

Drinking games

A sporting challenge turns messy when “entering into the spirit” is taken literally. By **Charlotte Reather**

DURING the winter months the country sports fanatic is spoilt for choice. However, in the summer, one can become restless. That’s why I decided to start The Annual Cotswold Sporting Challenge. Comb-over man (COM), my elderly companion – who can still move like a greased whippet without the aid of a Zimmer – and I thought we should choose only sports we were best at and invite three other competitive couples who excelled in every sport apart from those.

Now I pride myself in having an extreme mixture of friends so I was put out when I discovered my flame-haired white-witch biker friend had upped sticks and set up a cat house on the south coast. I thought this a lovely idyll until I discovered that it was in fact not a cattery but a brothel. She was looking after pussies of a very different nature. The summer was a busy time for her and her boyfriend, Brian-the-dog, who designs A-frames for a club called the Torture Gardens, so they had to decline our invitation.

Luckily, our hot young sporty friends from Batter-see-ah could make it and immediately got into training by going to the gym, running and doing other such extreme things.

We were taking a risk and we knew it. Half of these smug London people had run the marathon but we were hoping the smog might have damaged their lungs and that their injured tendons and knees weren’t healing.

There’s nothing like competition to test friendships. During the clay-shoot, the first activity of the weekend, arguments broke out between couples as the boys had rather let the side down. This was mainly because our fabulous tutor at the shooting school had enjoyed helping us gurlies by sweeping our hair over our shoulders, sensually stroking our necks before gently clasping us to him and squeezing the trigger together. Suffice to say we scored highly and enjoyed rubbing it in. The boys were po-faced and kicked the dust.

Next was seven holes of golf. Clubs were thrown down in despair at the length of the process (how does anyone manage 18 holes of this dull game?) and general ability – many

clouds of earth went farther than the ball. Campo (known thus for his love of pink cashmere sweaters) couldn’t understand why he only hit left and his feisty girlfriend Cleavage, angry at Campo’s lack of sporting prowess, accused COM and me of cheating. But if anyone was ruining things it was Beaver Bonce, who was winning everything – longest drive, nearest the hole and then the whole bloody golf competition. We were not amused as he and his beautiful wife had also won the shooting. Bah.

That evening we hosted an Eighties dinner party with delights such as prawn cocktail, duck à l’orange and Bananas Foster. We charged up our tired guests with wine and announced a surprise round: general knowledge. Naturally, COM and I excelled at this game. After knocking the spots off the competition, COM was inspired and created a new drink to celebrate our victory. “The Binger”, as

light for a spot of show-jumping which, mercifully, was without injury, just one grumpy horse. An awards dinner followed at the local pub which continued the Eighties theme with rubbish food and crap service.

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it was named, comprised one part Cointreau to one part brandy. Perhaps if COM and I hadn’t exhausted our clever muscles over Trivial Pursuit we might have realised this was not a good idea. Or it was only a good idea if we nobbled our guests and just pretended to partake ourselves. Alas, we did neither. The result was a rave in the sitting-room to The Prodigy’s *Firestarter* with sofa-surfing and headbanging, COM having his shirt ripped off by Cleavage and all the female guests carving their initials into his chest with their fingernails and finally Cleavage being sick out of her bedroom window creating, in her own words a “pavement pizza”.

The next day, 27 games of tennis per couple were not greeted with elation but we pushed on through. Afterwards there was still enough



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