

March 2026

Newsletter

Welcome to the March 2026 newsletter. It's National Pie Week (March 2nd to March 8th) and what a great time to get some baking in! Spring is in the air, and the days are getting longer on the UK side of the hemisphere. To celebrate Alison has written a Chicken and Tarragon Pie recipe – and Ian has paired it with a superb wine, see the next page and get cooking!

Last month Ian attended some more trade tastings in London. We were so struck by the amazing quality of wines from those countries you would not necessarily associate with an everyday choice in your wine rack. The quality of English wine is now world beating – and we talked about it in our previous newsletter, but the Sula Chenin Blanc from India, continues to blow us away, and we hope to have some more news for you soon on us selling it to you!

We also went back to one of our favourite places on the planet, Antibes, in Southern France for a little sun (after all it's been so rainy in England) – and along the way visited the Menton Lemon Festival, see more on this later in this newsletter.

We have exciting news! Ian's book on Greek Wine (order a copy at wineanddine.org.uk/category/books) has attracted a leading publisher, and it will be unleashed on a wider audience later this year. Look out for book signing events and associated tasting nights coming to a venue near you! We are also starting work on another book, on English Wine, which will involve lots of vineyard visits around the UK! If you have any recommendations for small wineries with great stories to tell, that we should see, drop us a line at hello@wineanddine.org.uk

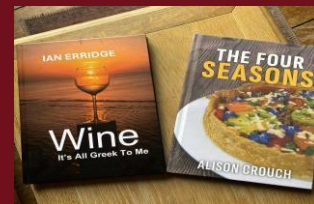
**“My only regret in life is that I didn't
drink enough Champagne.”**

— Robert Noecker



About Us

Hello! We are Alison and Ian. Alison has 35 years' experience working in food. From teaching cookery, nutrition and food hygiene, running restaurants, broadcasting, writing both recipes and food articles, to carrying out cookery demos at food shows. She has worked with Gordon Ramsay, Rosemary Shrager, Brian Turner, Aldo Zilli and Cyrus Todiwala - and has written several cookery books, her latest being *The Four Seasons*, which was released in 2024.



Ian has over 25 years' experience in the Wine industry and is also keenly into his food. He is author of a book on Greek wine, called, *Wine; It's All Greek To Me* - having lived in Greece for over 4 years. He also studied on the coast of Southern Spain for 2 years - has worked extensively across the UK - and is now a Wine Consultant, Specialist Tasting Host, Broadcaster, Wine Writer and Author.

Food Focus

Chicken and Tarragon Pie

Each month Alison gives you a tasty recipe for you to cook.

As we mentioned earlier, it's National Pie Week (March 2 to March 8) – and this superb recipe hits all the right notes. The aroma of pastry cooking in a kitchen is the best smell! Ian has paired this with a lovely Rosé (see page 4 – Pic; Happy Foodie).

You'll need

300g plain flour
A pinch of salt
Foodie)ter, cold and cut into small, even pieces
6-8 tbsp cold water

For the filling

1 onion, diced
1 carrot, peeled and diced – small otherwise it will not be cooked enough
1 leek, sliced
2 smoked bacon rashers diced
2 tbsp oil
40g margarine
40g flour
200ml chicken stock
150ml milk
50ml crème fraîche
2 chicken breasts cooked, diced or leftover chicken
A small bunch of fresh flatleaf parsley
1 tsp dried tarragon
Salt and freshly ground black pepper
2 large carrots, cut into batons for roasting, oil, seasoning

Let's Cook!

1. Pastry: Put the flour into the bowl. Rub in half the butter.
2. Add water to form a dough.
3. Roll out on a floured surface to a rectangle. Dot with the remaining butter.
4. Fold a third over, then another third over.
5. Turn the pastry and roll. Fold again.
6. Turn the pastry and roll out.
7. Fold again, place in the bowl and in the fridge.
8. Make the filling: Fry the onion, carrot, leek and bacon in the oil for three minutes.
9. Add the butter. Stir in the flour. Take off the heat and gradually add the chicken stock and milk.
10. Place back on the heat and slowly bring to the boil until bubbling and thickened (continued next page).



11. Stir in the crème fraiche, the chicken, herbs and seasoning. Leave to one side
12. Take the pastry from the fridge and roll then fold. Repeat twice more.
13. Remove one third for a lid.
14. Roll out the larger piece and line a tin. Place in the filling then roll out and seal on the lid.
15. Make a hole in the top. Brush with milk.
16. Bake at 180C for 30 to 35 minutes. Place the carrots in a dish and roast at the same time.
17. You could add in other vegetables such as parsnips, swede, turnips

We need your vote!

Velvet Magazine Food & Drink Awards 2026

Alison and her amazing team at The Ferry Project Cookery School in Cambridgeshire, need your help with a vote in the Food and Drink Hero category for this year's Velvet Magazine Food and Drink Awards 2026.

8 Years ago, Ferry Project CEO Keith Smith met Alison to discuss the possibility of setting up a cookery school for the charity's clients. (The Ferry Project helps homeless people in the Fenland region of Cambridgeshire - not simply to provide accommodation - but to give them the skills needed to live independently <https://www.ferryproject.org.uk/>)

5 years after that meeting the plan was hatched, an old hotel kitchen was redesigned, a new teaching kitchen built. Now in the present day, client and community classes, online and in person cookery demos and pop-up events, are successfully run. Alison has also written 3 cookery books and broadcasted on several Radio, Community Video Streaming and TV shows, promoting the Cookery School and all the incredible work that she, and the team, do in the local community.

Your nomination would increase the profile of The Ferry Project greatly, so please take a few seconds to vote.

How to nominate – follow these short steps;

1. Go to <https://www.iliffemediapromotions.co.uk/velvet-food-drink-awards/nominate/>
2. Type your name and address
3. Tick the Category box that says 'Food and Drink Hero'
4. Name the nominated business 'Ferry Project Cookery School'
5. Specify the Website or Social Media Link as @fascinatingfood
6. Give an amazing reason for the vote (e.g. Alison's passion for food and passing that on to others, the wide work in the community, encouraging healthy eating and helping the homeless, championing eating well on a limited budget, being an amazing advocate for Food and Drink in Southern England – inspiring others from all walks of life – and anything else you wish to write!)
7. Finally, click NOMINATE NOW! at the bottom of the page!

Thank you!!!

(Nominations close at 23.59, Friday 24th April 2026)



Wines of the month

Fabulous Vino to try in 2026

It's part of our obligation to you, dear readers, to discover new wines, pass on recommendations for vino we already know and to visit as many wineries as we can along the way. It's a tough job, but somebody must do it.

Spring is on its way, here in the UK, and it's a time when you start thinking about Rosé! And this one is an absolute corker!! Burnt House Vineyard is based in Little Finborough, not far from Stowmarket in Suffolk. Their growing reputation (excuse the pun) for producing quality English wine, is born out of hard work and a family ethos that stretches back several decades.

This lovely wine features the Pinot Meunier grape, aka one third of the blend that makes Champagne. This variety is a star in its own right however and makes stunning Rosé and Red wines that are a complete joy! This wine displays amazing strawberry aromas, with raspberry, citrus and strawberries on the palate. Different from Provence style, but in our opinion a big step up. £20.00

<https://www.burnthousevineyard.co.uk/product-page/burnt-house-pinot-meunier-ros%C3%A9-2024>

Ian has paired this with the Chicken and Tarragon pie made by Alison on page 2. The creaminess and rich texture of the meat are heaven with this bottle of wine.

Non-Alco Alternative

When it comes to non-alcoholic wines there are so many brilliant styles on the market these days. And we love this LoNo Rosé from Thomson and Scott. This uses 98% Chenin Blanc and a dash of Pinotage to make this South African beauty an absolute leading light in this category. This Provence style Rosé gushes with fresh summer berries, developing into fresh apricot aromas and a balanced palate with a gently lingering finish. Around £9.95 – various sellers.

<https://noughtyaf.com/>



Wines of the Month

Fabulous Vino to try in 2026

When it comes to great vino Romania knows a thing or two about producing brilliant wines that you don't need a second mortgage to afford.

And this is such an example. Pinot Noir from this country is renowned for being light, with red fruit notes and delightfully soft tannins, and this one is a beauty!

Made by well-regarded producer Cramele Recas, the wine displays notes of red berries and a touch of warmth. The winery is owned by English Winemaker Philip Cox and his wife Elvira.

They replanted 700 hectares of decrepit vineyards, replacing them with immaculately tended sites, matching some of the best vineyards in the World - enabling them to produce top quality reds like this. It's a lovely wine that we use at many a tasting – and makes people smile. What more can you ask for? £11.00

<https://www.wineanddine.org.uk/product-page/calusari-pinot-noir-romania>



Tasting Experiences

Recently we have been putting on some 'Journey across the Med' tasting experiences. We start in Spain and work our way East, towards Lebanon, before heading back to Portugal. This is a lovely wine tasting, of 8 wines, greatly enjoyed by our clients. To book your space visit

<https://www.wineanddine.org.uk/product-page/a-journey-across-the-med-40pp-8-persons>



Events Watch

Upcoming Tastings Tickets available online.

May 30th 7pm
Greek Wine at the Chapel



A Tour of Greece through its stunning wine regions.
A tasting at the beautiful old Chapel at Wisbech Cemetery, Cambridgeshire.

Come and learn about the wines of Greece, gain some wine tips ready for your Greek holiday, or enjoy memories of the wine you drank whilst there.

A wine tasting and talk, exploring seven amazing Greek Wines, accompanied by delicious Greek bites to accompany each wine

Please let us know if you have any allergies.

July 4th 7pm
Glamping with Llamas Norfolk.

Fire and Wine is a sizzling evening of bold flavours and fiery vibes, perfect for food and wine lovers to chill and cheers! Get ready for an unforgettable night at **Fire and Wine**! Beautiful wine selected by Ian, paired with scrumptious food prepared over fire, by Alison. And there are Llamas too! Yes, Llamas!

Bring your friends, your appetite, and your love for awesome wine and food - and of course, the Llamas! Don't miss out—let's light up the night together!

Please let us know if you have any allergies.

For more details and to book, visit our events page at <https://www.wineanddine.org.uk/events>

Adventures in Wine and Travel

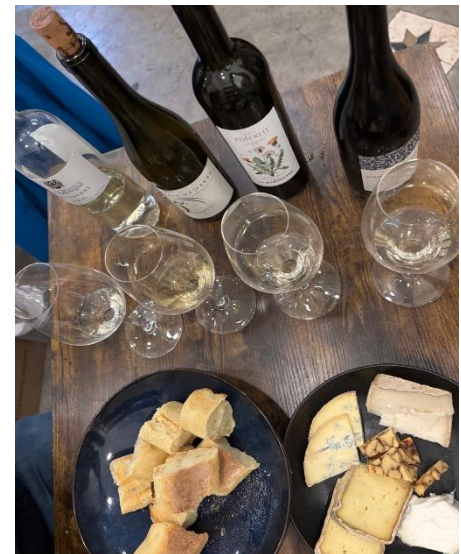
Places to go, people to see....

Last month we went to the Antibes region in the South of France. It's a favourite location, with a warmer climate, beautiful sea, charming towns, the glamour of Monaco, marvellous food – and of course – brilliant French wine!

We started off in Marseille, France's oldest city, has had a bad rap in the past for gang and drug related problems, but it's very much on the up, especially since it was named European capital of culture back in 2013. Its labyrinth of alleys and Café's nestle among old stone buildings, a sprawling Port - which is being redeveloped in parts, and a lovely Opera House. It's easy to get around – and get to – from the airport with good bus and train connections (It's around 35 to 40 mins into town).

While there we popped in to the Rive Sud Vins Wine Bar and Shop, owned by an Englishman named Myles! He runs the business with his wife, and their selection of French wine and local cheeses, is excellent! Such an interesting guy, with a brilliant wine journey. Ian has said this before, but The Rhone Valley, known for it's reds, such as Châteauneuf du Pape, produces amazing white wines, that are out of this world, and reasonably priced too!

Our next stop was Antibes (After a quick lunch in beautiful Cannes), a short rail journey along the stunning Côte d'Azur coast. Located between Cannes and Nice, this historic seaside town is known for its 16th-century ramparts, the massive Port Vauban superyacht marina, and the Picasso Museum. It offers a mix of old-world charm, sandy beaches, and a little luxury, if you so desire. We rented a cosy Air BnB in the centre of town and enjoyed going back to old haunts, for Hugo Spritz(s) and lovely meals – and just generally wandering around. When you think you can be there in just a few hours from the UK, it's such a favourite destination of ours, and a different way of life.



One massive reason we also went was to witness the annual Lemon Festival, in Menton, about an hour or so by train, East of Antibes. Each year the town hosts the event, in celebration of its local Lemon growth – and it's one of the largest and most colourful carnivals on the south coast of France. A wonderful tonic at the start of the gardening year.

Elaborate floats and imaginative sculptures in dazzling shades of orange and yellow are paraded through the Promenade du Soleil in Menton, bringing huge bursts of colour and a lemony zest to the early spring, with a carnival spirit and joie de vivre that is typically French. You could literally smell the lemons as soon as you alighted from the train. The theme this year was "Journey to the stars", with fanfares, orchestras, dancers and folk troupes, alongside giant 11 metre lemon sculptures, also visible day and night along the avenue called "Gardens of Light".

The whole spectacle was incredible, with ticker-tape, regularly being thrown, during the parade. Something we will return to again.



Thank you for reading this – and for your support!

We have exciting news upcoming in next month's newsletter, meanwhile, check out our tasting experiences and events on our website www.wineanddine.org.uk

AND, if you fancy a bottle, or two, of great wine, visit our online store.

Thank you to our partners

WYKEN



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