

JANUARY 2012

What's Happening

magazine

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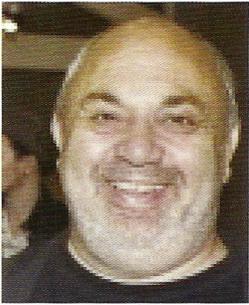
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DR VANDENBURG WILL SEE YOU NOW

MALCOLM VANDENBURG BSC MBBS FISMA FCP FFPM FRCP

Christmas is a special time for our family. We have 3 birthdays in December, as well as the entire holiday period with all our family traditions; none more important than all gathering for my Mum's birthday. Born Fanny Plozka on the Upper Clapton Road, which she says, is definitely not "The East End".

This year was her 95th, so we did something special!

It is also the month of my birthday and last year, at Komedia Comedy Club, Brighton's very own Marilyn Monroe, the unofficial Miss Brighton and Hove, Laura Nixon, had me on stage to sing Happy Birthday to me, re-living, the Marilyn tribute to president JFK. I had to stand behind her with my arms around her, getting more and more embarrassed, unlike, many of my patients, Viagra was not needed. You wouldn't believe where she put my hands!

The Vandenburgs are very good at doing something special for Fay's birthday. Sunday Lunch was family time. All the kids came down from London and Fay tried to stay in bed all day. But her very kind carer, Erika, managed to cajole her out and put on a dress, which Fay insisted was not hers.

We all met up at Alfresco's restaurant on the Front in the old Milk Bar, where 50 years ago, I was always sneaking into, without Fay's permission. This time no permission was needed. Despite some of the reviews on TripAdvisor; we have always found it to be friendly, helpful, over generous, great home Italian cooking and of course, the views are stunning.

I've always thought that I would buy shares in it. The owner, Giuseppe has always exuded a "welcome to my home bon vivance". His daughter Alex is trying to steer him into the 21st century but I'm sure it is a source of "good Italian family rows"...no horse's head in the bed I hope.

It's Fay's favourite restaurant in Brighton, they will always cook her what she wants, and not only is she fussy but "what she wants" changes ten times before the order, five times during ordering, five times after ordering and once after her food has arrived.

My girlfriend hates the restaurant! She is trying to control my weight and Giuseppe always trying to be a great host; adds many

extra courses unordered and unrequested but always joyously received.

On this occasion, it was Parma Ham and Caponata and my children's special order of Zucchini Fritti, which rates with Harry's Bar in Venice, if not surpasses it. Not forgetting to mention the extra dessert, extra Christmas Panettone and ad-lib Vino Santo. This particularly favourite dessert wine of mine rounded off the day, as did Champagnes, Bellini's, Chiantis and my favourite white wine Gavi di Gavi. Like New York, so nice they "named it twice"

I've gone into this in some detail, not that you are interested but Mike and Jennifer Mendoza are starting a Brighton food magazine, so I'm told; and I want to change from a Medical Columnist to being the Michael



Winner of Brighton. Being invited to the opening of restaurants would be a gourmet's (or possibly in my case, a gourmand's) OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder) passion. The first being someone who loves good food, the second being someone who appreciates any food in excess.

The next day, on her actual birthday, my closest Brighton relatives, my best Brighton friend and my wonderful three helpers came for another blow out. As well as Erika, Vanessa my secretary and Mariles my housekeeper put on a spread to die for. I thank them all.

The menu this time all locally sourced in Portslade; was smoked salmon, scallops and prawns. Then after we had goose, chicken and pheasant, a three-bird roast.

Wines this time were pink house champagne, a white Voignier for everyone

apart from Fay; who only drinks Pinot Grigio which helps her dance on tables even at 95. The red; a Chateaufeuf du Pape and a dessert wine plus a single-malt Japanese whisky; which I got addicted to with my many visits to Tokyo, developing medications for all the Japanese pharmaceutical companies including surprisingly, Japan Tobacco.

And that reminds me; we finished the evenings with the finest Cuban cigars, rolled for me by a tobacco farmer on my recent visit to Cuba. "We finished" is a misnomer as it should really be "I finished"... as being a good doctor; I was the only smoker at the table.

A patient once said to me, "Doctor Vandenburg, if I don't smoke, drink or go out with women, will I live for ever?"

I replied, "No, but it will seem like it!"

Please note as all good adverts must, smoking is bad for your health and you must drink in moderation. I am sure I did, although Mike who was with us may disagree.

The next day, I had my painful, annoying, debilitating slipped disk injected and I was told that I was the first patient this year; who had the procedure without sedation and anaesthetic. It's not that I am brave, but my simple calculations tell me my blood alcohol concentration was still in pain-relieving concentration. I remembered, like everyone should that the day after a good party, although feeling well, I was and you may be still over the blood alcohol level for driving. Be careful!

When I was a medical student, we used to joke, that an alcoholic was someone who drank more than his or her Doctor.

Perhaps the living proof of this is Medical Correspondent to "What's Happening Magazine"

Don't forget that I will answer any of your medical questions, and if we don't get more, your punishment would be to read about my life.

Please send me your medical questions, but also the invitations to any new restaurant openings, or celebration parties or events.

I have a Charitable Trust and always like going to Charity Balls as well.

From one bon viveur to Brighton's two hundred and fifty thousand others, Happy New Year!