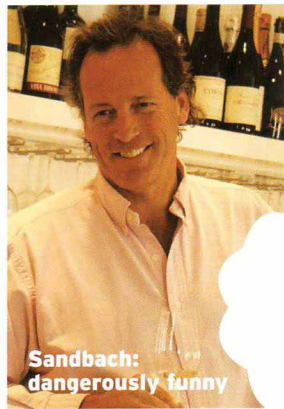


Piper bites off more than he can chew



Piper:
celebratory tippie



Sandbach:
dangerously funny

Now we hear a lot about the camaraderie between independent wine merchants, but nothing quite beats this tale of derring-do and quick thinking from Oxford Wine's Ted Sandbach – much to the relief of Chris Piper from Christopher Piper Wines.

The two met up for what was supposed to be a quiet lunch while Sandbach was on holiday in Ottery St Mary, just down the road from Christopher Piper headquarters.

All was going swimmingly until Piper, laughing from yet another Sandbach joke, found a piece of steak from his sandwich lodged in the back of his throat. As he desperately tried to dislodge it, Sandbach watched dumbfounded as Piper suddenly went red and redder, and then turned a worrying blue.

Realising the seriousness of the situation, Sandbach quickly jumped up to clasp Piper around the waist, to attempt the famous

Heimlich manoeuvre. As he squeezed, Piper grasped what he hoped would be a glass of water, but could only find his lunchtime glass of Viognier. Either way it did the trick and out popped the offending piece of steak, washed away by slug-fuls of wine.

The incident was not going to ruin the lunch, says Sandbach. He told Shurely Not: “The affable Chris, watery eyed and hugely relieved, celebrated with another glass of wine.”