

Wines

# Wining and dining on Air Malta



Michael Tabone

Returning home from Paris this weekend on an Air Malta flight, I asked for some red wine to accompany my meal and was told there is a €4 charge - a new strategy since up to a few months ago wine was complimentary.

There was only one wine available: the rather tired, vinegary and brown-looking Pjazza Regina Valletta by Emmanuel Delicata in quarter bottle with no vintage or grape varieties. Incidentally, the chicken with curried rice and olives was equally unpleasant. But nothing new there.

Now before anyone mentions cost-cutting, saving our national airline, patriotism... let me clearly state that I am patriotic and would love Air Malta to survive and to become the best airline in the world, just like every Joseph, Jurgen or Clint.

But as a frequent user of our national airline and now that I have

to pay for my wine, I think that, at least, a decent wine should be offered and even better, there should be a choice of two or three.

I assume that this new charge is meant to generate revenue and push up profitability. While I am not totally convinced that there would be a big demand for Ch Latour, I am certain that a choice of a couple of good Maltese wines, and maybe an Italian or French, could generate an interest.

Why not have a small wine list of half bottles for the benefit of those discerning passengers, Maltese and visitors alike?

Better still, why not make the excellent food served in first class available to all passengers against payment? I am sure there is some whizz kid who can come up with the software, so that when you are booking your flight online, a banner comes up suggesting to upgrade your meal at perhaps an extra €10 or €15. A similar service already exists for diabetic and coeliac travellers.

Passengers who go for this option can be seated in the front rows, so as not to complicate matters for the stewards. Or even better... forget about this and spread those having the first-class food around the plane so as to tempt those sitting next to them.



Air Malta could provide a better wining and dining experience.

Make sure there are a few extra first-class trays to sell on the spot. Space on planes could be an issue; maybe even security, but surely

my suggestions are not impossible. It's a bit of a win-win(e) situation. Lunch or dinner-time flights would become much more

enjoyable, Air Malta would make more money and we would increase the quality aspect to our islands for the benefit of all.

## Chinese become world's top tipplers of 'lucky' red wine



The Chinese drank 1.865 billion bottles of red wine last year.

China has overtaken France and Italy to become the world's number one consumer of red wine, although the US remains the world's biggest tippler of all types of wines, the wine and spirits trade association Vinexpo said.

China drank 1.865 billion bottles of red wine last year, or in trade terms 155 million nine-litre cases, contributing to a 136 per cent increase in consumption over five years.

That beat France into second place for red wine and Italy into third, Vinexpo said, based on figures compiled by the London-based International Wine and Spirit Research firm.

The reason for the massive surge in red wine drinking in China, apart from growing affluence, is the Chinese preference for red over white on cultural grounds based on the colour, said Guillaume Deglise, the new CEO of Vinexpo.

**"Red is the colour of luck and good fortune"**

"Red is the colour of luck and good fortune, and white is the colour of death in China," Deglise said.

"So you don't want to drink white, why would you?"

As the Chinese market matures, Deglise said he also expected an increase in consumption of white wines and champagne.

Overall, the US remains the world's top wine consumer, Vinexpo said, with China remaining in fifth place and not expected to change that ranking in the immediate future, the organisation said.

Since 2011, the US has been the world's largest wine consumer, with consumption expected to hit 385 million cases by 2017. (Reuters)

THE SUNDAY TIMES MALTA

**WIN A CARVERY BUFFET DINNER FOR FOUR at the Cornucopia Hotel, Xaghra**

The Cornucopia Hotel, in the heart of the Gozitan countryside, is a converted farmhouse hotel full of local character.

The Cornucopia Hotel in Xaghra is offering a carvery buffet dinner for four, including wine and water. Reservation is necessary and is always subject to availability. Readers are invited to answer the following question and send it to *The Sunday Times of Malta* Carvery Buffet for Four, P.O. Box 328, Valletta. Kindly include your name, address, telephone and identity card number when sending your replies.

Entries must be submitted by February 6. For information, visit [www.vjborg.com](http://www.vjborg.com) or call 2155 6486.

**Question: How many rooms does the Cornucopia Hotel have?**

NAME: ..... ADDRESS: .....  
TELEPHONE: ..... ID CARD: .....



The winner of the Carvery Buffet Dinner for Four at the Cornucopia Hotel competition, published on January 26, is Doris Triganza of San Gwann.