



Monday 10th October 2022

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. Blustery and autumnal this Sunday morning. Still mild though !

Here is just the one tasty recipes you could try this week:

Cavolo Nero and Parsnip Rosti

400g potatoes, unpeeled

4 tbsp olive oil

3 cloves garlic, crushed

175g cavolo nero, leaves shredded

2 tsp vegetable bouillon powder

300g parsnips, unpeeled

2 onions, roughly chopped

400g tin cannellini beans, drained and rinsed

200ml tub crème fraîche, or non-dairy alternative

3 tbsp French mustard

Preheat the oven to 200°C/ Gas 6. Scrub, then boil the potatoes and parsnips for 5 minutes, then drain. Heat 2 tbs of oil in a saucepan and fry the onions for 5 minutes until lightly browned. Add the garlic and fry for another minute. Stir in the beans and cavolo and cook for a few minutes, stirring until the cavolo has wilted. Add the crème fraîche, bouillon powder, mustard and 150ml water and stir. Turn into an ovenproof dish and spread level. Coarsely grate the potatoes and parsnips into a bowl. Stir in the remaining oil and some seasoning. Mix well. Tip out onto the cavolo mixture and spread evenly. Bake for 45-50 minutes.

My home has been turned upside down this week by the arrival of an overbearing intruder.

Years ago when big screen TV's became a thing, I remember when I used to visit my brother in his house in Teddington, he was so proud of his massive TV which dominated his living room, taking up the whole wall. He would lie on the sofa, volume on full, flicking through the channels, roaring with laughter at Friends for 5 minutes, onto the rugby, back to Friends et al.

I don't speak to my brother that often, but when I do, one of the first things he says is 'have you got a new TV yet'. When he visits he looks in the corner at my old one 'when are you going to get a new TV?'. I've been very happy with my 25-yr old TV for 25 years. It's a Bang and Olufsen, it's burgundy, and it has a motorised stand. It really was the business back then and I have loved it ever since. With a Freeview box I have been able to get all the channels.

A couple of weeks ago ominous lines started rolling down the screen. They would settle after a few minutes and I could still watch it. Against all instinct I decided to get a new one. I contacted the TV expert, my brother, and asked him for a recommendation. He sent me a link to a 65" LG OLED ULTRA HD SMART TV. I scaled it back and bought the 49" which already seemed huge, along with a tripod stand.

The local TV man came round to set it all up and show me how to use it. It is big and thin, and since then, my life has been hell. I am in agony with back ache, having spent days dragging furniture around trying to incorporate this huge black thing it into my living space. I've tried it in every possible place. Nothing works. It's an alien. The balance of the room, the balance of colours, shapes, heights, is completely messed up. It's ruined everything. It's even ruined the room next door as I have swapped so much furniture around.

Having done the tour, the new TV is now back where my beloved burgundy TV had been. The screen is high up on the tripod, it obscures the glimpse I had out of the 3rd living room window into the garden. Everyone who walks past the house can now see what I'm watching and given that my road is full of academics and hikers, I now have to close the curtain to hide Tipping Point. I normally come down on a Sunday morning and put the politics shows on to murmur in the background. This morning the whole room became The Laura Kuenssberg Show. I turned the volume down and listened to it from the next room. Domestic bliss this is not. Oh for the good old days. I told a neighbour of my angst. 'That's a very 1st world problem to have'.

It definitely is, but nonetheless it's ruining my life. I sent my brother a photo of it in situ yesterday prompting a phone call this morning to ask how I was getting on and what the 'clarity' was like. 'It's great' I told him. I have had to move paintings from the wall that the new TV semi-obliterates to reveal huge oblongs of the original paint colour and banged in nails. What a mess.

Why on earth would Liz Truss scrap the public information campaign on how to reduce energy consumption. Apart from it being very useful, and for every possible reason we need to reduce it, people want to come together with common purpose, to act as one, and especially in these frightening and bewildering times. To feel part of something bigger than oneself, to feel part of society. This was clear in the early days of the pandemic. It was demonstrated during WWII, it was demonstrated just the other week when the Queen died. We are so polarised and divided as a nation and I can't believe anyone enjoys that. Common purpose transcends our differences be it cultural, religious, political. Millions here feel marginalised, out on a limb, and with no sense of belonging. A society can be melded and feel inclusive. It isn't nanny state'ism, it's good 'leadership'. Underneath the grin, Liz 'go your own way' Truss is not a confident person. She's supposed to be our Prime Minister but has yet to address us about anything. She knows she's only there by fluke, and a flawed electoral system. The sooner she trots off the better before she gets to trash our economy any more, and then starts on the environment.

PR, proportional representation, becomes more appealing by the day to end the perpetual divisions: to bring other parties, green parties, to the table; a better calibre of politician, of human being, who may feel there is some point in standing. Late perhaps, but I am now a total convert. I get it.

I hope you have a good week,

Kind wishes,

Isobel