

thought to go into the centrepiece dishes. When someone goes to the trouble of baking a vacherin (and in E's case, a reblochon), devising exquisitely thin, complicated crackers (mine was rye, technically a tuile), changing the way you look at these seminal, ubiquitous cheeses just by monkeying with the textures and introducing a trace of wine, then you have to say, fair enough: truly, there is passion in this kitchen, not just goody-two-shoes perfectionism and urbane professionalism.

Puds were straight out of a 1970s dinner party - E had a pavé of Valrhona chocolate. OK, that's a buzzword of the past half decade, as adult and

sophisticated as chocolate gets, but the rich, pared-down density of the pavé itself reminded me of those recipe books you'd see at your mum's house, never prouder than a dessert that contained only chocolate and cream and could drop a depth charge in your arteries. Which is not to say it was too rich - salted caramel ice cream and a hazelnut sable could take the edge off anything. I had a prune soufflé with armagnac ice cream. Both excellent, expert, fun, maybe a bit themey.

This place is so hard to get into that you'll be desperate for a table: but relax, when it finally happens, you won't be disappointed. ●

Mark Whitefield



## NAME OF THE GAME

### Adam's

21a Bennetts Hill, Birmingham (0121 643 3745) After winning a Michelin star within six months of opening this restaurant, Adam Stokes is still wowing diners with his intricate tasting menus. The evening line-up (five courses for £50 or nine for £80) includes loin of hare with spiced red cabbage and armagnac jus

### Percy's

Virginstow, Devon (01409 211236) With 130 acres of woodland to explore, you might want to spend longer than a lunchtime at this country hotel. The menu (£40 for three courses) stars brassicas from the raised beds and home-cured bacon from the estate's organically reared pigs - great with seared scallops

### Jesse's

The Stableyard, Black Jack Street, Cirencester (01285 641497) This friendly bistro is a joy to discover, tucked down a side-street in an old brick stableyard. There's a butcher's shop next door, so expect great steaks, and loin of Gatcombe lamb with a delicious celeriac risotto (£24.50)

# Drink

The new face of a two-centuries-old wine business, Mimi Avery exudes enthusiasm, says *Susy Atkins*

Mimi Avery has stepped into some very big shoes. Her grandfather, Ronald Avery, one of the great pioneers of the British wine trade, headed off to Bordeaux in the 1920s, sniffing out "new" areas such as Pomerol. Her father, John Avery, went further afield from the 1960s, sourcing some of our first New Zealand and Australia wines. Now Mimi is the face of Averys of Bristol. She appears undaunted - a "can do" character of great energy who dives

and skis in her spare time. She meets me in the ancient Averys cellars with a bleached crop and bright-pink coat. Wine surely must be in the family's blood? "As babies we did dip our fingers into champagne," she says.

Averys is now part of the huge Laithwaites/Direct Wine umbrella group (the Averys branch runs *The Telegraph's* wine club, but there is no connection between the club

## Tippie Tip

HOW SWEET IT IS...

Estrella Moscatel Vino Dulce from Valencia, Spain, is my current favourite bargain - a luscious, honeyed, orange-tinged dessert wine that shines with hot fruit puddings and creamy blue cheeses. And only 10 per cent alcohol. *Morrisons, £4.89 for 75cl*

and this column), but it has kept an independent quality: Mimi holds regular tastings of its own range in the cellars and hopes to expand the loyal fan base, especially towards younger, female wine lovers.

Top tips, then, from the new generation of Avery? "Anyone who loves Alsace should try Austrian whites, especially the grüner veltliner grape," she says. "It makes 'foodie' whites, fuller than some." Portugal is a huge passion too, for its "unique" styles made from local grapes - she has expanded the range to 15 - and beaujolais reds another highlight. And South Africa clearly thrills her. Here are three wines that inspire her in her new role, and which appealed to me too. *averys.com*

## TRY THESE

### Casa Silva Petit Verdot Gran Reserva 2009

Colchagua Valley, Chile (£12.99) Richer, but fresh-tasting Chilean from a rare variety, with juicy mulberry fruit and a sprinkle of black pepper. Decant and serve with roast lamb

### Portuga 2012 Lisboa, Portugal (£6.99)

An exciting blend of both Portuguese and international red grapes creates this well-balanced, Parma-violet-scented wine with delicious, soft plummy, pruny notes

### Invivo Sauvignon Blanc 2013

Marlborough, New Zealand (£10.99) Beautifully crafted, superior NZ sauv blanc, lightly grassy, infused with passionfruit. Mouth-watering and more delicate than some

