Sloe Gin World Championships

Monday 1 December, 2014

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he George pub in Frant, East Sussex near Tunbridge Wells is to again host the Sloe Gin World Championships on Wednesday 10th December from 1.00pm.

Artisan sloe gin makers from across the world will gather at the popular village pub on the Kent/Sussex border, to vie for the coveted Sloe Ginster World Champion title for 2014. This Christmas will mark the 6th year of the popular annual event which began when pub locals began arguing over the perfect sloe gin recipe.

All proceeds of the event are donated to the MS Society which supports people with Multiple Sclerosis www.mssociety.org.uk.

Moondown mushrooming and Christmas wreaths

Locals looking for advice as to where they can forage wild sloes can visit Moondown website www.moondown.co.uk. Based at Bells Yew Green, near Tunbridge Wells, the company teaches county crafts, making Christmas wreaths and hosts wild mushroom foraging courses.

Sloe Gin Recipe:

Fill a wide-necked jar half way with pricked drupes and add 4 ounces (110 g) of sugar for each 1 imperial pint (570 ml) of sloes. Fill the jar with gin, seal and turn several times to mix, then stored in a cool, dark place. Turn every day for the first two weeks, then weekly, for at least three months. The gin develops a deep ruby colour. The liqueur is poured off and the drupes removed. Some sloe ginsters reuse the berries infused in white wine or cider, made into jam, as a basis for a chutney, or a filling for liqueur pudding or chocolates. The liqueur is then filtered into clean bottle or and left to stand for another week. The sweetness can be adjusted to taste at the end of the process by addition of more sugar. Allowing the drupes sufficient time to ensure full extraction, the gin develops an almond-like essence and aromatic flavour from the sloes' stones. In some recipes, the process is accelerated with the inclusion a few drops of almond essence, cloves and a cinnamon stick of cinnamon.

Editors' Notes: Two miles south of Tunbridge Wells, Frant is bordered by Eridge Park and is on the High Weald Walk making it a popular stop for walkers. The heart of the local community, the busy George pub has its own golf society, "the Gofers" and is a meeting point for several local clubs and societies. Winter is enlivened by the Monday night quiz, special food nights, and darts competitions.

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