

# Two bottles of wine? Let's make it four...

John Rink on an unforgettable fourball at Swinley Forest

When most *Golf Quarterly* readers think of Peter Alliss I suspect his wonderful golf commentaries and (perhaps) his slightly risqué on-air comments come to mind. I and two good friends have another reason to remember him.

Thirty years or so ago the three of us, partners in a London law firm, bought 'A round with Alliss' at a charity auction (as I recall, it was in aid of the National Association of Boys Clubs). Roger Davies, one of the others, is a fine golfer who narrowly missed his Blue at Cambridge but played in the dinner match against Oxford (the foursomes and singles games between the two reserves on each side). My golf has always been disappointingly ordinary and our third member, Gideon Hudson, is one of the few people I know whose golf makes mine look quite good!

Having purchased our round we contacted the charity fully expecting to have to organise everything ourselves. Far from it; Peter was

inviting us to be his guest at Swinley Forest and was happy for us to nominate a Tuesday (so as not to clash with his TV commitments) of our choosing. A date was soon fixed and we turned up, slightly nervous, on the appointed day. Before long Peter's chariot (could it have been a slightly-dated Roller?) with his famous number plate of PUT3 hove into view. His chauffeur got out followed by Peter who welcomed us like long-lost friends.



After changing we assembled on the first tee, Peter's chauffeur having morphed into his caddie. We agreed that Roger and I would take on Peter and Gideon and that the stake would be the lunchtime claret. Suffice to say that Gideon's golf started slowly and faded quickly. Peter hit some lovely shots but often just a degree or two off line. Throughout, however, he was great company, giving us little bits of advice and an endless supply of stories. Roger and I eventually prevailed by a score which was entirely unimportant (possibly 3 and 2) except that it determined

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holes (much needed for sobering purposes). He bid us goodbye, his caddie morphed back into the chauffeur, and off they went.

We thought that that was the end of it – but no. Two days later each of us received a hand written letter from Peter thanking us for the day, telling us how much he had enjoyed it and inviting us to make contact if we were ever at a tournament where he

who bought the wine.

Gideon got into lunch first and, being somewhat embarrassed about the quality of his golf, decided to buy two bottles so as to cover his partner's half of the stake. When Peter arrived he immediately said 'oh two bottles each is it?' and bought two more. There followed a wonderfully relaxed and entertaining session which must have lasted at least a couple of hours. Peter regaled us with more stories but also showed a real interest in us and our lives. Better company one could not have wished for. Eventually he decided it was time to leave but not before organising for the three of us to play nine afternoon

was commentating; sheer class.

I don't think any of us ever did subsequently contact him. I am sure that he has no memory of what, for him, must have been an unexceptional round of golf played, some thirty years ago, with three rather unexceptional lawyers. If any *Golf Quarterly* readers are in contact with him I would be delighted if they would show him this little piece and tell him that, whilst he doubtless won't remember the day, he gave the three of us an experience we won't forget.

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