

## Spurrier - a different sort of knockout

8 Sep 2007 by JR

Last week the entire Trefethen family – Janet, John and their 20ish children Loren and Hayley – decamped from their winery in the new Oak Knoll AVA to London to receive an award at the Decanter World Wine Awards dinner.

The next day they were invited to lunch by *Decanter* contributor and begetter of the famously decisive Judgment of Paris California v France tastings [Steven Spurrier](#) at his club, Boodles. This is one of those strange St James's institutions whose very existence is maintained by a series of arcane rules designed to raise the blood pressure of any right thinking person, by the way.

The Trefethens arrived more or less on time. They were joined by Michael and Daphne Broadbent whom Spurrier had also invited to lunch. They all sat there making small talk for between 40 and 60 minutes but with no sign of their host.

Then, miraculously, came a call from Spurrier – in hospital – to report that just outside the Victoria & Albert Museum someone had knocked him off his bike, concussed him, and he was very sorry but he would not be able to make it to lunch.

This is very sad, and Spurrier has since spent at least four nights in hospital, even though it has been established that no brain damage has been incurred – and he has been rather cross and desperate to leave.

Such are the mores of these strange outposts of a previous civilisation (I refer to gents' clubs) that neither Broadbents nor Trefethens were allowed to pay for their lunch – indeed the only reason they were even allowed to stay in Boodle's in the absence of their host was that the steward happened to have been manager of an hotel at which Janet Trefethen happened to have stayed at previously.

The upshot is that once Spurrier is returned to normal – soon, please – he will be presented with the lunch bill the Trefethens and Broadbents racked up while he was under the supervision of emergency services. I wonder what they drank?

This is not a good time for the close-knit group of English wine lovers which agglomerated around Spurrier when he was running Caves de la Madeleine in Paris in the 1970s. Tim Johnston of Juveniles suffered a mild stroke recently but is making good progress.