

L'Age Baston Chronicles 2007

EDITORIAL

It's that Chronicle time again. I can tell because it gets dark at 6.p.m. the wood stoves are gently purring and Alex is doing the Christmas cards.

So, what's new since the last edition? Well let me think – we had a birth, a marriage, and a tractor. We went a bit mad with the fairy lights in the garden and cleaned the terrace stonework. We did bedroom 1 (clever job that ceiling- ed.) and half the kitchen. We put chandeliers downstairs and a new office on the top floor. We cleaned off the garden walls and started on the woods. We even rebuilt a section of collapsed wall by the big gate (then calculated it would take us 35 years to do the rest). We start tomorrow. Oh, I forgot the new pool liner and the lawnmower – no wonder our Christmas budget is tight.

I keep telling Alex we need to be careful not to make the place too neat, too tidy and risk all that picturesque. She just looks at me with mild derision and mutters things like "that'll be the day" and something about hell freezing over!

It has been another full, busy and good year for us, as we hope it has been for you. We send our best wishes for a peaceful and prosperous New Year.

Alex and John

Dressing Up at the ducal Chateau



The chance to raid the son-et-lumiere costumes at the Duke's place proved too tempting for many of our guests. The Chateau of La Rochefoucauld is always worth a visit. To the manor born!

Family Wedding

Our first family wedding at



L'Age Baston – After weeks and weeks of rain the sun shone on it all, everything; the happy couple, the big tent, the English and Brazilian families and over a hundred guests.

Alex's God-daughter Sarah officiated at the ceremony. Sueli's friend translated verbatim. Caterers were excellent. Champagne flowed. And there was Dancing and music till 6a.m. (so the Mayor's secretary said, with a smile, and she lives over a mile away). Didn't hear a thing ourselves of course, we went to bed much earlier.

On the Sunday we did it all again – minus the ceremony we must add. Everyone said it was a memorable weekend.

Mathew and mums

Victoria gave birth to Mathew 24th May. Our



thanks to the guests that week for being kind about John's cooking. Victoria really appreciated her mum being there. (Mathew is doing fine and just about to crawl –ed)

Banana update

You remember how last year Alex was so excited when her patience with the Banana seeds was rewarded with a solitary plant? Well, we now have three of them, plus four avocados and three baby

yuccas – all grown from seed and destined for a spring planting. Alex is taking global warming seriously.

Angouleme airport

Speaking of carbon footprints - the saga continues. Having agreed the name and extended the runway and re-routed a road, they say services will start in April. Maybe they will. .

Help Given

Our lives were made a lot easier this summer by Nigel from Scotland (by way of Brazil).

We got Nigel partly because he was a friend of Julian's and partly because the contractor building the Sao Paulo subway system blew Nigel's flat up. Sao Paulo's loss was L'Age Baston's gain. The grass never looked better.

Let there be light

As part of the rolling refurbishment programme we thought we'd shed a bit more light on things. We've put more lights by the studio, kept the tree lights from the wedding and wired new lights to the pool.

Pool Police

The pool was a constant and glorious distraction this summer. We had an alarm fitted for safety but it failed to warn us about the 98 year-old skinny-dipper. One slightly shocked but definitely amused guest was heard to say, "from what I could see he needed a jolly good iron, ". Maybe we will have to organise sessions, with coloured arm bands and someone who blows a whistle at you if you do something wrong. Problems, problems.

Chic Cyber Pics

By popular demand we shall be posting pictures of both Mathew and the wedding on the website shortly. Watch this cyberspace.

New Tractor

Hardly 'new' (1973) but almost John's favourite thing. A trusty old John Deere that's already proved its worth carting & pulling & thrashing. Even has a



flashing light! Hoping for a huge trailer so we can go for rides round the estate. Are you listening there Father Christmas?

THE CHRISTMAS RECIPE

Paté d'Aubergine
For about 6-8 guests
2 medium sized aubergines
1 large garlic clove crushed
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 teaspoon salt



half teaspoon black pepper
one eighth teaspoon cayenne pepper.
Preheat oven 180degC/Gas mark 4. Place the whole, unpeeled aubergines onto a baking sheet and place in the oven. Bake for about 40 minutes or until the aubergines are soft. Remove from the oven and set the aubergines aside to cool. When cool, slice in half, lengthways. With a teaspoon, scoop out the flesh and transfer the flesh to a medium sized mixing bowl. Discard the shells. Stir the garlic, lemon juice, salt pepper and cayenne into the aubergine flesh and with a fork and mash the mixture to a pulp or alternatively pop into a food processor and whiz for a second or so. Place the bowl in the refrigerator to chill for about 30 minutes before serving. Serve with triangles of toast and decorate with parsley.