drowning by one of Lord Grey's men first presented the blend to the Earl in 1803. The tale appears to be apocryphal, as Lord Grey never set foot in China and the use of bergamot oil to scent tea was then unknown in China. However, this tale is subsequently told (and slightly corrected) as on the Twinings website, as "having been presented by an envoy on his return from China". Jacksons of Piccadilly claim they originated Earl Grey's Tea, Lord Grey having given the recipe in 1830. According to Jacksons, the original recipe has been in constant production and has never left their hands. Theirs has been based on Chinese black tea since the beginning.

According to the Grey family, the tea was specially blended by a Chinese mandarin for Lord Grey, to suit the water at Howick Hall, the family seat in Northumberland, using bergamot in particular to offset the preponderance of lime in the local water. Lady Grey used it to entertain in London as a political hostess, and it proved so popular that she was asked if it could be sold to others, which is how Twinings came to market it as a brand.

A 2010 survey found that a significant minority of people in the United Kingdom associate drinking Earl Grey tea with being "posh" or upper class."

I love it in the afternoon, and in fact Starbucks makes a reasonable shot at it, although of course to serve it in a paper or plastic cup is deeply offensive. Should be in China.

## 10/16 – “Iron is good for you”

Amy Allen works here at Wolfe Research, and she told me she is going with a friend to Dublin this weekend, using Air BnB. There are many subjects for debate there, but those are for another day. I said, "Okay, I have the Sunday drink for you, Amy." As you read this, she is in Dublin.

In 1985 I had a severe fever at boarding school in North Yorkshire, and was confined to the infirmary – a separate house with a stark row of hospital beds, with the imposing Matron Houlahan (Irish Catholic clearly) who basically kept things clean but let me tough out the tough part of having a fever. I will spare you the details.

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<sup>12</sup> This was a family in-joke about my ex-mother in law. They – my in-laws in their 70s - had flown back from JFK to Manchester, always a tough ride, and one that starts with a tough ride from The Hamptons to JFK in summer, and were met by a standard mini-cab to drive all the way back from Manchester to the Lake District where they lived. The driver was the classic old English geezer. He first irritated her highly by having to stop the car at a service station "to make a pit stop, I'm desperate." But what truly appalled her was that only finally making his way back to get into the car, he sat down and said "Oorgh, that's better,"

In the depths of the several weeks I was sick, I remember that I did beg for lemonade and Ribena, to mix – Matron eventually had to reluctantly go five miles to local town Helmsley to get it - and that it tasted like the best thing I have ever tasted. White's Lemonade and classic Ribena. I needed it. I had been listening to my Walkman obsessively, to one song, Frankie Goes to Hollywood, "The Power of Love." And I was wasting away. And then of course my batteries died.

Eventually, somehow, I was sent 22 miles to York Hospital for a blood test to determine why I was so sick. The fever was really something. One way or another, I ended up on a train to London, with a bag packed by my roommate (I went direct from infirmary) headed to the London Hospital for Tropical Diseases.

I had contracted malaria during school vacation with my parents in Tanzania (where they still were), but got sick in North Yorkshire at my monastery boarding school, Ampleforth, where malaria is... er... less common. They barely have mosquitos on the Yorkshire Moors, they have midges which are infernal but essentially harmless.

Years after, Fergus Macleod, later Investor Relations and then head of strategy at BP, would interview me as then Wood Mac analyst, for a job on the Deutsche Bank European oil sellside oil research team that he headed. According to Extel, he was not only the number 1 ii- (equivalent) oil analyst in the City, he was also, the "analyst of analysts." That is, Extel then identified one analyst as best above all, and he would win it. "It was said" he had a sweet Porsche 911 turbo with a phat wing on the back, and legend has it, a bathroom in his Edinburgh townhouse with a mosaic of the BP and Shell logos, the two stocks he covered. But, this is unconfirmed and possibly apocryphal.

As a fairly standard interview question, he asked me what my "A-Levels" were, the English high school final diploma or SAT equivalent, I guess. I answered "Two B's a D and an E." (which are pretty terrible scores, and rightly spelled BBED). He grimaced, having studied at Cambridge; he cannot have had less than A's.

"But" I added, "I had malaria." Fergus threw his head back and roared with laughter, and we moved on. And so eventually I was hired to the sellside.

Anyway, I got to the Hospital for Tropical Diseases, right by Kings Cross, the station that took us to and from our boarding school in York/Yorkshire (and subsequently did the very same for Harry Potter). Before they put me in bed on a quinine drip, the nurse asked me if I had sent the ambulance away. "I came by train and walked from Kings Cross", said this young man, wasted by fever. The nurse was amazed, but things were different "in those days."

Speaking of tough times, I might add that on my first night in hospital on the drip, another patient died of cerebral malaria. That is the one, as you can tell, you really do NOT want. Also, don't take Lariam to get past malaria, I went bat shut crazy in Borneo on that stuff years later. We used Chloroquine and I had forgotten one week to take my tablet, like any teenager. That did for me.

My Ampleforth College roommate had packed me a Hawaiian shirt, a pair of chinos that barely reached my ankles, a pair of plastic shoes that my Dad had inexplicably bought me once, and a toothbrush. Excellent gag, Shane O'Connor. Later in NHS hospital, dressed this way, I was paraded in front of a lecture hall full of students as part of the teaching mandate. When asked by the professor what the students observed about my appearance the first answer was not the correct "Severely underweight and evident anaemia" – clear evidence of malaria - but rather "He is wearing a Hawaiian shirt in February in London" to much hilarity. Excellent gag, Shane O'Connor.

Either way, to cut a long story short, on release from hospital, the Doctor told me that the anaemia would only be reduced by consuming as much iron as possible. In fact, I would have malaria in small part of the rest of my life, never donate blood, and it would take a long time to get back to less thin and pale. However, I should eat red meat, and especially liver (which I detested based on my experiences of boarding school canteen liver, which looked like a giant dead slug, had the consistency of rubber, and smelled worse than a burning tyre), eggs, spinach... and he paused and looked me up and down aged 17, and ended thus, behind his authoritative gaze: "And drink Guinness." Doctor's orders.

## 10/23 – American stadium beer

The great American sporting events involve American beer, and there is no way around it. It is not good, it is not pleasant, it makes you need – absolutely - to join a huge line at half-time. But, you know, here is to the great sporting circus that USA provides, at Ball Parks, Football Stadiums, Hockey Arenas, and Basketball Halls (?). For a great entertainment event, nothing beats live big US sports.

The prices are insane. Perhaps not quite cinema popcorn quality, but certainly shameless – take my money this is a blast! Yay the insanely loud rap music interjections! Boo the opposition! Yay our hometown multi-millionaires! God bless FREEDOM the national anthem! The kick-off tip-off first pitch yahoo! TV timeout.

Are we on the cam? Jump and scream waving arms like idiots for a cheap t-shirt blasted by a failed jock! Awesome, a trivia question on the big screen! REFEREE YOU SUCK! Lets go.. whoever! Lets go... whoever!

The menu will be as follows: nachos, hot dog, chicken fingers, a burger that will in due course produce a filthy odiferous belch that will briefly fill the enormous arena, everything with fries, probably waffle. We had some terrible specialty of crab fries at the Phillies which was fries covered in “Old Bay” which I thought was a 1970s aftershave and might as well have been. The Knicks have a pastrami sandwich, but it is not served one day a week, which is always the day I am there. Food at the Yankees is abysmal – I have been to public park kids parties with better-made food. That queso stuff is just a horrible insult to multiple nations that have worked hard at perfecting cheese over many generations – and this is where you take it? Let me eat an entire bag of unshelled peanuts – why unshelled? So you can make an insane mess and walk away! This is not home! Cotton candy for \$12! Great for the kids! I have dropped \$32 on four “Italian ices” and been thrilled for the little ones.

The whole thing is great fun, and what better to round it out, than a really bad weak and tasteless beer, served really cold that heats up to flat and tepid after the first tentative sip. Slugging the beer adds an important and awful gaseous volume to the terrible belch that is locked in by folding the burger rapidly into your mouth to finish asap, to protect your clothes from balancing a cardboard tray covered in small open containers of ketchup and mustard. Cheese burger of course – they somehow slice that queso as an alternate product to the melted sludge version. I always claim to the kids it comes out of the back of a refinery, as a co-product. Because it pretty much does.

My most joyous ball park beer moment came the one time we got into a fight. A major Boston client, a legend, had told me “let’s go and see the Celtics.” I showed up at dinner for the big game, and he said “where are the tickets?” I was like “I thought YOU invited ME?” He was spluttering with laughter and incredulity, that a broker could be so stupid, so misguided!

This wonderful client – and I mean that - had been on the cover of *ii* magazine as “Best of the Buy Side.” Realising the horror of my assumption, I hustled some absolute last minute seats for us, from a ticket broker by the ground. Total backpage.com job.

Three of us ended up in the nosebleed seats, wearing suits, among hardcore Celtics fans. A man who looked like a recent prison release and his clearly dangerous – sassy does not do it justice – girlfriend were in our seats... so we sat in someone else’s seats... then they came and we had to evict the dangerous guys... it was all a mess, played out in the steep and vertiginous top section of Boston Gaaarden.

We needed to plough into the beers to enjoy this. When in Rome, do as the Romans, (*alia jacta est*), as they say.

Over time, it was clear the crowd around us did not appreciate our erudite game commentary, particularly as Denis loudly declared shortly into the second half, as Lebron splashed – splashed - a mid range leap back jump shot to the silenced crowd, “That’s it. The Heat are going to win.”

It was a tight game at the time, but inexorably the Heat beat down the Celtics, and Denis would not leave it alone. He kept claiming credit for calling the game, repeating with every move ahead “see I told you they were gonna win” while maintaining a loud complaint to the second

guy that took back his seats, that just because he had said to him “wait while we get back our seats, dude,” did not justify, the guy’s back comment, “Hey, you’re too old to call me dude.” “Too old to be a dude” was Denis’s second infuriating refrain.

I was deeply concerned about Denis’ agitation of the surrounding crowd. Mega-Client X had been sitting quietly to my right. Suddenly with 2 minutes to go, another hooligan right behind us absolutely lost it with Mr. X “I am going to kill you @\$#@ I want you in the car park come to the car park I will @\$#@ you up” like on and on and on, in right in his face.

I assumed he was about to attack us, all of two feet from his spitting invective, but he just abused Mr. X and us pretty much nose-to-nose. But no punch was thrown, I was later told because if you fight in these arenas as a season ticket holder, you can get banned for life. Hence his offer to discuss things in the car park.

I had had enough – I said “Guys let’s go” and we stood up as one. As I moved in front of freaking out all-mouth Ratty O’Rat, I could not control my peaceable self. As we pushed away, holding my plastic pint of American beer in my weak right hand, I shoved him hard in the shoulder with my left, and said back to his nasty face “You are a stupid @\$#@ing @\$#” but in the same motion, involuntarily dumped the entirety of my right hand beer backwards over the two guys in the row in front.

The zone exploded. I had soaked two people in front of us who naturally went crazy. But we had momentum, and as everyone stood, we barged through the crowd, crossing the security that were already rushing to intervene.

We broke into a run, and kept going until we were safe in a bar a good couple of blocks outside the stadium.

“X, what the hell happened? What went down with that guy?”

“I feel terrible,” he said, “that that guy’s girlfriend kept abusing Denis, and eventually I turned around and told her ‘Shut up with the abuse you @\$#@ @\$#@.’ And that’s why he went mad. But I feel terrible. My daughter is gay, and I should never have used those words.”

American stadium beer, bringing out the best in fans across the USA.

## 10/30 – The Pope’s Own

Last week’s story – Ball Park Beer - was very well received, and I was particularly touched that one of the main protagonists of last week’s paean to US live sports, namely Denis, was forwarded the email and thanked me for giving him a good laugh at the end of what had personally been very tough for him, with the passing of his father. So, emboldened, this week’s drink is “The Pope’s own.”

Halloween, the eve of All Saints’ Day – a holy day of obligation in the Catholic church - is widely seen as a Celtic ritual that was part of a general adoption, probably in Ireland, of formerly pagan rituals into the Christian calendar.

Being English, and then only really reaching these shores in 2004, I do not have a deep Halloween history. We did not used to celebrate it, certainly not in the US sense. I do remember a night around 1992 in Paris with American visitors, when Tony “the Madman” Mara arrived dressed as a lumberjack with an absolutely enormous fur hat that had massive fur side flaps that ludicrously extended out directly sideways, and swung crazily with his head movements. It was more fun, that almost no-one in Paris in 1992 was celebrating Halloween, bar the odd clumps of Americans in “fancy dress.” What made it so memorable was that mid-way through the evening, the Madman shed his entire outfit, in a bar, and emerged underneath fully dressed as a surgeon in green with stethoscope, retaining his lumberjack’s plastic saw. By the time we left the bar he was a surgeon in a ludicrous lumberjack hat. With a saw.

We did of course celebrate with the kids’ schools over the years here in the West Village. One of my favourite memories is of a father called Guy, a fashion designer who was rather camp in a metrosexual way, and who was working the Halloween dance bar at the kids’ school dance. He had dressed perfectly as a biker, the whole bit, with leather studded vest, fake arm tattoos etc. Another father, a famous English film director, walked in, stood next to me, took in the scene, turned to me and said “Ah, it’s good to see that Guy has finally come out of closet.”

I really only have one great Halloween family costume story that comes to mind, which is that in **2013** my son Max dressed up in the most ludicrous costume imaginable. He is into politics, and he made his own costume, with his own campaign badge, suit and red tie, and crazy wig.

He was, “Donald Trump for President.” Boy did we laugh at that one.

So Halloween for me is not greatly celebrated. Rather, we would host a party the following weekend around November 5th for the British tradition of Guy Fawkes’ night, now well recognized as the masked figure of “anonymous” internet fame. Fawkes was a Catholic who was busted attempting to blow up the Houses of Parliament in 1605. It was great to have a traditional party the weekend AFTER Halloween, November 5th is the day. Tradition dictates that kids make a dummy life-sized figure, known as a Guy, and then beg “A penny for the Guy” in the streets of British cities. In inner city Manchester, it was a fine excuse for what amounted to petty mugging with threats.

On the evening of November 5th, a bonfire is built, fireworks are let off, and the Guy is burned on the bonfire. In certain places where sectarianism runs a little more curdled, for good measure an effigy of the Pope is also burned. I would always confuse my guests in East Hampton who were charmed by our traditional celebration, by letting them know that I was hosting a party which would feature the burning of the Guy, but that I was always a little uneasy about it, as an English Catholic, to have a party where we would be burn an English Catholic. Indeed we would stand in a group chanting “Remember, remember, the 5th of November, gunpowder, treason and plot! I see no reason, why gunpowder treason, should EVER be forgot!” while burning an English Catholic effigy of Guy Fawkes – it is quite disturbing at a given point, to have the human figure on there, but the kids LOVED IT. It was... PAGAN.

The Yankee guests loved the traditional Shepherd’s pie (that is, made with lamb and mashed potato topping) that was served, home-made, in huge steaming trays, sausage rolls, there would be large quantities of crusty garlic bread fresh from the oven, steamed greens, and a fantastic cheese board which should include Cheddar, Stilton, and of course the French stuff. And there should be toffee, for those who wish to remove a dental filling without visiting a dentist. Alternately you can break a tooth on a “toffee apple” which typically has the mouthfeel of a Russian hand grenade covered in fly paper.

Now of course, you talk of French wine, the wines of Bordeaux, but it is historically accepted that the first great buyers of Bordeaux wine, as far back as 1200, were the British. The great Bordeaux collectors of the 1800s, were British aristocrats. Basically you can thank us Brits for the popularity of French wine. By the same token, no Bordeaux vine would survive today but for Americans. “From 1875–1892 almost all Bordeaux vineyards were ruined by Phylloxera infestations. The region's wine industry was rescued by grafting native vines on to pest-resistant American rootstock.”

One of the reasons we Brits love French wine, is that English wine could strip the rust off a Bombay freighter. In bearing with tradition, I would serve an absolutely excellent large format bottle of French red wine for all to imbibe. These are the kind favoured by the late Aubrey McClendon<sup>13</sup>, and the double Magnum – a 3 litre bottle – is ideal for a large party. I systematically found over a few years, the better the wine I served, the more people arrived with excellent bottles of wine. So I would kind of swap a very expensive double Magnum for a range of individual bottles. Although the parties were pretty wild, so we got through a few of those too, I still came out a net winner as wealthy parents arrived with wine that would not embarrass them vs my luxury offering.

Red wine, I believe, ages better in the larger bottle, and is easier to keep, as you cannot chip away at a case, like we did in a previous story about a case of Saint-Emilion that was allowed to age for all of 2 months after I bought it, drinking it away bottle by bottle. Even an idiot like me would only open a huge bottle of excellent wine for a very special occasion, such as All Hallows’ Eve, or the celebration of the preservation of British democracy.

The particular wine I do remember serving was a double magnum of Domaine Les Cailloux’s 2005 Chateauneuf du Pape. For “CNdP” 2005 was an absolute outstanding year. The wine is absolutely delicious. Pedantic readers will observe it is not a Bordeaux, and you are correct, it is a Rhone. Linguists will note that as the Pope’s Chateau wine from Roman vineyards, the Brits had nothing to do with it. True. But it is that bit lighter for the longer evening of drinking. There is bad news and good news. I see that over five years later, it is now \$100/bottle just for 750ml.

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<sup>13</sup> Aubrey McClendon was a legendary oil man – more correctly gas man – who co-founded Chesapeake Energy and rode the natural gas price boom of the 2000s to billionairehood. He did not so much live large, as live huge, not least as a tall man, but as one who was famously generous and spendthrift. By the time he stepped away from Chesapeake as Chairman, the company was the second largest natural gas producer in the US after ExxonMobil, but he had become embroiled in controversy over his borrowing from the company, treatment of it as a personal vehicle, and lavish spending, including on a notorious map collection and wine collection. He had moved the Seattle Supersonics NBA team to Oklahoma, home of Chesapeake, during his run. A day after he was indicted on federal charges of anti-trust violations, McClendon died in a solo-occupant, single-vehicle crash at 9:12 a.m. on March 2, 2016. According to police reports, he died instantly when his 2013 Chevrolet Tahoe SUV traveled over the speed limit and crashed into a concrete viaduct under a bridge on Midwest Boulevard in Oklahoma City. He was not wearing a seatbelt. He was a truly memorable and generous man, swashbuckling and charismatic. May he rest in peace.

The good news? Robert Parker writes “One of my favorite producers, Domaine Les Cailloux’s 2005 Châteauneuf du Pape is a terrific effort that’s hard to resist today. Checking in as a blend of 70% Grenache, 17% Mourvèdre, 10% Syrah and the rest Cinsault, aged mostly in tank, it gives up a ripe, sexy and medium to full-bodied style to go with classic red and black raspberry fruit, garrigue, pepper and spice. Drink this beauty over the coming 4-6 years, although there’s no need to delay gratification. (2/2015)”

So, DO NOT DRINK U.S. STADIUM BEER AT A KIDS’ PARTY IT WILL END LIKE A SCENE FROM CHUCK E CHEESE DOWNTOWN BROOKLYN. Rather, sip the Pope’s own Castle wine, while reflecting on pagan rituals, kids burning effigies, and the victory of democracy. For kids weekday daytime parties, I always served champagne. Nobody ever objected to that.

## 11/6 – The Who Cares Martini

I don’t think I ever drank a Martini before I got to New York. But, this is what the drinker in Manhattan has after a hard day’s work in the city, especially when you get to my age, where just looking at a beer adds an inch to your waist. I go into Halloween weekend and come out visibly bigger, and I hardly eat any candy.

We moved from Edinburgh to NYC, after having lived there for eight years. Asking an Edinburgh barman for a martini after work... things have changed, but I am talking fifteen years ago, he might look at you hard, and tell you “What the @#\* are ye talking about ye daft @\$%?”

Literally, it can be hard for Americans, getting service in Scotland. Not at the big five star places, but the casual walk-around “let’s try this bar” can end badly. This is far more dangerous than the very occasional American tourist when I lived in Paris who would try to call the waiter “garçon.” Not a good idea. The first time I walked into a pub in Leith, the port city that abuts Edinburgh, where Wood Mackenzie had provided us temporary accommodation, I walked in the front door and just kept walking right through and out the back door, in terror at the palpable danger to an Englishman from the baying crowd of drunken underclass. The place was packed and everyone was yelling at each other, seemingly about to fight. It was 7pm. A taxi driver later told me there had been a murder there recently, or “It was more an unlucky punch, ken, Big Man?”

Back then after work it was a beer choice of “heavy” or “lager”, by the pint. “Heavy” is the Scottish for “bitter”, or more traditional British cask ale. I remember one Friday 5pm, when as a given just about everyone at Wood Mackenzie went to the Drum & Monkey, there was suddenly new management and... no beer on tap. No beer? We literally had no idea what to order. We solved it by going en masse round the corner to The Cambridge Arms. Because we weren’t about to drink beer from bottles or cans.

Another reason you would not order a martini in the UK is that UK hard liquor shots better not be spilled, because they are tiny. And expensive. I remember a UK shot is 1/8th of a gill, and although I do not know exactly what that quantity is to post-Victorians, it is not large. You cannot make a NY martini from 1/8th of a gill, believe me. The 1/8th of a gill Martini is basically what you spill trying to get the New York martini to your mouth for the first sip after a long hard day of work.

The best bars in NY measure a shot by eye. Based on the size of the glass. And no NYC bartenders, nor waiters nor taco chefs, blink, when you ask for a specific variation. If you go into a UK restaurant and ask for the Salad Nicoise, but no potatoes, rare tuna, with extra anchovies, and just lemon juice not vinaigrette, they will hate you. Hate you. Let alone the order I learned as my Sunday breakfast go-to in New York: “an everything flagel, lightly toasted, with a schmear of scallion cream cheese, lox, but half on it, half on the side, to go”. They will not blink. In Scotland, believe me, back when I was there, ordering that in a breakfast place might cause an abusive exchange of words, from both server and the other customers.

The point is, you cannot walk into an Edinburgh bar after work and order a dirty martini, straight up, with a twist, etc, But in NY, when I drift into a drink after work, it will be “A Gibson Martini, straight up, top shelf vodka, with a dash of Vermouth. Thanks.” At the Grand Central bar that is one very occasional stop (it is way too crowded typically), and some other places, they give you the individual cocktail shaker, to top up your first half a drink.

Over time I have changed my order, away from dirty straight up, to a vodka Gibson (ie it has cocktail onions not olives or a lemon twist), with a dash of vermouth. Vermouth is key for me, who could possibly drink straight vodka! Tch tch tch. It does not matter if it is shaken or stirred, that only applies to Gin. British theory is that if you shake Gin you “bruise it” and affect the taste. Something to do with Juniper berries from which it is made. With vodka, you can shake it, stir throw it on the floor, and run it through a car engine, and it basically all tastes the same. Hence the vermouth, the onions, and the deep chill. Because when it comes down to it, vodka is simply pure alcohol/ethanol. An oil client once told me he went to visit a Midwest ethanol plant when GW Bush mandated that 10% of US gasoline be ethanol. They walked into the giant production facility, and in huge red letters on the side of a huge ethanol storage tank it read: “Smirnoff”.

## 11/13 – Office Coffee

I cannot stand flavoured coffee so you can forget spiced pumpkin latte. I was once marketing in Boston from Europe with jet lag, exhausted, back at the top of the market around 2000. Typically, we would hit Boston after two full NY days marketing, and right by the South Station I was put in a windowless office for my first meeting, entirely lit by fluorescent strip lights. I felt like I was about to be torture-interrogated.

I was. The client, a classic Boston long only in his mid 50s, more bureaucrat than market titan, with the chinos that “manage to be both too big and too small” – i.e., cut to fit a massive-middle-aged-middle-American waist, then pleated to add yet more cloth and waist inches, yet somehow fully 3” short in length, sailing far above the Clarks “carpet creeper” plastic-rubber-looking shoes. White shirt, possibly short sleeved with pens in top pocket. Earnest questions on all the usual subjects. Back then it was all about natgas and Enron winning. I was pushing BP for its Gulf of Mexico premium position (lesson in Net Asset Value right there, “3 Gs of risk”<sup>14</sup>) The client had a half-patient-smile to my hilarious jokes, which I heroically made despite the raging desire to run from the room and just keep running.

He had sat down, and placed a large white paper cup of vanilla-flavoured office canteen coffee, obviously heavily sugared, and generously whitened to abysmal grey by that dreaded substance, “half and half”, that added a sickening thickness to the odour of the coffee, right by my face.

Over the course of the hour, as we ground through the presentation, the appalling fake-vanilla nauseating smell of that wafting coffee, whitened by the fluorescent light, was indeed pure torture. To this day all the flavoured coffees repulse me. As they would any Italian. And I am English.

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<sup>14</sup> This is a reference to me pushing BP on a Gulf of Mexico position that would yield the Macondo oil disaster for investors, ten years later, the single biggest value-destructive event in global corporate oil history.

Long since, I told my kids, Starbucks is an ice-cream shop in disguise. To this day, in New York at work-a-day I only drink either large Americano, or large iced Americano. I just ask for a large black coffee with ice, no sweetener. All year. Coffee is said to be the one drug to which you can shamelessly confess addiction, and no-one blinks. This is like a light habit. I never drink coffee after lunch, unless espresso after a meal.

The whole US coffee construct as I know it, is work-a-day. I guess some buy for the train from Connecticut, I don't see anyone really drinking on the subway, but I guess when they do, it is from a combat receptacle, because you do not want to take a large cup of coffee in a paper cup on a subway commute in NY at primetime. I stopped taking the 4-5 train to work from BK because people were beating each other's asses on the morning commute, pretty regularly. Too many people, not enough room on the 4-5. You cannot carry a coffee into that unless you go pro cup.

Forbes.com: *"A new study conducted by Canada's University of Waterloo discovered a direct link between commute time and well-being. The findings, which were published in World Leisure Journal, conclude that people with the longest commutes have the lowest overall satisfaction with life."*

University of Waterloo? *World Leisure Journal*? Sounds about right. Do with it what you want, there is only one true office coffee. You can only get it in Milan.

Although! It is available across Continental Europe. But, to be true to the drink, you have to go to the birthplace of western coffee, Italy. Imported to Italy by Marco Polo's friend and closest advisor, somebody bought it in from Yemen, to Italy.

And to truly be in Italy doing this job, you are in Milano. Milano is the modern Italy. Roma, of course, Francesco Totti. Venice, we know, has passed, but we hope to preserve. Firenze, we have seen. But real Italy for the global stock analyst, is Milano. They have models and guys in super suits. With supreme shoes. And they have Il Duomo.

The true office coffee, not the US version, starts in Milan. If I love Manchester, I love Milan. It has exactly the same commercial characteristics. The English say Milan, and remind you that the major soccer team is called "AC Milan" because the English started that club. But, like Man City in Manchester, locals support the other great soccer team, Inter Milan. Strange they also use the English name for their city team. Just sayin'. We English let soccer get corrupted because we were not corrupt. But at least they kept our names.

You have flown into Malpensa – a 70's concrete behemoth of a movie throwback airport – it feels like Michael Caine and Sophia Loren just checked in. As a trans-continental arrival, you feel like Hannibal's elephant dung. You have to negotiate an "Italian" taxi driver down an Italian autostrada "freeway" which is Mario Kart, but playing for real lives, with roadworks as the swerves, in grey weather, because Milan is like Manchester, weather-wise, for geo-physical reasons – it sits behind the Alps. Your driver is a typically unfriendly (probably Albanian) driving a Fiat as if a Ferrari. There is an air of direct personal risk from his driving, and worse, questioning his driving. He thinks he speaks English, but you wish you carried a knife. But then, you hit the center of town, bounce over some cobbles, and you arrive at a classic Milan hotel, for no sleep and an exhausting start to a long day with borderline hysterical (by US standards) clients.

So, in the birthplace of office coffee, it is imperative that you drink some coffee before you go out to work. Drop the bags after check-in, and head out. Meet the local Italian salesman, driving a Fiat. First stop, a bar. You immediately belly up to the zinc counter, that is buzzing with people trying to get buzzed on coffee because these people have to get on, but there is one thing to deal with first. Coffee is imperative, Chatting to the salesman about family (soccer will come shortly), you stand at the bar with confidence, you need space but will not be there long.

I remember a salesman once telling me that the Italian defense was great, but the Italian midfield were "chimpanzees but they have feet like bananas." It's Italy. You will start using your hands as you talk. You order "un caffè," Are you going to ask for a Venti maracaibo frappuccino nosferatu with lentil milk and... NO! Just ask for "un caffè" in the morning in Italy! Otherwise a disaster!

And you hit it like a shot. Never touch the lemon peel, it is a trick to see if you are a lemon, but you can dip the biscotti. You order the second – because you are having a double espresso. The correct double espresso in Italy is two back-to-back – otherwise you lose the freshness and natural creaminess of pure coffee.

You pay cash with a Euro for the bartender and say "Ecco! Mille Grazie, Grazie Mille! Forza il Papa! In bocca al lupo!" And, acting more crazy than a local, you hit the day.

No better coffee than at the counter in Milan – Milano - before work.

## 11/20 – Port in a Storm

This week's drink is "Port in a storm". Be warned this is a long, stream of consciousness, and may not make any sense.

Time flies at this time of year - crazy. I remember being in a teenager in boarding school and counting down days to going home, and time would just stop. Just stop. You could watch that moment when the second hand just stops on a clock, before knocking forward, and it took an hour. For a second. And a second closer to getting out.

As time passes, I find Labor Day to Christmas to last like 10 minutes, the second hand spins. So Thanksgiving already. As Einstein said about relativity: "Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results."\*

A casual forward looking comment in last week's Morning Sankey provoked a response from a IR at a major Houston company that he forwarded internally and cc'ed our team:

*"In my opinion this is the true quote of the day, from Paul Sankey in his daily periodical:*

*"Next week will be spent in the UK for Thanksgiving. There is no Thanksgiving in the UK."*

Obviously "I could care less" as is bizarrely said in the USA to mean "I could NOT care less" about Thanksgiving, being English, with literally zero family in the US apart from my ex-wife and kids. Pretty much zero other family. There is an aunt somehow second removed on my ex-wife's side, but let's say the kids are neutral on her. And she's not MY aunt.

I will take the liberty of some advice. From the age of zero, you and to others, treat people like equals. Speak to them like equals. Don't go down the goo-goo gaga route, and don't feel that you can randomly tell a kid or an adult what they should be doing because you are who you are, when you are not their mother. Fathers are not mothers. There is a great US line, "opinions are like a\$\$holes, everybody has one" – you got it. Incredible how often relative strangers wander in, often who have no kids, and think they are Einstein mixed with Supernanny. "If I want your advice, I will get a good lawyer." Kids should be taught to say it. Also refer to my earlier story about what Freddie Mercury's aunt told me as a teenager in Zanzibar. That advice, I appreciated.<sup>15</sup>

See? Thanksgiving has triggered me. It have years of bemused observing of this deeply ironic celebration. The irony is, as for US citizens who are anti-immigration. Huh? Ironic too in that theme that I think the only US population group that does not celebrate Thanksgiving per se is native Americans.

But the IR feedback suddenly made me realise, that like the recent election, half the people involved HATE this thing. It may in fact be that a majority of Americans hate Thanksgiving. Thankfully I have come to realise this. Rather than get triggered again, I need a safe space. So I head to London.

When we did stay for Thanksgiving in the US, as a family we kept it direct parent-child and nobody else. We went to Quality Meats in Midtown for a restaurant meal. So good. No dishes to clean. No stupid mucking around flailing, cooking all sorts of excessive nonsense. Walk in, choose a drink, choose to eat. Full? No thanks on dessert. Pay; walk away. No random family, no bitterness, no screaming rows.

For you Americans who continue to repeat the same insanity, there is the well-known out. You eat a massive meal, ziggling when everyone is ziggling by eating a Turkey. By the way, the Presidential Pardon of the turkey is another head-slapping moment. I guess "The Donald" will do it too, probably excellently. Who knows how the Donald's Presidency will go? We can but hope. He will surely nail some things, and the Presidential pardon of the freaking Turkey on Thanksgiving might just be one of them. Turkey Lobby? Massive. Persuade the President to pardon one so we all feel better about battery-farming turkeys for one insane moment of battery farm turkey sales? I have to get out of here!

So, you day-drink copiously, eat a colossal turkey that never got to even stand up, makes little sense to eat because it is not that good. Have two types of potato... hey.. six types of carb which drives me nuts – why so much? (One great thing about flying club class to London, is the warmed nuts in little bowls... so good. High protein, seeing as you are cooking everything in the world for lunch, offer some hot nuts before the meal with champagne cocktails, excellent).

You eat pumpkin pie which is horrible, I have never had a good one, and you head to the sofa to lay back, watch "football", and you mumble some comment about "Hey darling, hey guys! I'll do that clearing up, just give me a moment". Slump back, watch one play, and then uncontrollably fall into a deep sleep, to wake, disoriented and dehydrated, to find the Lions are still in the third quarter vs whoever, and your least favourite relative is massively passive-aggressive at having done the ALL the washing up.

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<sup>15</sup> When my father was stationed in Dar es Salaam Tanzania we had a UK government house on Zanzibar, and were visting, and went to a cocktail. A little Indian lady in a sari approached me, standing totally bored, and asked me the same question everybody at these parties asked me, which was "What do you want to do when you grow up." To which I always replied, in a classically poor forecast "A civil engineer." Never even got close. She replied, "Oh! You should do what my nephew did." "And what was that?" I replied, groaning inside. "He became a rock star!" she triumphantly proclaimed. It was the aunt of Farrokh Bulsara, born in Zanzibar (b1946, d 1991) aka Freddie Mercury.

I could start on the UK equivalent, which is the Christmas dinner, where in our family you did an “Aunt Pat”. I never knew the woman, but evidently, cometh the end of Christmas dinner, she would repair to the “bathroom” (we frankly call it a toilet, I was told that is vulgar in the USA) and lock herself for almost exactly as long as it took to clear all this nonsense away. That is the kind of people you have to deal with at family events.

I am advising you to go deeper. Turkey has some sort of soporific effect, it is well documented. There is some sort of chemical in the damn ugly over-sized difficult-to-cook bird that makes you sleep. A full Thanksgiving dinner will send you into a “food coma”. My advice is: add a classic British drink, that will simply take you from waking around early evening, when the Lions game is all-but decided, but you then face the remnants, the detritus, so that you stagger dry-mouthed at twilight and have to re-enter the “party” of ghastly small talk and horrible side comments, with a banging headache and a pan to clean, bitterly left for you.

I can nail you, right through until everyone is gone, it is totally dark, and you can be happy that you offended no-one, you did not argue, you never pointed a finger. The drink is a historic British-Portuguese classic, that is as soft and pleasurable as what every person who has gone from deep-sleeping teenager to writhing insomniac hedge fund manager, truly craves. That is, the total deep sleep.

The drink is Port. It is absolutely delicious, particularly with strong cheese, that should feature in any good mega-meal, although the British and French will argue over whether cheese comes after dessert or before. The English have the cheese after dessert, which is wrong, unless port is involved. Americans often eat cheese before the whole meal, which is just utterly wrong – that’s an Italian anti-pasti thing but this is not the Mediterranean. The French eat cheese after the main dish, then dessert.

I was friends with the son of a Euro billionaire who did it best at his Swiss estate – some smoked fish and garden (literally) salad to start, white wine. Flat water, as in Geneva, the tap water is Evian (previously discussed). Roast meat served with no vegetables, alone, with red wine. Then as you finish the meat, the butler arrives at the antique table with steamed vegetables – there is more salad on the table. So as you finish the meat, you start the steamed vegetables. The whole meal was punctuated by estate-made dry bread – basically whole grain crackers. Then as you finish, a fine selection of cheese, a heavier red wine, and more salad. Vinaigrette should be very plain – oil vinegar mustard salt pepper, lemon juice. Finally dessert – mousse au chocolat maman was their favourite. I found it too gloopy-sticky but hey, they were kids of hers. Fin.

For some Victorian reason, quite possibly related to port, we English have cheese to end the meal. Port is served in thimble port glasses. You only need a couple of thimbles. Aunts love it. Kids love it – as wealthy teens we used to adore the thimble. The privileged band Keane – great band, privileged UK background – saw their lead singer reportedly in rehab on “port addiction.” And boy, will you sleep off the relatives.

Which port? They all taste as good as each other. Gorgeous stuff. I have a 100 point bottle from Parker that I only bought because I never saw him award 100 points. Never touched it, but love the idea, I only would drink two thimbles. Then which? Take a Cockburns simply because it has like 400 years of history, and you can tell them it is British and pronounced Co-burns. Like co-ka cola, but better. No giant gulp. We shall thimble it.

And then sleep deeply until they are all gone. Be warned, centuries of research show that if you drink too much port, you will have the hangover to end all hangovers. There is nothing worse than a bad port hangover, it is living death.

So, I am calm now, London for a week with my two teen boys. Hmmm, “port addiction”. I wish I could have given them musical talent, I have none. Imagine if you could have a global mega-selling success with a band that is three people only – the Jam, the Police, Motorhead, Cream, UK, and for Americans, Nirvana, Green Day, Blink 182, the Kings of Leon, ZZ top, the Jimi Hendrix Experience, I personally think there is absolutely nothing cooler than a 3 piece band that can kill it. But this one, from a place where I lived as a teenager in the UK (decades before they hit it), Keane are from wealthy East Sussex, a beautiful place, of my teens. I mention it, because it was widely reported that they took a hiatus on the lead singer’s issue with port. Not to be taken in more than thimbles. But to do drums, piano, vocals, nothing more, and achieve global success.

Just amazing. I guess there are some lessons for my boys in here...

You say you wander your own land  
But when I think about it  
I don't see how you can  
You're aching, you're breaking  
And I can see the pain in your eyes  
Says everybody's changing  
And I don't know why  
So little time  
Try to understand that I'm  
Trying to make a move just to stay in the game  
I try to stay awake and remember my name  
But everybody's changing and I don't feel the same  
You're gone from here  
Soon you will disappear  
Fading into beautiful light  
'Cause everybody's changing  
And I don't feel right

[Keane Everybody's changing](#)

## 12/4 – Fluid Beef

The previous week to Vienna, in London for Thanksgiving, at the Arsenal soccer match Wednesday night European Champions League game with my two teenage sons, I was pleased to see that for all the new flashy stadium, and corporatisation of UK soccer, as tradition dictates, for half time they still sell meat pies and have Bovril as a drink. The service is still surly, and my New York raised boys were amazed at how long it took the spotty youth serving to get two Coke Zeros... and a Bovril.

In fact the crowd was disappointingly muted, evidently because in moving to a new stadium, the traditional clumps of fanatical fans have all become separated. But then the previous ground was known as “Highbury the Library.” The move of stadiums has further quieted crowds, unless they are travelling support away from home. So it was the Paris St Germain fans who were chanting and singing half an hour before the game, kept it relentlessly on, many with shirts off, throughout the entire game, increased their volume and intensity when their side went 2-1 down, and were still singing as we left the 2-2 draw. By contrast the Arsenal crowd sat and watched basically in silence. It has become known as the “prawn sandwich” school of new British soccer fans. The cost of the tickets, the seated “stands” have muted the crowds in new stadiums. Try Celtic Park or Anfield for an authentic experience, where you feel a palpable danger of being stabbed for team treason if you don’t scream and shout passionate encouragement for the home team.

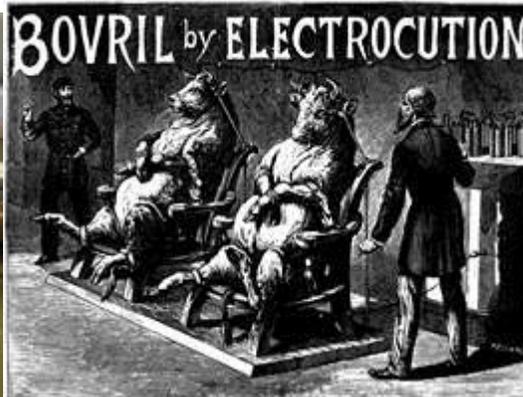
And you have to somehow learn the songs... quickly. “♪ His teeth are offside! ♪ His teeth are offside! ♪ Luis Suarez, his teeth are offside!”

When he scored, we did start the Beatles Hey Jude... “La, la, la, lalalala, Gi-roud, Gi-roud!” but that was the only memorable chant, from a largely silent crowd.

Soccer “hard man” Roy Keane coined the phrase “prawn sandwich brigade” as long ago as 2000, when as a top Man Utd player he had a “rant” bemoaning the lack of atmosphere at Old Trafford: “*Away from home our fans are fantastic, I'd call them the hardcore fans. But at home they have a few drinks and probably the prawn sandwiches, and they don't realise what's going on out on the pitch.*”

Roy would know a cup of Bovril, our “fluid beef”. It is a traditional British staple drink of soccer grounds, first made as a product in 1870. The viscous dead black liquid – think Marmite as Canadian Heavy oil sands, Bovril as Maya crude oil, is made into a hot beverage with boiling water, and consumed at football grounds. It was fortifying the British through wars and tribulations. It was first made as a by-product of the meat ordered by Louis III for his war against Prussia.

For example, they drank it on Shackleton’s Antarctic Endurance expedition, which was only slightly colder than watching a soccer game on a cold night in London. The concrete floor, the biting damp wind that chills the bones... you need a fortifying drink made up of concentrate of boiled cows: Bovril.



Source: Bovril

Here is how Apsley Cherry-Garrard starts his legendary 1922 book on the subject of Shackleton's ultimately doomed expedition, we assume Buzz Aldrin feels the same way right now:

*"Polar exploration is at once the cleanest and most isolated way of having a bad time which has been devised. It is the only form of adventure in which you put on your clothes at Michaelmas and keep them on until Christmas, and, save for a layer of the natural grease of the body, find them as clean as though they were new. It is more lonely than London, more secluded than any monastery, and the post comes but once a year. As men will compare the hardships of France, Palestine, or Mesopotamia, so it would be interesting to contrast the rival claims of the Antarctic as a medium of discomfort. A member of Campbell's party tells me that the trenches at Ypres were a comparative picnic. But until somebody can evolve a standard of endurance I am unable to see how it can be done. Take it all in all, I do not believe anybody on earth has a worse time than an Emperor penguin."*

We recommend the book which that passage opens, but it is long. It is rated by National Geographic magazine as the greatest adventure book ever written, sitting at 1 on their list of top 100 adventure books of all time. It is an existentialist classic, in my view.

The boys loved their sausage rolls at the game, but when I proffered them to taste the Bovril, which I proudly proclaimed was made up of boiled cows, and I mean the whole bovine, brain, eyes, hooves, tail, ears less nose ring, everything in the pot under pressure until this thick black concentrate is refined, it did not go well, despite the marrow-seeking London damp chill wind.

With considerable reluctance, Max aged 15, tried a sip, and then made such a face of agony and disgust that his younger brother simply flat out refused to try the stuff. No way, take it away... stop, I can smell it.

I tried to explain by saying that in Iceland, or is it Norway, they eat rotten tinned fish and like it, not because it tastes good, but because they have had it since childhood and know it is good for them. And by the same token I like Bovril, especially spread from the pot on hot buttered toast. But the next generation of Sankeys will not be continuing the tradition, that much is clear.

The other necessity for the penguin-pleasing chill of a UK soccer game is a scarf. We bought them for \$50 a pop – ooof - in the official Arsenal store, and I was then wearing a new Arsenal scarf as I stood outside the Hotel Kempinski in Vienna for the Tuesday afternoon arrival of the Iranian oil minister the day before the OPEC meeting would start. An outrageous scrum developed, that pitched bodyguards vs journalists, cameramen, and sound recordists, vs a hotel door, crowded lobby and ultimately elevator. As the group tumbled into the lobby of the hotel, with me in range but not scrumming, a table was knocked over, a lamp was broken, a woman loudly was yelling her leg was being broken as she continued to press closer to the diminutive minister Zanganeh. She was playing the "you're breaking my leg" card to get closer to him, in my view.

The afternoon tea -sipping wealthy matrons of Vienna were horrified at the melee, and shortly after it was concluded that the minister said "we will not cut" – which was truthful but interpreted to mean no OPEC cut by the suddenly highly bearish market – an officious hotel security woman began to clear the lobby of the many loitering journalists, then supported by a man in a suit who revealed himself to be a plain clothes Austrian policeman. "I am not with ze 'otel. I am Aus-trian politzie. You must all leave now..."

Entirely unjustly, I was singled out for ejection, even though I had just hosted lunch and wanted to host tea – no freeloader journo here. I concluded that my scarf made me highly visible to the powers that be, even though I was by no means in the forefront of the fight.

Happy with the OPEC meeting result, after the 8pm conference call we drank Austrian wine, and to be honest, late in the evening, flaming B52s. I will cover that next week, assuming no better drinks come up over this next week, which we preview in the Sunday Sankey. I am certain I will drink neither Austrian wine, flaming B52s, nor Bovril over the next week, that much is sure. I also failed to drink a Gluhwein, which is wonderful stuff, it might be

the very best Austrian drink, but only in ski resorts. In Vienna it was Austrian white wine “a dry one please.” It helped the analysis of the mysterious figures who swirled through Vienna, including the beautiful oil analyst who revealed that the brother of one of the most hated figures in modern history had once proposed marriage to her. It was that kind of week...

## 12/11 – Austrian Wine and Flaming B52s

The drink of the week is an OPEC special. There were two key OPEC November 2016 drinks that featured. The main one was Austrian wine. The second in passing was my first “flaming B52s” for many years. There is a highly tenuous connection, related to being in Continental Europe.

On Austrian wine, the reason I mention it is that I found it had an excellent price/quality relationship, for what I believe, from my own memory, is a rather unfortunate historical reason. Austrian white wine was embroiled in a major contamination/fraud scandal in the 1980s that caused sales to absolutely collapse, and for the wine to become known across Europe as something you do not touch, rather like a Chipotle rare chicken burrito or supermarket own-brand “beef” burger in Britain, assuming you like horses to ride on, not eat.

The scandal involved the discovery that anti-freeze was being added to the popular Austrian wines in order to improve sweetness and mouthfeel, as producers for export struggled to meet quality requirements on pre-agreed sales quotas. Needless to say, the huge publicity of the whole issue, not only in the biggest market of Germany, but also across Europe, caused Austrian white wine sales to absolutely collapse.

The entire somewhat arcane story, is [here](#), for the truly determined reader.

Austrian wine was forced to start again, and with tighter regulations, over time has used generally the same Riesling grapes, the same slender and graceful bottle, but become a much drier wine in general. Decades after the terrible scandal, in Vienna I found the white wine was excellent quality, much smoother and less acid, for a far cheaper price than a bottle of French white, for example. So I recommend, as an “ABC” (anything but Chardonnay), a dry Austrian white, if indeed your local liquor store actually has any. In short my theory is that a lasting legacy of the scandal is that Austrian white wine is relatively cheap for quality. I thought it was excellent, and good for calming my nerves over dinner at day’s end during the OPEC drama.

As the night wore on after the tumultuous OPEC meeting, and we found ourselves in a dark Vienna bar of convivial atmosphere, I was reminded of my early 20s in Geneva, when we would drink in the underground Cactus bar near the main train station in Geneva. There were two drinks I remember we would have. Previously covered in the Sunday Sankey as a drink best taken standing up, in case you drink too many sitting down then cannot stand up, the Long Island Iced Tea. The other, to really get us going, the flaming B52. Fortunately both were cripplingly expensive, so we could only afford a couple of each out of our vacation job pay checks, working in brutally boring Geneva bank summer programmes.

After a couple of months I gave up on the bank – can you imagine a worse fate than working as a filing clerk in a Geneva bank - and became a builder. I was totally the unskilled roughneck. My superiors were all Portuguese (drank exactly two Kronenbourg beers for mid-morning breakfast with some sort of grey egg and rice stodge in a Tupperware box). That work lasted a while, probably three weeks, an eternity to the young, and it taught me to get up for work insanely early in the morning come B52s or not, as we would start at 6am often a good hour from home, demolishing and building houses. After a 4:30am wake up, nothing quite gave so much pleasure as using the pneumatic drill, which I quickly discovered requires no skill, at 6:05am in a quiet Swiss suburban “village”. Let that teach you to launder money and shield global criminals, oh ye of false lawfulness! If ever you are stunned by how much noise builders are making at insanely early times, believe me, it is deliberate.

Shortly I was given a big break. The opportunity to become a roofer, which was a great job. There was a simple reason for the merit of the work, apart from the views of Geneva. If it rained you could not work. Down tools, sit down, and hang out, paid by the hour. In the days before iphones, the standard entertainment was to get out a pocket knife and carve at things, randomly. I loved it, until I got fired.

It was a size-ist thing. Size discrimination. I was really too big for the job, and believe me, I was a waif compared to my size today. Much as I loved being on the roofs, and throwing the piles of tiles, I kept cracking tiles on completed sections of roof and driving the blonde mullet haired foreman absolutely crazy, as you cannot just replace one tile. It was a measure of the higher status of roofer that he was actually Swiss. He came to hate me.

The problem with breaking a tile is that you have to lift and repair the entire section. I cracked one tile too many, by not balancing my weight on the edges between two tiles, which can take weight, but rather towards the middle of a single tile, which cracks with a sharp :“snap!” Mullet would whip around and LOSE IT, and then huff and puff to do all the work over, shooting vicious glances at the idiot English oaf.

In fact you don't as such get fired from those jobs, you just get told on Friday afternoon, that you will not be needed Monday. It is only when you get home and think about it that you realize you have been fired. And thus it ended.

As many of you clients can no doubt testify, when junior gets fired from his vacation job, he always has the option to mooch around the house building a colossal hunger, eating everything in the fridge, and sleeping at length. I'm pretty certain that was my response to losing my job, seeing as I had no money to go to the Cactus Club. I think pride prevented me from demoting myself back to the builder's mate, or worse the bank.

But in Vienna, in the dark bar, it was “a la recherche du temps perdu” that made me abruptly order a round of B52s.

The B-52 cocktail is a layered soft and sweet shot composed of a coffee liqueur (Kahlúa), an Irish cream (Baileys Irish Cream), and a triple sec (Cointreau). The top layer Cointreau is lit, hence the drink flames blue, for no known good reason other than drama. To be drunk immediately, it is slurped through a plastic straw in one go, otherwise the straw may melt and deliver a far more toxic after-inhale than any Austrian wine ever did.

## 12/18 – N/A (alert to imminent end of the Drink piece)

Nobody can recommend a drink every week forever. It is self-defeating... however it may read as regards my alcohol consumption, it is just not possible to drink more. So sadly, drinks are coming to an end. I think I will make it through Christmas, but there is no way I will make it through 2017 at the same pace. As I said, whatever it may seem, I just don't drink enough different drinks to write more – and I try, believe me – to sustain this much longer. Suggestions for next Sunday theme welcome. It occurred to me it was over when Steve Fleishman<sup>16</sup> said “You have to do Jägermeister” and I realized, I have literally not one Jägermeister thought. I went to college in the UK. We did not drink that stuff. A wise man, Fleishman bearing the gift of Jägermeister made me realise that this cannot continue, we must move on.

One of my lines on life that I picked up along the way, is that if you are the manager of a rock band, and the drummer comes to you and says “I've been thinking” – it's over. The drink write-ups are shortly to be discontinued.

Speaking of drummers, I also love the line of Charlie Watts, the taciturn and unelaborate drummer of the Rolling Stones, when asked “What is it like to be in the Rolling Stones rock band?” He replied “75% of the time is just hanging around.” ‘Nuff said.

I might move on to great 12 inch vinyl. I read that vinyl is outselling digital in the UK, need to check that. Of course, we recommend “Fairytale of New York” for Xmas song. Interestingly, I read that the “NYPD Choir” does not exist. To me, it just underlines the genius of the lyrics, of the greatest ever Xmas song. By the way, the Saks Christmas lights this year are off the hook. Genuinely amazing. Take your wife, or “significant other”. There is nothing like NY at Xmas “they have cars big as bars, and rivers of gold, but the wind goes right through you, it's no place for the old” Saks lights will let you live that. And pray for Tiffany's, it is a story of markets that Donald would name his daughter after the store, and then destroy it, inadvertently.

## 12/25 – Ginger

As promised, in our dwindling list of drinks to cover, this happy day, we do ginger – not the hair colour, the root. God save Prince Harry! Hurrah! Not our subject! We are doing ginger drinks, not Royals! For Royals, the Queen will speak at around 3pm GMT, as every Christmas Day, as broadcast by the British Monarch every year since 1932. God Save the Harry's grandmother!

My father used to ask for crystallized ginger for every single Xmas, as his gift.

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<sup>16</sup> Legendary Utilities (as opposed to oil, my sector specialisatoin) analyst who is in the Hall of Fame of institutional investor (has been ranked all American #1 analyst 10x+, ie 10 years+ and is thereby inducted into the Hall of Fame. I have 3x #1, a long long way from Hall of Fame, but I did do them back to back and quit. Fleishman is the best all-round analyst I ever had the privilege to call a colleague. And I worked with some good 'uns.

In fact, I think he asked for it one long-distant Christmas, and from then on he just got it, as his annual present, with socks and whatever, every single time. So we would be kids with loads of presents and – I feel you Dads – you get to Dad’s presents and it is pretty much “whatever, these are the presents for Dad.” Rightly, frankly.

But to fill the gap, of “what do we give this strange man?” my father would gasp, for one of his “What, six gifts!? For me!?” ritual. For sure, one of which, he would get crystallized ginger.

I think maybe his father originally liked it and got it every Christmas too. I can tell you that this year at Christmas, aged 86, my father will be getting almost no presents, but for sure, one will be a box or jar of crystallized ginger.

My own version as a father is that I get a gift of Turkish Delight every Christmas. It is a tradition, that has been the case since I was a boy. My mother started the gift in response to my love of Turkish Delight as a kid. Now – that is my Dad gift, every year.

It is helpful to the family if there is some dumb present that Dad “wants every year.” Let’s face it, buying Dad presents is part of the Dad joke. Who really cares? What are you seriously going to get him, a car? What would I ask Santa for Christmas, if he was not me, but a dude who actually gave gifts? Yeah, okay. I just buy a lottery ticket, one of the most under-estimated investments – at \$1 a week.

In passing, I would say I am more than fortunate that my first son Max was born on my birthday, so I get to shamelessly celebrate my birthday, with Max. If it was just “Dad’s birthday” – it’s not like you can go crazy for yourself. Fantastic, love my birthday, for my MaxMax. We are all fortunate to call ourselves Dad, and for that, me especially so. Once your first son is born on your birthday, you can never get another better gift, right? My deepest gratitude to Deborah, his mother, for the ultimate gift, our Max, on my – now our birthday. (23<sup>rd</sup> February, also a miserable time of the year, so great time to have a big celebration, Gifts – think cars – are welcome... he will be 16 this next year, and I will be 50... Porsche 911)

So I get Turkish Delight at Christmas. I loved Turkish Delight as a kid, still love it today once a year at Christmas... Everybody knows that rose flavour is the best. Why is nothing else rose-flavoured? I have never understood that. Anybody will nail a sugar-dusted piece of Turkish Delight from the crowded octagonal tray, but my Dad’s crystallized ginger, we candy-hungry kids would not touch. I remember it as eye-wateringly sharp, spicy, and hot, as a kid. We tried it, once, and then avoided.

Now I love it – can’t say when my taste switched. Some time between asking for money and worrying about providing money. Now I love ginger! Crystallized ginger to start! I eat the ginger left over on my kids’ plates of sushi; I sometimes buy it as a snack in delis, I love ginger candies, ginger ale and ginger beer are good with me, etc.

So I looked up this root online, and was not surprised that as an ancient plant, it was very popular with the Romans. It is thought to originate in India, based on the widest genetic diversity of ginger plants being found there. Although apparently “ginger no longer grows wild” as it intriguingly states on Wikipedia. I have to say, my very weak enquiries into ginger posed more questions than got answered – such as “what do you mean it no longer grows in the wild?”

As far as I can tell, it is pretty much globally consumed at least as far as the West Indies, to Japan. Russians do it, it seems Latinos do it. I lazily checked on whether it had reached Fiji, I met a website dedicated to Fiji as producer of the world's finest ginger.  
<http://gingerpeople.com/fij ginger>

What surprised me is that according to Wikipedia, that font of all speculation, (let me say, I have donated to the site to help maintain it), Ginger is ancient, popular with Romans, originated in India... and **okay medicinally... for nausea**. I was really surprised; I thought that it would be described as a long-established panacea for everything from cancer to hot flushes, with rubbing properties for everything from arthritis to dandruff to athlete's foot. I thought that Cambridge, or Harvard, or Fiji National University, would have comprehensively proved it a solution to every ailment. But on Wikipedia, it is pretty much given as a somewhat dubious cure for nausea, and not a lot more.

Given the global consumption of this stuff by those as wise as the Japanese to the Jamaicans, never mind Fijians, I was surprised, It seems there is little "medical evidence" of any benefits. By the way another quick search found that the Zulus have it, like, top of their medicine list. I feel I should maybe investigate, as surely everyone sees this stuff as a cure for everything. I certainly do.

**Okay, as a drink.** The established fact is, that ginger ale and tomato juice are chosen as a drink by hugely more by persons flying on aircraft, than by persons on the ground. We started this drinks series with the Bloody Mary, so we end with ginger.

It is now established that the unusual popularity of ginger ale and tomato juice on flights is attributable to changes in taste at pressurized high altitude. I thought that was related to high umami, our mouthfeel, and balance of all tastes, so that ginger ale, resides alongside Coca Cola, Pepsi Cola, tomato juice, tomato ketchup, as a flight classic of even mouth feel & taste.

You can read more about this from Malcolm Gladwell, in his investigative piece on "why is there 700 types of mustard but only one type of ketchup." (the Ketchup conundrum). It is about the even mouth taste and feel of ketchup that should not be fought, and which is not offered by mustard, which is naturally sharp and spicy, with no sweetness nor umami.

But NO! Tomato juice is thought popular on flights for umami, but ginger ale.... FOR NAUSEA! HAIL WIKIPEDIA!!!

Anyway, ginger ale is nothing special. You can drink it on the rocks, and if you want alcohol, a good drink is whisky and ginger ale (Sorry to all you Scotch snobs).

I remember there was a story about the legendary Irish writer Brendan Behan arriving in Canada and saying "I just saw an advert that said "Drink Canada Dry." I am about to start." He died of alcoholism aged 41. Did he misunderstand the ad? Not so much...

*In 1890, Canadian pharmacist and chemist John J. McLaughlin of Enniskillen, Ontario, after working in a soda factory in Brooklyn, New York, opened a carbonated water plant in Toronto. In 1904, McLaughlin created "Canada Dry Pale Ginger Ale"; three years later the drink was appointed to the Royal Household of the Governor General of Canada, and the label featuring a beaver atop a map of Canada was replaced with the present Crown and shield. When McLaughlin began shipping his product to New York in 1919, it became so popular that he opened a plant in Manhattan shortly thereafter. Canada Dry's popularity as a mixer began during Prohibition, when its flavor helped mask the taste of homemade liquor. In the 1930s, Canada Dry expanded worldwide.*

**But Ginger beer:** back to Wikipedia: *"Its origins date from the colonial spice trade with the Orient and the sugar producing islands of the Caribbean. It was popular in Britain and its colonies from the 18th century. Other spices were variously added and any alcohol content was limited to 2% by excise tax laws in 1855. Few brewers have maintained an alcoholic product. Current ginger beers are often manufactured rather than brewed, frequently with flavor and color additives. **Ginger ales are not brewed.**"*

My question is this, where are the good GINGER BEERS???? There are none, and it is doubly disappointing because there are two classic drinks that take GINGER BEER.

**The Moscow Mule:** back to Wikipedia *"The cocktail's inventor was Wes Price, Morgan's head bartender and the drink was born out of a need to clear the bar's cellar that was packed with unsalable goods such as Smirnoff Vodka and ginger beer. Eric Felten quotes Wes Price in an article that was published in 2007 in The Wall Street Journal: "I just wanted to clean out the basement," The first one he mixed he served to the actor Broderick Crawford. "It caught on like wildfire," Price bragged. The Moscow Mule is almost always served in a copper mug. The popularity of this drinking vessel is attributable to Martin, who went around the country to sell Smirnoff vodka and popularize the Moscow Mule. Martin asked bartenders to pose with a specialty copper mug and a bottle of Smirnoff vodka, and photographed a Polaroid picture of them. The copper mug remains, to this day, a popular serving vessel for the Moscow Mule, but not only due to tradition and aesthetic reasons. The copper has a chemical reaction with the acids from the lime giving it a unique taste that can only be achieved in a pure copper mug."*

Recipe: 2 shots vodka, 2 shots lime juice, ice, fill copper mug with ginger beer, to taste. Assuming you do not have a copper mug, ask for one at a Manhattan steak house. Odd drink to have at home. I mean, who has a copper mug?

**A Dark 'N' Stormy:** according to Wikipedia (yet again) A [highball](#) cocktail made with **dark rum** and [ginger beer](#) served over [ice](#) and garnished with a slice of [lime](#).

*Credited to Gosling Brother's recipe, the drink was invented in [Bermuda](#) just after World War I. Dark 'n' Stormy is promoted in the sailing and [sail racing](#) community. Golf Clubs will serve. Yep. Golf clubs will serve them...*

**BUT THERE IS NO GOOD GINGER BEER!!!!**

*I HAVE STARTED A GOFUNDME SITE regarding Ginger Beer, or lack thereof. Contact me for details, or you can find it online...*

## 1/1 – Drinks You Should Never Accept

This week, **we end this bizarre weekly drink adventure** with “drinks you should never accept”. We already covered Camel Milk. That is the worst drink in the world. Here we round up some other really bad ideas.

What went wrong? We ran out of drinks. There are a couple of stragglers, but we should move on. Suddenly I remembered hot chocolate, which I always recommend people order in Paris – the cafes take it very seriously. I lived in Paris for four years and became an amateur of the perfect Parisian hot chocolate. No Minute Maid, thanks. The best with a hot croissant... or tartine (toasted fresh baguette) with butter and apricot jam, will make your eyes roll back in your head. In the world center of cuisine, it is what French teenagers have for breakfast, with very good reason.

I think for the odd star weekly drink reunion, we should do a couple of other drinks I missed. Mulled wine at this time of year, especially in Austrian ski resorts – fantastic. We did not do brandy, and I do not recall a Scotch – we can cover those on special occasions. Irish coffee is terrific. To be honest I do not really like bourbon, although the US Marine Gunny Sergeant in Tanzania introduced me to two of the favourites of my youth, Jack & Coke and Bailey’s on the rocks. Haven’t touched either for years; they are here for the record. I might do Bailey’s on the rocks and share some stories about the American Military abroad, as I saw it, aged 17. There is a 9-11 related tale in there. Suffice it to say that the US Embassy we stood outside and wandered around was heavily bombed by Al Qaeda ten years after I was gone.

We did not do apple juice nor cider, and in fact wondered over brunch today with my son, whatever happened to grape juice? Have not seen it for years. It takes us towards the drinks to avoid, such as Sunny Delight – which makes the high sugar content of regular fruit juices seem like a diet drink. All high sugar content soft drinks are crazy, in our view. So are extreme high caffeine energy drinks and “flavoured water.” I mean, come on. Awful. Even Gatorade, nah, water is better.

Hard drinks to avoid: In the UK, a couple of drinks are reputed for being favoured by the homeless. Probably a good indication that they are not a great first choice of beverage for the professional person looking for a refreshing and relaxing evening tippie. Those drinks are Carlsberg’s notorious “Special Brew” and Strongbow Cider available in the “2 liter epic” bottle for .around GBP 3.00. Yep, that’s right, 2 liters for under \$4 the bottle. Not a good sign.

“Compared by many homeless charities as “crack in a can” Special Brew should never be touched. I was once on the Gatwick Express train and the typical spotty English youth in ill-fitting train uniform pushed the refreshments cart up to us. A respectable 30-something and typically enthusiastic American tourist asked the sallow youth for a beer recommendation. He did not hesitate “Oh you want to try a Special Brew” he said, confidently handing the disconcertingly gold, heavy can to the tourist. This is what is known as British humour at its under-stated best. The tourist had just been totally Monty Pythoned. I sat back in respectable silence.

Although I understand it has now been watered down, under legal pressure, back then “tramp juice” was some 9% alcohol by volume. No kidding, in a beer in a can. The American guy had no idea he was basically about to drink a bottle of wine in the time he would normally get through a smaller can of Bud Lite (2.4% ABV). With the bigger European can, your man was about to drain around 5 Bud Lites in one 30 minute train ride.

He started by exclaiming at the unique syrupy nature of Special Brew (so much alcohol content gives it a thick texture, no kidding), combined with its wincing brandy-with-beer over-taste that Churchill, for whom the drink was originally brewed by the Danish, so appreciated. Shortly, he became lively, giggly, overly gregarious. He drained the dreaded “Spesh” and was clearly becoming confused. By the time we got to Victoria, he was staggering and totally bamboozled. The next phase for him would be a terrible hangover, all within an hour of arriving in London. Avoid.

By the same token the defining element of Strongbow is as follows: cheap. I had been told there are no apples involved in this cider, but fact-checking shows there is. However the production facility does have the largest alcohol container in the world, so they say. Suffice it to say, mass produced. Has a hint of paint stripper with a violent carbonation that masks the underlying fake apple taste. Not good.

Top of my list of things not to drinks is a category, not a specific. Namely, shots. There is an old wise line that “nothing good happens after midnight” and by the same token, the move to start drinking shots, is basically always a mistake. Some good stuff may happen after taking shots, but more likely, terrible things happen. It is just not a smart idea to drink a shot. Because nobody ever drinks one shot. And once someone has had three shots, they think more shots might be a good idea. As F Scott Fitzgerald said: “First you take a drink, then the drink takes a drink, then the drink takes you.”

Of particular note:

Tequila shots: fortunately I simply could not stomach – literally – a tequila shot in my youth. Back then the drink was purely seen as a shot on the road to oblivion. Now I have come to appreciate sipping tequila, and we have covered several tequila-based cocktails. But the old lick salt from back of hand, slam a tequila, bite the lemon? DON'T DO IT!!! It makes no sense.

A client wrote further to our intro last week: “I tried several times to order a Flaming Ferrari at Nam Long in London and was talked out of it both times. Having seen my wife after she had one (maybe two), I am pretty sure this is a drink you should never accept.” I have never had one, as listed, you can see the effect of compound error upon error in this drink choice. In a shot glass. Grenadine syrup; Galliano, Sambuca; Chartreuse Verte; Grand Marnier; Navy Rum. Layered. Ouch, no thanks.

The flaming Ferrari is listed by The Daily Mail – one of the least reliable, most derivative, and internally hypocritical websites on the web – as “15 of the most dangerous cocktails in the world”. The Zombie is another “three different kinds of rum, lime juice, falernum, Angostura bitters, Pernod, grenadine, and 'Don's Mix,' a combination of cinnamon syrup and grapefruit juice.” You are not permitted to buy more than two. Also on the list, “Death in the Afternoon” as invented by Hemingway (absinthe and champagne, drink 3 to 5 slowly” NO THANKS ERNEST!

The Mail article includes another whole category that you should never touch, namely any kind of local moonshine, grandmother’s own special God-knows-what, Poteen, Pocheen or Putin’s backyard vodka, and in fact you can throw into that, punch at a (student) party. Good sense says you will never accept this undocumented stuff. I once brought back a bottle of “Hungarian Farmhouse Brandy” from Budapest which locals vehemently insisted should only be taken in one small thimble, no more, before lunch. Friends had a couple after dinner and we never had such bad arguments with our “significant others” before or since. I once tried Poteen and woke up to a fully risen sun on a beach in the South of France (I had drunk it in the South of France, Cannes, not New York, in case you wonder). It just had a truly terrible effect on the head. If it not a recognized brand in a recognizable measure, don’t do it!!! Nowadays, I assume no-one is dumb enough to randomly drink a random punch at a student party. I hope. But then again, I was a spectacularly dumb student. God help the next generation!

Speaking of which, we will never get to cover Steve Fleishman’s requested Jägermeister. It falls into the category of a shot, and he gives it a terrible write up: “Jägermeister is the badge of honor of every fun loving, dirt poor US college kid ... it deserves respect.” By my thinking, that puts it only slightly above “Tramp Juice” on the recommendation list. Hey, dirt poor college students love this stuff, it must be great! Nope.

So there it is, don't drink shots. I do admire the President-elect for not drinking, nor any other type of stimulant, after the death of his brother. God help us if he would Tweet at 3am... and was a drinker.

What would be my final drink? Unquestionably the 1990 Bordeaux we covered (St Emilion from the greatest Bordeaux year of all time). The finest red wine, the complexity, the history, the vagary of the vintages, in a good glass with a good meal... makes total sobriety a challenge for me. "A meal without wine is a day without sunshine!" as the French say (although I have never heard the French expression).

*We end on a somewhat moralistic or at least cautionary note. We all have stories, you should be fully aware of the dangers of alcohol. For various reasons, I am not a big fan of Irish rock star Bono, but he said recently: "Capitalism is not immoral, it is amoral. It is a better servant than master."*

*The same is totally true for alcohol. Drink in moderation. I would hate to think this series led anyone to trouble, other than me. Ultimately we are the masters of our own destiny, and if you choose a bad master, you will likely face many bad consequences. Be honest with yourself, and keep alcohol as a highly trained and obedient servant, let it never become an uncontrollable master. On this I refuse to compromise your standards.*