

# L'Age Baston Chronicles 2011

**EDITORIAL** This is Chronicle No.10 for 2011. That was a year that was. So dry the rivers are only just coming back up. So hot at times the pool was the only place to be. So scrumptious the old waistline is only just recovering (in time for Christmas!). What fun-filled, frolicsome, feisty, fearless folks we had. Never were G&S better performed, pipes played, flutes fluted, rhymes declaimed, stories told and songs sung. Our painters painted enough to do a papal ceiling or two. The Walkers walked with grace and skill, the French Students talked with fierce animation and Alexandra cooked up a storm, overseeing a procession of gastronomic triumphs. The help helped hugely and the animals all did their entertaining best. We had a ball and we trust our guests did too. We may well be living through 'interesting times' right now but, as the world shifts and the old certainties dissolve, there are still some things that always seem to hold their value. You can count on a holiday at L'Age Baston being one of them! **A bientôt**

## Sheepsheared

Horatio was publicly sheared in late spring. It was a popular event with people hanging out of widows to



take photos. We shall be selling tickets next year. Drum is an old

man now, but still eating well. Mimi is as loud as ever and the big boys still adore ginger biscuits and being groomed by Alexandra. Jury still out on those ewes for Horatio – depends on re-jigging the fences. We will keep you informed. **STOP PRESS** – if all goes well he should have a couple of ladies for Christmas!



## Holistic retreat

People often remark how restful and reviving the ambience, food and company are here. We thought to add some gentle exercise, supervised yoga sessions and expert, pampering treatments. The idea was to help people de-stress, detox and delight in the hospitable oasis of calm that is the



Chateau. It was a triumph – thanks to Claire and Debby – we'll be doing it again in 2012.

## Leguminosi

We like to grow as much as we can to put on the table. Every year we try to expand the range of home-produced goodies. This year we made good progress with the potager garden paths and had great crops of courgettes, tomatoes,



aubergines and salads (still snacking the aubergine daube actually). Not forgetting all the herbs, apples, figs, cherries, plums and walnuts. Almost persuaded one to become a veggie. If only it wasn't for the bacon . . .

## Sparrow hawks

It's been an extraordinary year weather-wise with a severe (and continuing) drought that slowed the grass down but had the same effect on cereal crops. We had our first resident hoopoe and a sparrow-hawk that swooped about the courtyard after the finches.

We had regular sightings of deer in the fields, a resident badger in the woodpile and a

visiting pine-martin. All the usual suspects as well; foxes, herons, buzzards migrating cranes and, to the distress of the farmers, signs of boar in the maize-field plus a partridge on the drive. We are very happy to report.



## Roof on

This spring saw the main roof between the towers renewed. When we bought L'Age Baston in 1989 a friend said, "Next time, buy something with less roof". It must be the first time in a couple hundred years that the attics don't leak. You can all take some pride in this achievement. Without you dear guests, none of this would have been possible.



Long may you continue! We look forward to the next bit of our rolling renovation programme.

## Write-on

Not content with offering an innovative week of spiritual growth and elegant ease (The Retreat). L'Age Baston Ltd is pleased to announce it's first writers week. Expert writing tutor and author Karen Mcarthy-Woolf will be your guide. This is your chance to limber up the imagination and unlock that inner voice. Learn and develop the good habits that make for successful writing.



**Saturdays Again!**  
The uncertain mid-week flight schedules mean we shall now be running our courses from Saturday to Saturday.

**Just like old times!**

## Pear and Almond Tart

### For the tart

175g plain flour  
95g cold butter  
1 level tablespoon caster sugar  
3 tablespoons milk  
1 large egg yolk

### For the filling

75g butter  
75g caster sugar  
2 large eggs  
almond essence  
110g ground almonds  
1 level tablespoon plain flour  
4/5 firm ripe dessert pears (Williams are excellent)

### For the glaze

2 tablespoons apricot jam  
juice of half a lemon  
A loose based flan tin 23cms in diameter and 4.5cms deep



### Method

Sift flour into a mixing bowl  
Add butter in pieces and rub in.  
Add sugar and mix.  
Mix the milk and egg yolk and add to the mixing bowl. Stir with a knife, then with floured fingers to form a dough. Turn out pastry and knead once or twice until smooth. Let it rest 15 mins under the upturned mixing bowl.  
Preheat oven and baking tray to 190degC, Gas Mk 5.  
Roll out pastry, line the tin.

### Filling

Cream the butter & sugar until soft and light. Add the eggs, almond essence and flour and beat well to make a soft almond mixture. Take the chilled pastry case, prick the base with a fork, spoon in the almond mixture and spread evenly. Peel, then halve the pears and scoop out the core with a teaspoon. Place each half, cut side down, onto a board and make 3 or 4 cuts lengthways in the pear halves.

Lift each pear half carefully on to the tart base with the stalk end towards the centre and fanning out the slices a little. You should get eight halves around the edges and possibly one more half in the centre, depending on the size of the pears.

Transfer the tart onto the heated baking tray and bake for about 35-40 minutes or until golden. Whilst your tart is cooking, put the jam and the lemon juice into a saucepan over a low heat. Stir to blend and bring to the boil for one minute.

When the tart is cooked. remove from the oven and while it is still hot, spoon over glaze. Should keep tart in good shape for at least 24 hours. Bon Appetit!

# 2012: Courses Dates & Prices

## Early Booking Prices

**Book before 28**

**February 2012**

### Painting

7 nights £849

14 nights £1600

### French Country Cooking

7 nights £835

### Walking in the Charente

7 nights £800

### French for Francophiles

7 nights £949

### Creative Writing

7 nights £825

### Retreat Weeks

7 nights £949

14 nights £1850

### Partners & Friends

7 nights 14 nights

Sharing £575 £1125

Own Room £675 £1350



### Painting

May 12,19 Jennifer Johnson

May 26 John Barber

June 2 John Barber

June 9,16 Rob & Sian Dudley

June 23,30 David Chandler

July 7,14 David Chandler

July 28 Jenny Halstead

Aug 18,25 Anne Bosset

Sep 1,8 John Barber

Sep 15,22 Jenny Johnson

**7 nights £899**

**14 nights £1,700**

Another premier cru of a year for painting. What a talented and inquisitive bunch you turned out to be. It's always a joy to see how our painters respond to the place and the people. They never fail to surprise us with new ways of looking at our favourite things. (Good title for a song that ).

There's a tutor and subjects to suit everybody here at L'Age Baston. We know you don't just come for the food and the Champagne reception! John goes on tidying things up (clearing paths in the woods right now – don't worry Judith there will be loads of trees left to do). So every year there are different points of view from which to sally forth with an artists' hungry eye.



### French Country Cooking

July 9 Sept 1

7 nights £899

Profiteroles with gold leaf, Claret poached eggs, Beaujolais Bomb and old-fashioned rillettes in boccoux. What do these mouth-watering recipes have in common? Answer: they were just a few of the delicious dishes by Alex and the team of our Country Cookers. Much to their own edification and to the delight of everyone else.



### Creative Writing

July 21

7 nights £875

**NEW!** A creative adventure with writing tutor Karen McCarthy-Woolf. Unshackle that literary imagination! Everybody has a story to tell. Develop your skills and learn the habits of good and successful writing.



### French for Francophiles

May 11 Intermediate

June 23 Advanced

July 28 Intermediate

Aug 18 Intermediate

Aug 25 Advanced

**7 nights £995**

### Included on all courses

7 nights full board

6 days tuition

Air-conditioned transport

Free airport collection

Free train collection

Super food

Beautiful place

Wine with lunch & dinner

Wi-fi & Guest PC

Trips to places of interest

Solar Heated, salt-water pool

20 acres of grounds

Pool Towels included

Vegetarian/special diets

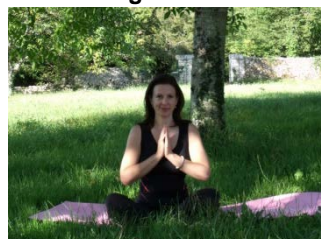
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### The Retreat

Aug 4,11

7 nights £995

14 nights £1900



### NEW! (OK -nearly new then)

Following the outstanding success of our first retreat in 2011, L'Age Baston is pleased to announce two more in 2012. The Retreat has been designed as a luxurious week away from all the stress and distractions of everyday life. The course offers relaxation and pampering and includes yoga, pilates, massage, meditation, guided walks and treatments to recharge and nurture the mind and body.

### Walking in the Charente

May 26, July 7, Aug 4,11

Sept 15

**7 nights £850**



A special thanks to those L'age Baston Guests that kept John company on the walks. He had a particularly good time this year. The weather and the wild life, the company and the Charente countryside all conspired to be about as good as they could be. He is looking forward to breaking in some new boots next season on some new trails.

### Partners and Friends

7 nights 14 nights

Sharing room £599 £1,150

Own room £699 £1,350

Don't forget that partners and friends can also enjoy the delights of a L'Age Baston Holiday. No tuition of course but everything else is included. While there is lots to do, if you simply want to relax, lounge by the pool, read a book, or watch TV, then that is just fine too.

### BOOKING CONDITIONS

A deposit of £200 per person is required at the time of booking. Payment is due eight weeks before the start of your holiday. Bookings made within eight weeks of the start of your holiday must be accompanied by payment in full. Cancellations must be advised in **WRITING**. It is the policy of L'Age Baston Ltd to try to re-book your place as soon as advised of a cancellation. If successful, your deposit/full payment will be refunded less cancellation costs born by L'Age Baston. L'Age Baston Ltd reserves the right to retain all or part of the deposit/full payment.

### INSURANCE

**As a condition of booking and for your own protection, please** take out full holiday insurance including cover for accident & medical expenses, loss of personal property, personal liability, cancellations & costs. **To book or if you would like our full brochure, write, phone or e-mail.**

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