



BOB TYRER ON THE BOTTLE

When I had a hole drilled in my jaw for a tooth implant last month, the dentist told me to lay off alcohol for four days while the antibiotics did their work. I felt so virtuous after the four days that I kept going. But on my way to work on the seventh day, the phone rang with the news that Marie Colvin had been killed. That evening, the corkscrew came out again.

Marie would have been thrilled by the vast amount of booze sunk in her honour by her friends over the past four weeks. Envious, too. My personal contribution has been relatively modest — but with memorable moments. On the evening of her death, I opened a treasured wine made by Vanya Cullen, a woman as well known in her trade as Marie was in hers — and for the same reason: she combines an open-hearted modesty with extreme skill and perfectionism. I think Marie would have adored both Vanya and her heart-liftingly fresh and spicy Diana Madeleine Cabernet-Merlot 2001 (the 2009 is £54.50 from winedirect.co.uk).

She would also have revelled in another highlight: a glamorous journey in a fleet of Jaguar XKRs to Epernay, in Champagne, by invitation of Pol Roger to taste its 2002 vintage. Her war reporting was far removed from PR jollies, but she had the *joie de vivre* to have embraced this one. All the champagne-makers are proud of their 2002s, an outstanding year. Pol Roger's, which will cost £60-ish when it reaches the market next month, is minerally and restrained and will probably blossom fully in 10 years' time, when I hope I'll be able to afford a bottle in Marie's memory.

