



Castaway choices

DEBBY COLLINSON,
Lady Taverner and wine writer,
talks to fellow Taverners and

asks them their favourite
choices and wines, if landed
on a desert island

David Gower



Some girls get all the luck! I had hoped to interview David Gower over a glass or two in his cellar but my mission failed and the interview was

held over the phone. It is well known that David is a keen wine collector and I wanted to have a good nose around, especially as his collection apparently includes some pretty impressive stuff. And he has some stories to tell.

"I was once in Burgundy in the cellars of Etienne Sauzet in Puligny with the winemaker Gerard Boudot and Mark Reynier of La Reserve." says David.

"Mark had introduced me as the Platini of England and then patiently spent 20 minutes explaining to Gerard the rules of cricket and how to play. As we all know, it is difficult enough to explain cricket in English, let alone in French. Then

suddenly, a friend of Boudot, also French, walks in and explains it all in 20 seconds in rapid French – and correctly!

"As we all stood open-mouthed, Mark produced his video and asked him to do it all over again, which he did! This video still exists but where, I don't know."

So you are on a desert island, your Tiger Moth (complete with family on the wings) having run out of fuel. What would your wish list be?

"Definitely some Bollinger vintage champagne! Etienne Sauzet's Puligny Montrachet. Then some 1985 Lynch-Bages (Pauillac) and Marquis d'Angerville (Burgundy). Then across the Equator to South Africa for some Thelema cabernet sauvignon and down to Australia for Geoff Merrill's chardonnay.

"My essential luxury would be a completely comprehensive audio/visual and hi-fi system with lots of music and videos and then I could also watch the cricket on Sky.

Margaret Price

So you are on a desert island. What is your wish list?

"Lots of cigarettes and plenty of gin and tonic. We don't really keep a cellar at home but buy a

lot of wine from the Sunday Times Wine Club – I am very much a red wine drinker and I have come to prefer those from the New World.

"I am also a big fan of port. When England retained the Ashes in 1972(?), all the players received a case of Taylors which would not be ready for drinking for 25 years. Amazingly we still have a few bottles left and we drank some at my birthday this year. I also have a weakness for Lanson Rose Champagne, and Moët NV – they always hit the right spot.

"Apart from the ciggies in quantities which would make the UK Customs chaps' eyes water, some light reading such as a full set of Dick Francis would go down well. As John would be in Australia watching the demise of the English cricket team, I'd need some cerebral company. Stephen Fry would be perfect and a good raconteur. I do like sporty men too and I would need some exercise – John Newcombe could teach me tennis and I could teach him! Then I would have to have someone to cook for me. Gary Rhodes – he is just a magic creative chef.

"The ultimate luxury would have to be Frank Sinatra – he wouldn't need to play cricket or tennis, just sing to me.

"And one more thing – a very large notepad to write the history of the Lady Taverners – something I have been thinking about for some time."



"My wife Clare and I are very into wine," says Ainsley, "and we have done the Christies wine course but I think we are both too busy to for a serious

wine cellar – we tend to buy wine to consume more or less at the time rather than keeping it.

"I have a few bottles of Chateau Talbot and others lying around – more of a mini-museum rather than a serious wine cellar. The greatest wine I have ever drunk was a Lafitte from the 60s. I am very lucky to go to the most amazing dinners and drink the most amazing wines – but sometimes the wines come so quickly on to the table that you forget what they are."

So here you are, lazing on your catamaran and drifting away on some wonderful dream with no Fern Britton to cuddle you. What would your first necessary item be?

"My chopper – I could cut down and chop all the fresh products, plantain, sweet potatoes, and coconuts. Then I would catch fish and put together a feast.

"My first drink request would have to be cacaca in the hope that there would be lots of limes and sugar cane to scrunch up to make caiparinhas.

"If Clare was not on the catamaran with me I'd hope to run into some really interesting people – someone like Maya Angelou; being a poet she speaks gently but with fire and passion – I wouldn't be bored.

"I would while my hours away playing cricket and footie on the beach – I'd like to have Mike Brearley, Michael Holding, Mike Atherton and Ian Botham with me to talk about their experiences – all those old times they could talk about.

Jonners too, he was wonderful. I remember him always being so stylish and generous natured when I worked in the kitchens at Lord's."