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I went looking for solace in the bottom of a bottle. A few bottles, actually. But it wasn't there. I went looking for comfort in the arms of a woman. Well, more than one, actually. And it wasn't, in the long run, there. And I went looking for satisfaction in the act of cooking a meal for a new friend. And – strangely enough for this food anorak – I did find much comfort there.

Yoghurt roast chicken

Serves 4

A covering of yoghurt, particularly if you marinate the chicken for a while, keeps the flesh moist. I have used some strong spices, but you could just use paprika to allow the chicken flavour to shine more brightly.

- 1 whole, fresh No 16 free-range chicken
- 1 medium red (Spanish) onion, chopped
- 1 tsp salt
- 4 cloves, garlic, crushed
- thumb-size piece fresh ginger, grated
- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- finely grated zest and juice of ½ lime
- 1 tsp cumin seed, ground
- 1 tsp coriander seed, ground
- 1 tsp garam masala
- 200g natural yoghurt

It'll take you: 15 minutes to make the marinade (best done ahead), then 1 hour to roast the chicken.

Rinse and pat dry the chicken.

Use a food processor to puree the onion, adding the salt to help it grind. Add the garlic and ginger and keep pureeing until it's kinda smooth. Fry this mix in the oil (maybe adding a touch more oil if it's impossibly dry) until the raw smell of the onion dissipates. Cool slightly, then stir in the zest and juice, spices and yoghurt. Smear this mixture all over the chicken, even inside the cavity, until well covered. Allow to stand half an hour, or overnight in the fridge if you're organised.

Preheat the oven to 200°C. Roast the chicken, preferably raised on a trivet, for 1 hour or until cooked through. Serve with steamed rice or naan bread and some vegetables. **GW**

BY HUON HOOKE

Wine

2005
Shingleback
Cabernet
Sauvignon

Cabernet and merlot-based reds used to be thought to have a definite varietal signature that included some cassis or crushed-leaf aromas. But lately, cabernet-family wines that smell or taste at all "leafy" or "herbal" are likely to be dismissed as "green". That is, made from under-ripe grapes.

A corollary of this trend is that the cabernets that do well in wine shows are from warm climates such as McLaren Vale, Barossa Valley and Clare, and tend to be high in alcohol and taste less cabernet-like. Shingleback winning the Jimmy Watson Trophy with its D Block Reserve Cabernet '05 is a case in point. The wine has recently been released and is an excellent red, but at \$60, it's not cheap. The regular '05 cabernet, at \$26, is very good value.

Super-ripe, high-alcohol cabernet can be rich and sweet-fruited, and retain varietal character. Here are three that have impressed me lately.

2005 Shingleback Cabernet Sauvignon, McLaren Vale, 14.5 per cent, \$26 Rich earthy, toasty and chocolate aromas with underlying berries, and a solid structure finishing with a firm grip. Masses of blackberry flavour. What it lacks in elegance it makes up in generosity. 92/100. Distributors: (03) 9768 3022; (02) 9713 5180.

2005 Summerfield "Tradition", Pyrenees, 14.8 per cent, \$27 A blend of merlot, shiraz, cabernet sauvignon and cabernet franc. Rich and sweetly ripe with warm, dark berry aromas and a sumptuous, fleshy palate that lingers well. Very ripe but retains freshness. 93/100. Winery: (03) 5467 2264. Distributor: (03) 9596 6444.

2006 Kaesler Cabernet Sauvignon, Barossa Valley, 15 per cent, \$25 A gutsy, ballsy red, still with varietal signature, in a lusciously berry-ish style with hints of toasty oak and subtle chocolate/vanilla. Fleshy, supple and dense, its flavours flood the mouth. 93/100. Distributors: (08) 9878 7848; (02) 9427 5222. **GW**

