

Maybe it's a man thing? Who knows? But I, like most men I know, I do like BBQ's and using them. It can't just be men have a predilection for buying things, because if Lyn my wife and I, are as similar to the rest of society as we are to our friends, then most men and women are the same, we just hanker after different things!

Take clothes, a forthcoming Wedding, necessitates a cornucopia of items for Lyn to be able to attend, Dresses, hats, shoes, gloves, fascinators all need to be considered and debated, ending with a visit to the shops that sell such attire.

When entering such emporiums, I like many men, am very well trained. I settle in a suitable comfortable chair, and look around to see what refreshments may be on offer to keep men folk quiet when they are effectively being "crèched"

This leads to another side issue, that if no refreshments are available, the apparel bought may not cost too much. If Coffee and biscuits are available, the cost of the purchases may be high but reasonable. However, you should be aware of dress and hat shops that provide Sky Sports and Champagne, purchases made in such establishments will, make you wince "if" you ever eventually find out what the items cost, which is unlikely!

Why do I start talking about buying dresses, not BBQ's? Simple, BBQ's are not normally a purchase that elicits any excitement from the fairer sex, so such purchases have to be made surreptitiously, covertly, anonymously and never, ever discussed in front of one's partner.

Back to the dress shop, whilst as I said, I am trained to look for a comfy chair, pull out my phone and bide my time and wait. Should I be stupid enough to ask Lyn "how long will you be? (meaning is it worth starting to watch this Netflix film) I will only get a withering look, from not only my wife, but the gaggle of assistants, offering advice, holding items up and gathering things in. I believe the Greeks called this gathering the "Harpies" forcing me down into the seat and hide behind my Smartphone. No such courtesy is extended for looking at BBQ's however!

Normally when I suggest walking around a Chandlers or a Camping Accessory shop, I am asked "what do we need?" Saying "I don't know till I see it" is not apparently an answer, So gets me led away from said shop, at a brisk pace, with me looking longingly over my shoulder. So I need a better plan!

I have resorted to a tactic that many of us are familiar with, when our wives suddenly appear with a nice new dress, and when asked if it is new "This old thing? I've had it ages"

So with nearly the whole of August off, I ordered the Dometic Classic grill and one of all of the accessories and cheerfully loaded them into our Camper along with all of the other holiday equipment, so no one was any of the wiser (This old thing? I've had it ages theory)

The Dometic Classic Grill/BBQ (classic Grill) has been around for some time and has evolved and much improved from the earlier "Cramer" version that Dometic purchased many years ago. The thing that had always put me off was the massive array of extras available for the grill, and the need to order gas connectors separately, even a choice of legs.

My logic was that if I was going to be hung for a Sprat I may as well catch a Mackerel, so I took the plunge and ordered one of everything that Dometic make for their Grill BBQ and headed off for France.

After a couple of days, we were shopping with our best mates who we'd joined on holiday and I announced that I wanted to rotisserie a couple of chickens for that night's dinner as I really "fancied rotisserie chicken"

Lyn asked me how I intended to cook rotisserie chicken and Jeff unintentionally (Or was it?) dobbed me in by casually announcing that I'd ordered a new BBQ and "loads of accessories"

So with that "I'll get you later" look, that all married men know, the look you get when you've been naughty but your in a public place, and in company, it was agreed that we would indeed have rotisserie chicken for dinner.

A bike ride back to the campsite and, having had the secret exposed I started unloading all of the various bits. The biggest box, yet surprisingly small was the BBQ/Grill. I'd also ordered the carry case, the cover to place over the BBQ when it is assembled but not being used, side hanging shelves, with wooden inserts, a rotisserie rack, a battery powered rotisserie motor, a mains powered rotisserie motor and a set of telescopic adjustable legs.

All in its original packaging it did look a lot of equipment and I did start to wonder if I had wasted a lot of money buying a BBQ that frankly I didn't really need, owning already a Beauclaire, a couple of Webbers, a Stainless Steel Magma BBQ and handful of grills and rings, let alone a couple of big ones at home.

Jeff, having dobbed me in earlier in the supermarket then thought it would be an ideal time, with the table under the awning groaning with new BBQ equipment with Lyn and Susy looking on critically and disapprovingly, to ask "So how much did this lot cost?"



Did I mention that Jeff “used” to be my best friend?

So logically unpack the box, what comes as standard?

The BBQ/Grill comes in a suitcase type arrangement that forms the base and the rear of the BBQ/Grill, two alloy side cheeks, marked L(eft) and R(ight) clip in and lock to form the sides and then a Stainless Steel top plate clips in and forms a surprisingly rigid “square”

The Stainless Steel (SS) Top plate houses the powerful gas burner that directs heat down towards the BBQ/Grill compartment and allows radiated heat up to the two cooking rings on the top, allowing you cook a variety of different foods simultaneously

Also in the box, is a grill tray, a grill rack, removable metal handle that appears a bit naff and flimsy on first sight, but works very well, a gas valve, and carrying handle a clip, a manual skewer with a handle and four metal legs.

The buyer has to fit the clip that holds the “suitcase” together, and screw the handle on, took a couple of minutes and was easy. I didn’t find the multi national instructions much use, and to be honest the only mistake we made at this point was opening and inserting the alloy side cheeks and



the grill top, before turning the whole thing upside down to screw the four legs in! Duh! Only took a few seconds to rectify but elicited sarcastic comments from the audience! I must say that with three “watchers” if they were so clever they would have noticed this School boy error! However! In no time at all, literally a couple of minutes it was assembled and ready to go! Well, not go as the BBQ/Grill doesn’t come with a gas connection. I assume this is because Dometic being a multi national company, and this unit being sold across Europe, it is better to order the suitable connector at the time of purchase.



Once the correct gas connector and gas pipe is connected to a suitable gas supply the BBQ/Grill is ready to go.

As we had bought accessories to try on the BBQ/Grill we thought that this would be the ideal time to play with them.

To be honest the weather that day was warm, but overcast, we had no intention of driving for days, so it was a perfect time to experiment, enjoying great company, a giggle, a couple of beers and the of local plonk was going down very well with the girls! And we had rotisserie Chicken to look forward to later that afternoon, so long as it all worked and

we could fathom out how to use it all without ruining dinner! The wire racks seemed, interesting in the catalogue, but hard to envisage in a picture. Actually as normal they are surprising simple in design, simple to hang on the BBQ/Grill and surprisingly useful, almost immediately put into use with a second thought. I do love things that are intuitively useful.



Next was the decision to use a battery powered motor for the rotisserie or, go to the bother of running an extension lead out from the motorhome? A quick look in the two boxes established that the battery option looked a much

better bet. It was only a much better bet because the 220 VAC mains powered motor has a two pin plug on the transformer, and although I carry one, I had lent it to a young couple with a baby on their first ever camping trip to plug their hired fridge in. It would have seemed mean unplugging their fridge just so we could eat dinner! So we went battery powered!

We had bought the additional Rotisserie rack, as we were unsure as to what exactly came in the “box” with the BBQ/Grill. As it was, we didn’t actually need the rotisserie rack but were glad that we did buy it, but didn’t realise at the time.

So we decided that we would use the supplied rotisserie skewer and we set to prepping two Chickens we had both at the hypermarche earlier in the afternoon.



By skewering the Chickens “legs to legs” get could get a good tight fit on the skewer, using the two rotisserie “Barbs” with thumb tightening screws, how ever, we were worried that once they started to cook, they may shrink and loosen on the skewer, so Susy provided some small metal kebab skewers which allowed us to ensure that the Chickens were going to stay put whilst cooking. When using the rotisserie, it is advised that you use the grill pan as a drip tray to make cleaning much easier. That gave us the idea of using a packet of smoked streaky bacon and placing it on the drip tray. This resulted in very diet friendly (well perhaps not that friendly) crispy bacon that had been slowly crisping up for about 80 minutes with chicken fat being drizzled on

it constantly. It may not of been healthy but it was extremely tasty!. As it started to rain just after we started to cook, and, much to my disgust Lyn had suggested (made me) lifting the BBQ/Grill out from under the awning as it as going to drip on our new awning mat! As it was it didn’t spit or drip at all, it was perfectly behaved. However, as we were concerned that the rain may interfere with dinner, we inverted a “Casty” griddle plate which just happened to fit perfectly.

After about 80 minutes we removed the Chickens from the spit and using a meat thermometer decided that they were perfectly cooked. Self praise is no compliment, but, they were absolutely fantastic. The meat was moist, tender and perfectly cooked, the skin was golden crispy all round and the streaky bacon slowly cooked in the pan below set the whole thing off beautifully So day one a complete success and managerial approval rating went from “disapprove” to “quite good”

By the time we had eaten, it was too late to consider washing up, instead all the bits went into the big yellow bucket that we use for washing up, and once the BBQ/Grill was cold, we opened up the



bag and took out the cover, which didn’t fit, until we removed the gas connection It seemed a bit of a faff, but in hindsight, with the side located gas connection removed the cover fits extremely well and is snug enough to stay on in the strongest winds, which is important.

The next big test we decided a couple of day later was would it cook a decent steak? And, would it be any

good as Dometic the manufactures claim, to simultaneously cook on the top whilst BBQ'ing? Now, when we are away and it is just the four of us, we tend to take it in turns with Jeff and Susy to provide meals, if we haven't eaten out. So I decided that I would cook big "proper" chunky chips and mushrooms as an accompaniment to the steaks, and we jointly prepared a crispy salad.

Now, the term "decent steak" is in itself a controversial term, what is a decent steak? Well, for Jeff and I it was easy, the girls wanted Salmon and we wanted steaks, so the steaks were Sirloin's seasoned well, and should be crunchy on the outside and, red in the middle. The reason we said easy, was that when one person wants well done, and one want rare to medium and two want rare, it is rare for everyone to get their steak exactly as they want it.

So, we made up two Salmon parcels in foil, very basic: a little white wine, a little Dill, a pinch of dry fennel, a pinch of freshly ground pink peppercorns (best done in a pestle and mortar) a tiny knob of butter and a drizzle of extra virgin Olive Oil, all scrunched up tight and placed under the BBQ/Grill on the pan, on the middle shelf. We left these to grill/steam for about 15 minutes and removed the tray and checked the Salmon! Nearly done! So the aluminium parcels were placed in the bottom to rest and then put the seasoned Sirloins on the grill and raised the tray to the highest position. The steaks cooked in not time at all, the advantage of having a searing heat, so a slightly quicker cooking time for side two, and the tray was lowered to the lowest setting allowing them to rest whilst dinner was served.



The meal was a really good! the crispy chunky chips were all that you would want a crispy chunky chip to be, and the mushrooms were also perfect, cooked in two pans in no time at all.

So very pleased that on a hot day, we had cooked a selection of food, all superbly, without having to go in the van, use the hob or the oven, nor had anyone had to stand in the van on their own, instead, we had all sat round a table, chopping rinsing and probably drinking and generally having a great time, so another result, and Wife approval raised from "Quite good" to "It does work well"

Then walking around on one of our various shopping trips we were discussing food and Lyn and Susy decided that they fancied Spicy bean burgers from the freezer, a vegetarian option. Vegetarian options being an anathema to Jeff and I, so given a free reign to buy and cook whatever we fancied without having to worry about the girls, we bought a slab of belly Pork and some Pork mince. Back at camp, wine in hand we set about boning out the belly Pork and mixed the pork mince with breadcrumbs, Chinese Five spice and mixed it together with toasted Sesame seed oil. We rolled and stuffed the Pork mince in the Pork belly and tied it with string.

This time to rotisserie it we decided to use the optional roasting rack. This is an adjustable double ended rack that allows you to rotisserie a



number of different cuts of meat with the minimum of fuss

It was at this stage that we realised that we could actually raise or lower the height of the rotisserie depending where we mounted the motor, this allows for slow cooking, perfect for belly Pork, and it was! Absolutely mouth watering. We actually cut it into slices using a bread knife the crackling was so perfect, and of course, being rolled and tied and cooked in the rotisserie basket was 360 degrees covered in crackling. Of course, the Spicy Bean burgers looked insipid by comparison so we happily, with smiles on our faces acquiesced to the “Ooo! That looks nice, can we try some” with the same attitude us men know about the “Don’t order me chips, I’ll have a few of yours” statement.

Joking aside, it would make a religious fanatic convert the pork was that good!

We used it for a couple of days, fairly basic stuff, a bit of lunch, cooked breakfast on it one morning, which worked particularly well, as having the ability to keep things warm once cooked it meant that things weren’t sat in a pool of oil once ready. So grilling the sausages and bacon under to the grill, whilst doing mushrooms and tomatoes on the tops rings, keeping everything warm once ready in the bottom of the BBQ/Grill was great, meaning that everything was ready to serve once the eggs were poached and ready to go.

One morning, we had to move pitches, we knew about it when we booked into the site, so we’d kept getting anything out of the camper to a minimum to be honest and found that the multi function of the BBQ/Grill suited this very well indeed. It packed away in a couple of minutes, table and chairs folded and placed in the camper, press the buttons and the awning, slide outs and jack are away and other than the awning mat we were ready to go.

Every BBQ I have used in the past has been messy to fold up or needs a clean/wipe out before stowing as it will drop bits out into the locker or, normally over me, just as I have put a clean white shirt on. In this case, the stainless steel burner/lid lifts off, the two alloy side cheeks fold in, and the whole lot folds into the “suitcase” setup and closes with a catch.



Having used it a few times now, I decided that the base really doesn’t get too hot and I would risk placing the BBQ/Grill directly on a aluminium table I use for my cooking and food preparation, as I said, as I knew that I was due to move after a few days, I hadn’t bothered to get it out of the locker and its bag. What a great base it made for the BBQ/Grill, additional space to put stuff, a place for my Stella, and it meant that the wire racks were redundant, although, invaluable when using the BBQ as a stand alone unit on its own legs

The ultimate test came when I decided to cook a fish pie. We had had a call from some a couple who are family, and had decided to make a detour to join us on the site to spend the last couple of days, I offered to organise

dinner as the last thing you want to do when arriving on a site after a long days drive is to start worrying about food, especially when your mates are there, all set up, but given that they had a long drive from the South Coast I wanted something that could be ready and done, but wouldn’t matter if it was delayed for a while. Hence the fish pie

A quick cycle ride to the local supermarket (why do the French shops have such good fresh fish counters, displays and contents?) and we were sorted! I'd bought Cod loin, Salmon, Scallops, Crevettes, Mussels, fresh Dill, Chives and Parsley, some Spuds, Chives, frozen peas, Shallots, fresh Silverskin Onions and a few other bits and bobs, Or as Lyn call's it "Too much!"

I'd bought Cream Normandy, which I guessed was the best to replace good old double cream, but wasn't sure about it, so was prepared to forgo the cream if it looked dodgy! I rarely take much to France, it seems a bit pointless, but I do always have a good supply of decent Cheddar in the fridge, much as I love continental cheeses, there are times when only a bit of tangy Cheddar will do, Fish Pie being a case in point.

So, the day was OK weather wise and I certainly didn't intend to spend all afternoon in the camper cooking, certainly not while Lyn Susy and Jeff were sat outside enjoying the afternoon Sun with a glass of wine in hand, so the question was, could I cook a decent fish pie on a portable BBQ?

The first job was to prepare the potatoes so Susy and Lyn got pressed ganged (actually they did offer) and the Crevettes were shelled and headed, potatoes peeled, shallots, Leeks and Onions peeled, washed and sliced as we thought fit, Jeff to be fair was kept busy supplying ice cold Stella and wine for the Commis Chef's.

On one of the two top rings, I poached the Cod Loin in milk, Dill and Chives and when the Cod was nearly white, removed it from the heat and strained the milk into a mixing bowl. Flaking the Cod by hand ensured that there were no bones at all left in the fish, which I placed in a large glass bowl at the bottom of the BBQ/Grill, covered in foil. I then added more milk to the pan, and plenty of cracked pink Peppercorns and poached the Salmon. Again, when more pink than translucent, I simply flaked the Salmon into the glass bowl removing the Salmon skin and the bones which I discarded.

Whilst this procedure was underway the large pot of peeled potato's were boiling away on the other ring. A wipe of the poaching pan with a bit of kitchen roll (Don't you just love Tefal Ingenio saucepans and frying pans) and I poured a generous glug of a dry white wine, a HUGE knob of butter, a splash of Red wine vinegar a spoonful of honey and stirred, again using the spare "hotplate" on top of the BBQ. Once it was all melted and bubbling I introduced the shredded leeks, the Shallots and baby Silverskin onions, stirring all the time. I certainly didn't want them "frying" but I needed them colourless but cooked. I decided that doing the leeks and Shallots in a couple of batches meant that I could easily see what was happening and I didn't risk burning them, but it did mean that I did have to top up the white wine, butter and red wine vinegar. I "probably (read definitely) topped my own glass up at each stage.

Once these were all done, added to the glass bowl and under tin foil in the BBQ I brought the liquid left back to the boil, added more wine, a lot more butter (nowhere have I said that this Fish Pie was a "healthy option" and once boiling away I popped a couple of finely chopped Garlic cloves in the boiling mix, removed from the heat and started to stir in plain flour and cold water mix. Once the "goo" appeared consistently smooth, I placed the pan back on the BBQ/Grill hot plate and started to mix in the milk I had put aside after poaching the Cod loin.

In no time we had a rich, smooth white sauce, with hints of garlic and Cod. It tasted wonderful.

That mix went into the bowl, under the foil and then more butter in the frying pan with a small slosh of extra virgin olive oil and a hand full of King Scallops went in, literally long enough to brown both sides, they also, along with the browned butter, went into the mix in the glass bowl.



I did cheat and buy a pack of prepared mussels, frozen, but defrosted, each one coated in herb butter glaze, and the shelled Crevettes went into the mix.

Finally it was to mash the potatoes, fold in a fairly generous amount of coarse grated mature cheddar and dress the pie dish.! Cover with foil (initially) and pop under the grill. Once cooked (you could see the sauce boiling) the foil was removed and cheese sprinkled on, to make a brown cheesy crust. Just left to boil some French beans on the top prior to serving, as a garnish.



So, no great achievement in a modern kitchen, nor in my camper, with a huge fridge freezer, four burner hob, a electric oven and a gas oven and electric grill. But, I wanted to sit and enjoy the prepping and the cooking, with my mates, making a lazy afternoon of cooking

memorable, a few drinks, the Gypsy Kings playing on the Bose, in essence, BBQ's a fish pie!

Did it work? Well six of us sat down to enjoy fish pie, and everyone dug in for seconds, proclaiming that they "shouldn't" as they were "absolutely stuffed" as they levered out another portion.

Washing up was minimal, despite the number of separate elements, as only a couple of pans were used and a frying pan.

So I have used the rotisserie to cook chickens and rolled and stuffed belly pork. I have cooked nice big Sirloins steaks to (what we consider) Perfection, Grilled Salmon parcels in foil, prepared and baked a fish pie, plus cooked burgers, fried eggs, wonderful garlic mushrooms and spicy sausages.

It has cooked everything I have tried to cook on it superbly, is easy to clean, folds up flat into a suitcase and is my new "Best BBQ" I do tend to do most of the food shopping as I enjoy cooking and



enjoy cooking for friends. Certain things I cannot do. A Sunday roast for example, I simply do not have the knack, skill or forethought to ensure that everything comes together at the same time, fairly important if you expect people to enjoy their meal lol, whereas, when persuaded Lyn cooks with an ease that I dream of, so I was very pleased that at the end of the holiday, when we were packing up,

that Lyn said that she thought that it was a "really good BBQ" and that she understood why I wanted one, and my mate Jeff announced that he wanted one for Christmas LOL

I'd call that a result!