

This was written as an entry to Cast Iron Selection Box:

“It's CHRISTMAS! Cast Iron Theatre's Selection Box returns for its third year!

“An hilarious and suitably jolly celebration of new writing, comedy, and cold reading. Selection Box sees performers take to the stage to present Christmas-themed new short plays.

“But there's a catch! The performers haven't read or rehearsed their scripts before. Instead, they'll pick a gift-wrapped script from our selection box and unwrap them live on stage, performing them right there and then.

“So, here's what we need: short, Christmas themed plays (around 5 minutes) for 2 actors. They should be gender blind and age blind, so any actor can perform them.”

The Christmas Wine List

By Susanne Crosby

Note to actors: A gets the glasses of wine, B types on a laptop / iPad, apart from the first set of glasses.

Props: at least one chair (for B to sit typing), preferably 2 glasses which keep being topped up with wine (off) and a laptop or iPad, but these can be mimed.

As they drink, their posh accents slip to more common, and they become more and more uninhibited.

A. *(Clear, crisp, “posh”)* So. How many do we have?

B. *(Gesturing off - to an imagined cellar full of bottles of wine)* Enough. A truck load! Enough.

A. And how many are the same?

B. How many are actually the same, or how many are we telling the customers are the same?

A. I assume we're telling everyone that our whole Christmas wine list is new?

B. That's what I was thinking.

A. Ok. Up with the first one then.

B. Right. *(Getting 2 wine glasses and handing one to A)* Here. We did this one last year. Called it *(checking a laptop / iPad)* 'a lesser known Sauvignon blanc, young, but with wild fruit.'

A. Sounds like my ex.

(They laugh)

B. In that case I think they would have had to call it 'appearances for this one are deceiving. It looks innocent and perhaps naive but packs a huge punch'

A. Spot on! No wait - add: 'flowery notes' somewhere!

B. Right (*typing*). Ok what about the next one?

A. (*Getting more in the glasses*) You putting this straight on the website?

B. Of course! No messing about. New Christmas wine list. Come on - get this right and we'll be done before midnight – and waiting for the orders in the morning.

A. (*Rubbing hands together*) Ok! Challenge! I like it! (*Taking a sip*) This one new?

B. (*Also sipping*) For the sake of this (*gesturing the laptop / iPad, meaning their website*), Everything is new.

A. (*tasting*) This one is a little sour.

B. I can't put that.

A. I wasn't suggesting you type ... Of course not. This one – reminds me of Melanie Sykes.

B. Ok..?

A. She was a little sour.

B. Oh come on, you can do better than that!

A. (*Deep breath*) 'this will pull you into a warm blanket of friendship promises and then wakes you up with a sharp citrus zest'

B. Beautiful!

A. Your turn.

B. You have to get them, I'm typing.

A. Ok! Division of labour, I get it. (*Handing the glasses*) Still - your turn.

B. (*Drinking*) Velvety smooth. Like honey and chocolate.

A. Oh please.

B. Alright! Velvety smooth, like De Niro in "the Godfather part 2": takes charge like a boss.

A. 'Takes charge like a boss'???!!

(*They both laugh a lot.*)

B. Look I'm typing it in. You now.

They are getting quit merry now. Facades are slipping. They reveal more than they want to)

A. This one is sweet. (*Another sip*) ridiculously so. Sweet like a 50's prom date.

B. A 50's prom date?!?

A. I had a date on my "prom", end of school dance. Soooo sweet and naive and innocent. Seriously like going back in time. Like a black and white movie. I felt rebellious and sex starved by comparison...

B. Ok then! Sweet like a 50's prom date is in here. Bit short though.

A. 'One can't help feeling that its true potential might lie in a further maturation of the grape...'

(*They both laugh*)

B. Ok - do me! Come on, describe me as wine!

A. *(Getting more wine)* I'm going to ignore the obvious thing to say there and - 'fruity, zesty, rich, chocolatey finish'

B. That's what I need...

A. Oh come on! Come on - loads to get through yet...

B. *(More wine)* 'good on the nose, great with fish.'

A. What the hell's wrong with you?! You can do better than that!

B. Flowery and citrus nose, delivers more subtlety on the palette than would be expected.

A. Aaaah that's better. And – you sound like you're in love...

B. Well that was a long time ago.

A. *(Pouring more wine)* and..?

B. And nothing. Long time ago.

(A looks at B in a 'please tell me' way)

A. Ok, you don't want to tell me...

B. Alright. I was bit of a hippy at school. I know, hard to believe now, but, I was. And then - it was one of those crazy things...

A. Meeting over hummus...

B. If you're going to take the piss I'm not going to tell you.

A. Ok ok I'm sorry. Please go on. Please.

B. We met up together, the only two in the school concerned about the environment, about recycling... But it was more than that. We had a deeper connection. A soul connection.

A. *(Unable to suppress laughter, bursts out laughing then sees B's face)* I'm so sorry, it was just the look on your face, I just couldn't...

B. *(a little hurt and angry)* Tell me about yours then!

A. Ok, yes, that's fair. New wine though. *(Gets wine)* Dancing on a stage in a nightclub.

B. I'm sorry?

A. That's where we were! Dancing on the stage together.

B. No no no we're still working - come on - wine it up.

A. The sweet sexy potential of this one will have you screaming for more.

B. Holy shit - I can't put that on the website!

A. Ha! No I didn't mean that...

B. No wait. Let's do that. Nobody gives a shit about these wine descriptions anyway. Let's do it. I bet nobody even reads them, they just look at the price. Do it! What did you say?

A. Can't remember.

B. Something about sweet sexy potential...

A. Will make you beg for more.

B. That will do. Next!

A. (*New wine*) this one (*smelling, then tasting and reacting badly to taste*) - thought it was going to be nicer.

B. Oh come on. That's going backwards! And - we're supposed to be selling this stuff, not putting people off...

A. That was just an instant reaction! Ok so - you may believe you know this one already but it will surprise you.

B. Mehthhhhhhh. What do you really think?

A. I went on a date with this once, I thought it was going to be nicer.

B. Ok that's going in.

A. You can't put that.

B. Watch me. My turn. (*More wine*) this one - this tastes just like the first one.

A. Could be me - it is me. Wow that you spotted it though. Ok. New wine!

B. Smells like the back of the Citroen borrowed from my mum, where I lost my virginity.

A. YES! Ok new wine... This one. Ahh this is soul mate wine.

B. Oh jeez that's bloody terrible. I don't care how much I've had I'm not putting that down.

A. This reminds me on the heady scent of musk of the kind of in love that lasts forever.

B. Worse! What's the matter with you?

A. It's coming up to Christmas and I'm here. Doing this. With you.

B. Not Christmas yet. And come on, don't we have the best job? Drink a truck load of wine and get paid for it?

A. Yeh I suppose.

B. And what's wrong with me?

A. What?

B. You said 'doing this, with you'

A. Didn't mean anything by it.

B. Yeh you did. Aren't we friends? I think of you as a friend...

A. Not just someone you drink with?

B. No. I have fun with you. We really "get" each other. I can't imagine being here with anyone else. Doing this at Christmas time - this is brilliant. To me.

A. I suppose I enjoy it too.

B. It's not soul-less. After a full on year in this tiny on-line business which is hard and not always fun, this is a great stress reliever!

A. Yes it is. Ok then. Ok then! Where were we? Right. This wine is a perfect accompaniment to most everything in your life. Ask it to move in and don't charge it rent.

B. Great! My turn (*taking wine from A*) this one - this one will keep you up at night begging for more.

A. YES! (Passing another) this is - Celia Bridson- age 20 and behaving like she's 40.

B. And this is - James Groad- always scratching his armpits when it got too warm!

A. This one is Frieda Hadge - pretty but never quite classy enough!

B. Brilliant! How many more are there?

A. Who cares? With what we've put on the website we'll be lucky if we have a job in the morning...
Let's carry on...!